

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225975811>

# Race and Ethnicity in the Labor Market; Employer Practices and Worker Strategies

Chapter · August 2007

DOI: 10.1007/978-0-387-70845-4\_15

---

CITATIONS

4

---

READS

290

1 author:



[Roberta M. Spalter-Roth](#)

American Sociological Association

35 PUBLICATIONS 204 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research

*Handbook of the*  
**SOCIOLOGY OF**  
**RACIAL AND**  
**ETHNIC RELATIONS**

Edited by  
**Hernán Vera**  
and  
**Joe R. Feagin**

 Springer

*Handbook of*  
**the Sociology of Racial  
and Ethnic Relations**

# **Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research**

*Series Editor:*

Howard B. Kaplan, *Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas*

---

## **HANDBOOK OF COMMUNITY MOVEMENTS AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Edited by Ram A. Cnaan and Carl Milofsky

## **HANDBOOK OF DISASTER RESEARCH**

Edited by Havidán Rodríguez, Enrico L. Quarantelli, and Russell Dynes

## **HANDBOOK OF DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION**

Theory, Science, and Prevention

Edited by Zili Sloboda and William J. Bukoski

## **HANDBOOK OF THE LIFE COURSE**

Edited by Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan

## **HANDBOOK OF POPULATION**

Edited by Dudley L. Poston and Michael Micklin

## **HANDBOOK OF RELIGION AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Edited by Helen Rose Ebaugh

## **HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ACROSS DISCIPLINES**

Edited by Conny Roggeband and Bert Klandermands

## **HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Edited by John Delamater

## **HANDBOOK OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

Edited by Jonathan H. Turner

## **HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION**

Edited by Maureen T. Hallinan

## **HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS**

Edited by Jan E. Stets and Jonathan H. Turner

## **HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER**

Edited by Janet Saltzman Chafetz

## **HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF MENTAL HEALTH**

Edited by Carol S. Aneshensel and Jo C. Phelan

## **HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE MILITARY**

Edited by Giuseppe Caforio

## **HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC RELATIONS**

Edited by Hernán Vera and Joe R. Feagin

*Handbook of*  
**the Sociology of Racial  
and Ethnic Relations**

**Edited by**

**Hernán Vera**

*Department of Sociology  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL*

**Joe R. Feagin**

*Department of Sociology  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX*



**Springer**

Hernán Vera  
Department of Sociology  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL  
hver@ufl.edu

Joe R. Feagin  
Department of Sociology  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX  
feagin@tamu.edu

ISBN-13: 978-0-387-70844-7

e-ISBN-13: 978-0-387-70845-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007923830

© 2007 Springer Science + Business Media, LLC

All rights reserved. This work may not be translated or copied in whole or in part without the written permission of the publisher (Springer Science + Business Media, LLC, 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013, USA), except for brief excerpts in connection with reviews or scholarly analysis. Use in connection with any form of information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed is forbidden.

The use in this publication of trade names, trademarks, service marks and similar terms, even if they are not identified as such, is not to be taken as an expression of opinion as to whether or not they are subject to proprietary rights.

Printed on acid-free paper.

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

springer.com

# Contributors

**Gianpaolo Baiocchi**, Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Amherst, MA

**Felix M. Berardo**, Department of Sociology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Melanie E. L. Bush**, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY

**Roderick D. Bush**, Department of Sociology, St John's University, Jamaica, NY

**Jorge Bustamante**, Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN

**Pinar Batur**, Department of Sociology, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY

**Rodney D. Coates**, Department of Sociology and Gerontology, Miami University of Ohio, Oxford, OH

**Danielle Dirks**, Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

**Karen Manges Douglas**, Department of Sociology, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

**David Geronimo Embrick**, Department of Sociology, Loyola University, Chicago, IL

**Joe R. Feagin**, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

**James Fenelon**, Department of Sociology, California State University, San Bernardino, CA

**M. Elizabeth Fore**, Devine Research Center, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

**Charles A. Gallagher**, Department of Sociology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

**Sidney Homan**, English Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Nadia Kim**, Department of Sociology, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

**Debra Walker King**, Office of the Provost, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Peter Kivisto**, Department of Sociology, Augustana College, Rock Island, IL

**Amir Marvasti**, Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology, Pennsylvania State University–Altoona, Altoona, PA

**Karyn McKinney**, Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology, Pennsylvania State University–Altoona, Altoona, PA

**Ruth K. Miller Thompson**, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

**Amanda Moras**, Department of Sociology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Jennifer Mueller**, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

**Eileen O'Brien**, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA

**Rogelio Saenz**, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

**Constance Shehan**, Department of Sociology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Eduardo Bonilla-Silva**, Department of Sociology, Duke University, Durham, NC

**Gideon Sjoberg**, Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

**Roberta Spalter-Roth**, American Sociological Association, Washington, DC

**Yanick St. Jean**, Department of Ethnic Studies, University of Wisconsin–Parkside, Kenosha, WI

**Hernán Vera**, Department of Sociology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

**Lynn Weber**, Women's Studies Program, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

**David Wellman**, Department of Community Studies, University of California–Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA *and* Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California–Berkeley, Berkeley, CA



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Racial and Ethnic Relations Today</b> . . . . .	1
<i>Hernán Vera and Joe R. Feagin</i>	
<b>2. White</b> . . . . .	9
<i>Charles A. Gallagher</i>	
<b>3. The Struggle of Indigenous Americans: A Socio-Historical View</b> . . . . .	15
<i>James V. Fenelon</i>	
<b>4. Unconscious Racism, Social Cognition Theory, and the Intent Doctrine: The Neuron Fires Next Time</b> . . . . .	39
<i>David Wellman</i>	
<b>5. The Work of Making Racism Invisible</b> . . . . .	67
<i>Amir Marvasti and Karyn McKinney</i>	
<b>6. Anything but Racism: How Sociologists Limit the Significance of Racism</b> . . . . .	79
<i>Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Gianpaolo Baiocchi</i>	
<b>7. The Not-So-Harmless Social Function of a Word that Wounds</b> . . . . .	101
<i>Debra Walker King</i>	
<b>8. Racism and Popular Culture</b> . . . . .	115
<i>Danielle Dirks and Jennifer C. Mueller</i>	
<b>9. Asian Americans' Experiences of "Race" and Racism</b> . . . . .	131
<i>Nadia Kim</i>	
<b>10. African American Families: Historical and Contemporary Forces Shaping Family Life and Studies</b> . . . . .	145
<i>Amanda Moras, Constance Shehan, and Felix M. Berardo</i>	
<b>11. A Dialectical Understanding of the Vulnerability of International Migrants</b> . . . . .	161
<i>Jorge A. Bustamante</i>	

<b>12. Race, Ethnicity, and Health: An Intersectional Approach</b> . . . . .	191
<i>Lynn Weber and M. Elizabeth Fore</i>	
<b>13. What Would a Racial Democracy Look Like?</b> . . . . .	219
<i>Peter Kivisto</i>	
<b>14. Race and the Theatrical Mirror</b> . . . . .	241
<i>Sidney Homan</i>	
<b>15. Race and Ethnicity in the Labor Market; Employer Practices and Worker Strategies</b> . . . . .	263
<i>Roberta Spalter-Roth</i>	
<b>16. UNITED STATESIANS: The Nationalism of Empire</b> . . . . .	285
<i>Melanie E. L. Bush</i>	
<b>17. Racial Hegemony, Globalization, Social Justice, and Anti-Hegemonic Movements</b> . . . . .	319
<i>Rodney D. Coates</i>	
<b>18. Acting for a Good Society: Racism and Black Liberation in the <i>Longue Durée</i></b> . . . . .	343
<i>Rod Bush</i>	
<b>19. Pathways to Downward Mobility: The Impact of Schools, Welfare, and Prisons on People of Color</b> . . . . .	373
<i>Rogelio Saenz, Karen Manges Douglas David Geronimo Embrick, and Gideon Sjoberg</i>	
<b>20. Research Literature on Haitian Americans 1996–2006: Trends and Outlook</b> . . . . .	411
<i>Yanick St. Jean</i>	
<b>21. Antiracism</b> . . . . .	427
<i>Eileen O'Brien</i>	
<b>22. Heart of Violence: Global Racism, War, and Genocide</b> . . . . .	441
<i>Pinar Batur</i>	
<b>23. The Reality and Impact of Legal Segregation in the United States</b> . . . . .	455
<i>Ruth Thompson-Miller and Joe R. Feagin</i>	
<b>Epilogue: The Future of Race and Ethnic Relations</b> . . . . .	467
<i>Hernán Vera and Joe R. Feagin</i>	
<b>Index</b> . . . . .	471

## CHAPTER 1

# Racial and Ethnic Relations Today

HERNÁN VERA AND JOE R. FEAGIN

In this *Handbook of Racial and Ethnic Relations*, we have aimed to foster and put forth cutting-edge thinking on an often controversial set of racial-ethnic topics. To achieve the volume that you now have in your hands, we decided not to start from a pre-constructed outline that prejudged what is going on in the fields we cover. On the contrary, we started from a list of important scholars in these fields and asked them to tell us what topics they thought should be included in a major reference work of this kind and which topics they felt capable of taking on. Their savvy responses yielded, after considerable work and interactive discussions, the informative contents of this handbook. The authors are all authoritative researchers on the topics they deal with.

A white television host once asked a well-known black political leader he was interviewing: “Don’t you feel that you play the race card too much? Don’t you feel that this is unfair because today’s accusation of racism is very similar to the old accusation of communism that Senator McCarthy overplayed and discredited?” The latter fielded the question with grace and intelligence. However, his sharp answer was perhaps not the most significant aspect of this interview. More striking was but the fact that the white journalist did not ask the question if racism was still a threat to U.S. democracy. This deliberate avoidance of mentioning the reality and consequences of continuing racial and ethnic oppression in the United States, as well as around the world, is a main characteristic of racial and ethnic differentiation today.

This handbook opens with a topic that has been taken for granted for too long: the racial categorization of some people as “white” and superior, while others are categorized as “not white” and as eminently different and inferior in one or more ways. Charles A. Gallagher, a leading U.S. expert in this area, notes that whiteness remains a relatively invisible way to classify human beings. Other people are classified as minorities; some have a “race”; others have ethnicity; and others are just different. Whiteness often remains implicit and unstated, but still held in the mind. Yet viewing “white” as a racial identity helps to support the societal fiction that “race” characteristics—rather than racial exploitation, imposed poverty, or institutionalized exclusion—are responsible for the inequality between and among people of different skin colors in the United States and overseas. Contrary to much popular belief, human populations cannot be placed without ambiguity and error into discrete, mutually exclusive categories based on anatomical and

visual features. The idea that “races” are stable features of humanity has long been contradicted by the constant change that these categories undergo in current popular debates and older scholarly debates. The U.S. census itself provides an example of how definitions of white and other racial categories defined by contrast to it have changed substantially over several decades.

The chapter by James Fenelon, a leading scholar in indigenous issues, traces the origins of indigenous peoples in the Americas, their struggles to survive and resist during European and Eurocentric-American conquests and domination over centuries and continents, and the nature of contemporary indigenous conflicts and revitalization strategies. Several important themes are accented, including the origins of indigenous peoples, the definitions used as political identities, and historical and current socio-political usage. Fenelon explores the intergroup conflicts of those termed “American Indians” in terms of nationhood and struggles over sovereignty. He examines the larger indigenous struggles with a focus on the modern states of the Americas, as well as on the burgeoning anti-globalization and cultural contestation conflicts over indigeneity, autonomy, and the nature of community. His section concludes with an analysis of the centrality and predictive location of indigenous peoples in the Americas—which partly explains the great diversity of indigenous cultures, experiences, histories, and names.

David Wellman’s section deals with the central topic of what constitutes discrimination. When the Supreme Court interpreted Congress’s objectives for Title VII of the 1964 civil rights law in the 1971 *Griggs v. Duke Power* case, it used broad conceptions of institutional discrimination and realistic equality of opportunity. “The Act proscribes not only overt discrimination,” the *Griggs* opinion reads, “but also practices that are fair in form, but discriminatory in operation.” This conception recognized that in reality racial discrimination today is often hidden or unintentional. As the political winds shifted rightward in the mid-1970s and 1980s, however, an increasingly reactionary and all-white Supreme Court narrowed the meaning of discrimination and introduced the “intent-to-discriminate doctrine.” In its 1976 *Washington v. Davis* decision, the Court determined that without a finding of “intentional discrimination or purposeful discriminatory acts,” there was no violation of the equal protection clause in the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Court’s current standard of discrimination is not based on social science but rather an ideological view that personal prejudices, purposeful malicious intentions, are what produce racial discrimination and inequality. This intent requirement raised the bar for proof of discrimination, lowered the standard for white innocence, and made discrimination cases all but impossible to prove. As the all-white Court moved toward a theory of personal bias, social scientists and their accumulating research moved ever more in the opposite direction. Social scientists developed empirical studies, and theoretical conceptualizations out of that work, that demonstrated intentional bias was no longer a necessary determinant for racial discrimination to occur. The Court has not kept up with state-of-the-art social science. Until recently, Wellman suggests, legal scholars and activists have largely based their challenge to the conservative Court’s intent doctrine mainly on psychological and social psychological theory. Alternatively referred to as “ordinary prejudice,” “implicit bias,” or “cognitive bias,” these theories focus on individual bias, stereotypes, prejudice, and cognitive neurology. This essay argues that cognitive bias theories do not represent a fully effective challenge to the intent doctrine. Rather, they reproduce certain assumptions that are central to that conservative view. In contrast, the sociological understandings of unconscious and institutional racism avoid these conceptual pitfalls and contain a compelling critique of the conservative Court’s outmoded and wrongheaded conceptualization of contemporary discrimination.

In their chapter, Amir Marvasti and Karyn McKinney, pioneering scholars both on white racism and on Middle Eastern Americans, note that in the contemporary study of racial-ethnic matters “institutional” discrimination can be distinguished from “individual”

discrimination in that the former does not necessarily involve the irrational motives or actions of specific perpetrators but subtly imbeds and institutionalizes the everyday realities and social policies and thus is made to seem as “business as usual.” The quotidian impact of institutionalized racism is evident in many societal indicators, such as the disproportionate rates of poverty and extensive imprisonment of people of color. While there are now laws that, at least officially, prohibit overtly racist discrimination, purportedly “new,” “modern,” and “aversive” racist practices persist. In a climate accenting public colorblindness, social scientists need to show that discrimination continues to exist as a concrete, empirical phenomenon in various settings. Marvasti and McKinney lay out an analytical approach for addressing this challenge by specifically focusing on four strategies: (1) offering incentives for silence; (2) labeling claim-makers; (3) mandating silence; and (4) appropriating anti-discrimination policies. They end their analysis with a brief discussion of the theoretical and empirical implications of researching “invisible social problems.”

The pervasive idea, especially among certain academics and policymakers, that there is a “declining significance of race” in the United States did not begin with William Julius Wilson, whose name is associated with this notion, which he proposed in the late 1970s. It goes back at least to the 1960s. In their chapter, Eduardo Bonilla Silva and Gianpaolo Baiocchi take a broad look at the research methods that mainstream social scientists have constantly used to validate whites’ racial common sense about racial matters in the contemporary era. Their principal goal is to examine major tactics that social scientists have used to minimize the significance of racism in explaining the racially oppressed plight of Americans of color. Specifically, they examine how (1) social scientists’ weak societal theory on racial matters leads to a weak interpretation of discriminatory racial outcomes, (2) most work on racial attitudes creates a mythical view of whites’ attitudes, (3) the various demographic indices used to assess racial matters today miss how racism affects people of color today, (4) the ethnographic gaze looks at people of color much like anthropologists earlier looked at those they viewed as “natives,” (5) new research work on “social capital” tends to hide the centrality of racially based networks, and (6) most social scientists report their results distort the significance of actual racial stratification. They conclude their analysis by suggesting that work on racial matters must be revamped if it is going to have any practical use for those Americans of color now at the “bottom of the American well.”

For decades the n-word has been accepted as a bonding tool in various social groups, and often a sign of cultural *coolness*. Noting in her chapter that the use of the word is a question of conscience and consciousness, Debra King, a leading humanities scholar, suggests there is much more to this issue than is usually recognized. Approaching the word via Pierre Bourdieu’s provocative theory of symbolic violence—which is defined as “the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognized as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen”—she challenges certain assumptions about black cultural acceptance of a ritualistic grammar that wounds. She shows that the word *nigger* has a tremendous ability to control and silence those using it or allowing themselves to be defined through it. Because it is greatly empowered as a marker or code of acceptance, it has the ability to shift hierarchical relationships and condemn, denounce, divide, or unify individuals, almost simultaneously. The n-word is a signifier of guilt and innocence; and, as such, it has gained the power to compromise this country’s official advocacy of free speech. Through a discussion of these important issues, King concludes that no matter how much people claim an unproblematic transition from hurtful to healthy nominative possession when using this word, the pain of derogatory name-calling endures and runs deep in personalities and in society.

The relationship between popular culture and white racism has a long history in Western societies, particularly in the United States. In their chapter, Danielle Dirks and Jennifer C. Mueller, talented younger scholars working on cutting-edge cultural issues, illuminate the

many ways in which white-racist representations of blackness of the past have endured to distort, shape, and misrepresent African Americans and other groups of color today, both in the United States and across the globe. They provide a brief history of U.S. popular culture's racist past to illustrate that the manufactured images, ideas, and material goods of the present are generally recycled remnants of the dominant racialized ideologies and actions of the past. While U.S. popular culture appears to be in a state of constant new invention, this is often not the case. Dirks and Mueller examine contemporary examples of racism in popular culture to show that the country's culture makers have not come a long way. It is inaccurate to view much of popular culture as providing examples of enlightened or novel racial inventions in a supposedly post-civil-rights era.

African Americans have been at the heart of white racial oppression since the 1600s, but they are by no means the only group of color to feel the heavy burden of such oppression. Since the mid-19th century Asian Americans have faced much discrimination at the hands of white Americans, as Nadia Kim, a leading scholar of Asian issues, shows in her insightful overview chapter. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the full exclusion of Asian immigrants by 1924, and the incarceration of most Japanese Americans during World War II (despite no evidence of treason) illustrate this discriminatory reality. More recently, the brutal murder of Vincent Chin in 1982 by two white men, as well as the racist epithets hurled at Judge Lance Ito during the 1990s O.J. Simpson trial, are only a few of the racialized events that show that white and other Americans still view Asian Americans as inferior and foreigners. Kim shows how racialized exclusion and imposed foreignness have been at the core of whites' subordination of Asian Americans, even as whites have later described and placed some groups among them as white-defined "model minorities." Nativism, that intense opposition of the native-born to immigrants on the grounds of their supposedly foreign connections, is even more problematical in the case of Asian groups because they are not just *immigrant* groups but are also viewed by whites as *racially* non-white. Thus, Asian American experiences in the United States are determined by the intersection of "race" and nativism.

Much of the social science literature on African Americans families has adopted a perspective that mostly stresses the negative impact of slavery on evolving black family structures and relationships over time. This mainstream literature often speaks of the alleged "demise," "disorganization," and "pathologies" of black families that are thought to be grounded in the realities of hierarchical slavery. These conventional social science analyses have too often reflected the biases and prejudices preponderant in larger society at particular periods of time. In their probing chapter on African American families, Amanda Moras, Constance Shehan, and Felix Berardo, influential family sociologists, examine questions and critiques that generally focus on the many strengths of much-maligned black families. They assess the complexities of racialized slavery in the shaping and adaptation of family life for African Americans and the continuing structural-racial oppressions that shape their family experiences and reactions.

In his chapter on international migrants, Jorge A. Bustamante, a leading immigration scholar, examines the critical policies that governments adopt concerning immigration, policies that mark indelibly the racial and ethnic thinking of a country's leaders. He navigates the historical, empirical, and theoretical aspects of Mexican immigration to the United States. The mobilization of people in multiple directions makes such cross-border migrations impossible to disassociate from ongoing globalization and the question of the human rights of immigrants. Bustamante's dialectical analysis notes the apparent contradiction between the universality of human rights and the notion of international immigrants as under the sovereign control of a country's government, which can thus distinguish between its own "nationals" and "foreigners." He examines how most government constitutions define relations between

these supposed nationals and foreigners. This governmental process is explained through a diagram of the dialectics of vulnerability, and a historical perspective is used in order to analyze salient aspects of a *de facto* international labor market in which a particular type of immigration takes place.

Lynn Weber and Elizabeth Fore, important health researchers, address several critical aspects of the relationship between health and intersecting systems of racial, ethnic, and other inequalities. First, they present several ways that racial and ethnic differences in health are defined in the United States. Second, they provide an overview of contemporary data on racial-ethnic differences in health and health care. Third, they examine dominant and critical models for explaining the social differences, specifically comparing traditional biomedical approaches with intersectional, social constructionist approaches. Finally, they address some strategies designed to reduce or eliminate health disparities across the racial, ethnic, gender, and social class lines of society. Nowhere is the severity and impact of racism on the United States and its people clearer and more profound than in the arena of health—where racism is literally a matter of life and death. Since the middle of the 20th century, extensive population studies have repeatedly documented the lowered quality and length of life and restricted life chances that people of color endure in the United States and, indeed, worldwide.

The ideal of a “racial democracy” took root in Brazil and was over time applied to that country and several others in Latin America. In his provocative chapter, Peter Kivisto, an expert on these issues, argues that, if applied to the United States, the idea of racial democracy can be a valuable analytic tool to understand the implications of “race” for structurally determined and persistent patterns of inequality. What he proposes is to import a concept used in one geographic setting for use in another. There is a creative irony here insofar as, in its earliest articulations, the idea of racial democracy was intended to distinguish the racial dynamics in Brazil from the United States. Moreover, in recent decades the term has been challenged as very inaccurate for a highly racist Brazil and for other countries. In these cases it operates as a pernicious myth serving as an ideological rationale for existing racial oppression and inequalities. Cognizant of these realities, Kivisto makes a case for the utility of the concept for the United States. For heuristic purposes, thus, a “racial democracy” can be defined as a racially diverse nation that is not characterized by significant racial inequality. Using this interesting idea, he illustrates how far the United States is from a genuine racial democracy.

A leading scholar and poet, Rodney D. Coates provides an important chapter examining certain issues of racial hegemony, globalization, and anti-hegemonic movements. For this important purpose, he uses and improves upon Antonio Gramsci’s well-known concept of hegemony by applying it to racial and ethnic relationships. In his view there is not one but several different types of racial hegemony that can be seen in real societies. These types of racial hegemony need to be distinguished and better understood if people’s efforts at evaluating, transforming, and eliminating these hegemonies and their very serious consequences are going to have much chance of success.

In his chapter, Roderick Bush, a leading scholar on global capitalism and racial matters, focuses on what has become known as “the long twentieth century.” Key in his examination are the critical events of historical capitalism and the pan-European project of world domination starting in the late 1800s. He argues that, before and during this era, the oppressive efforts to integrate people of African descent into the United States has been symptomatic of the troubled relationship between the white European world and the world of those defined by whites as the “dark others.” The latter are often people of African descent, who have a distinctive position historically in the globalizing capitalistic political-economic system. Since pan-European world hegemony has frequently relied on pan-European racist thinking, the

social psychology of emancipation for oppressed populations of color has tended to take the form of counter-hegemonic strategies emphasizing the rise of the “darker world” against oppressive whiteness. The marginal status of African Americans within U.S. society is also the source of a form of “dual consciousness” regarding personal and national identity (as well as class and gender) that assists in placing the sociopolitical strategies of African Americans in the bridge between securing the globalizing “American Dream” and international social justice efforts.

Sidney Homan, a well-known Shakespearean scholar, playwright, and theater director, provides a chapter that explores how theater has been a mirror of “race, ethnicity, and place.” Certain questions that he asks are crucial for what some have called this “postcolonial” era: Can playwrights who take up racial, ethnic, and spatial matters offer a perspective that, at the very least, complements the insights of, say, social scientists? Or is the theater stage’s illusory world only a false mirror for such societal realities? Can a play really serve as a societal case history? He tackles these questions through a highly original examination of William Shakespeare’s main character in *Othello*, Lorraine Hansberry’s and August Wilson’s African American families in the plays *Raisin in the Sun* and *Fences*, the South African playwright Athol Fugard’s indictment of racial apartheid in *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, and his own original play *Black Voices*. The latter is a collage of African American literature, speeches, diaries, songs, and dance, which Homan wrote and directed and in which he acts as a (white) minority of one. The answers to his questions become clear as we see the many ways in which theater both reflects and illuminates the contours of historical racism.

Roberta Spalter-Roth, an important sociologist researching U.S. employment issues, seeks in her chapter to understand the workings of the U.S. labor market, employer practices, and worker efforts, with an eye to why African American and Hispanic workers so often end up at the bottom of the employment ladder. She first describes the outcomes of the ranking and sorting process in terms of certain key indicators: position in the labor force (including employment and unemployment), occupational segregation, job quality, and earnings. Then she explains certain inegalitarian outcomes by examining how U.S. employer practices and associated worker efforts affect position, or lack of position, in an ever-shifting labor market. Her conclusion briefly discusses government policies that have affected workers’ opportunities and rank in the U.S. labor market.

In her chapter, Melanie Bush, an innovative scholar who has done much interviewing of younger Americans on racial matters, examines constructions and imaging in the United States and calls for a moratorium on the equation of “being American” with being white. She examines commonplace assumptions and attitudes about national identity in the United States and various social constructions of which groups are considered to be “real” citizens, and under what circumstances. Exploring the mechanisms that reinforce global and national racialized structures, she examines new configurations of identity that have emerged as the contradictions of white world supremacy have become increasingly apparent in the modern world. Today, in innumerable public and private constructions, U.S. nationalism and white racism have become largely indistinguishable.

Examining pathways to downward mobility in U.S. society, the savvy sociologists Rogelio Saenz, Karen Manges Douglas, David Geronimo Embrick, and Gideon Sjoberg examine how social institutions have long been structured to serve best the interests of those in power. This power division has largely followed a color line, with white Anglo-Saxon Protestants receiving and accumulating the bulk of the vast resources available. These scholars show fallacies in the widespread belief that U.S. institutions today are fairly structured so as not to advantage any one group. Using a historical lens and a contemporary lens, these



scholars examine how schools, welfare agencies, and prisons have been specifically designed to exclude people of color from resources. The white power elite has long ensured that whites receive a better quality education and a broader social safety net during hard social and economic times—with little concern to use the society's social control mechanisms (prisons). While the civil rights era of the 1960s ushered in a series of legal reforms to improve the conditions of people of color, white-controlled political forces over the last few decades have reversed the earlier tentative movements toward racial equality. For example, high-stakes standardized testing has increasingly driven the educational system and contributed to students of color being tracked or pushed out of school without diplomas. In addition, beginning in the 1990s, welfare reform brought about dramatic cuts to entitlements, with reductions disproportionately affecting persons of color. The theoretical perspectives of Joe Feagin's systemic racism, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's color-blind ideology, and Gideon Sjoberg's bureaucratic-organizational framework guide this important overview.

Not all Americans of African descent have come into the complex society that is the United States through the involuntary immigrations of the slavery era, as Yanick St. Jean makes clear in her chapter. St. Jean, a talented sociologist who works on both racism and religion issues, takes a different approach by examining writings on Haitian Americans. She reviews the literature on this neglected group of relatively new Americans to examine their situation over recent decades. Haitian immigrants, who have come to the United States over roughly the same period as many Cuban immigrants, have had quite different entry and development experiences from the Cubans. This is, in large part, because of their differential, often racialized, treatment by those whites in control of the U.S. immigration process over the last few decades. Cuban immigrants got a great deal of U.S. government aid and support, while Haitian immigrants received little such support. St. Jean identifies some trends from this slowly growing literature and draws attention to some benefits for understanding racial matters in the United States that comes from research examining Caribbean Americans separately from other Americans of color, especially African Americans.

In her probing chapter, Eileen O'Brien, a leading expert on whites who have joined antiracist organizations, argues that "antiracism" can be understood, in its broadest sense, as any theory or practice, whether personal or organizational, that seeks to challenge, reduce, or eliminate manifestations of white racism in a society. In her analysis, she demonstrates that the issue of what particular ideas and practices qualify as "antiracist" is difficult to answer, given that scholars in the field of racial relations operate from different definitions of racism. In her view, antiracism cannot be merely understood as the inverse of racism because many practices that some label "antiracist" may be taken to perpetuate contemporary racism by yet another definition. She suggests that, in contrast to feminist research that has better defined and theorized what feminism is, antiracism research has not yet developed an agreed-upon typology and interpretations in regard to what is racist and antiracist.

Racial oppression is not unique to the United States, as we have already noted, but indeed has become a global reality—often with the assistance of U.S. government actors. Over the last two centuries racial oppression has encompassed the establishment of racial hierarchies and the institutionalization of racial segregation, the confinement and exclusion of certain racialized peoples, and the elimination of those considered racially inferior through group genocide. In the context of global racism, racialized genocide and war are frequently seen as natural and inevitable—indeed sometimes they are not even seen or noticed by a great many people. Pinar Batur, an insightful sociologist who has worked on comparative racism issues, considers in her chapter the changing terms and realities of global racism, using case studies ranging from Iraq, to New Orleans in the United States, to the Sudan. Conceptually

innovative, she explores the new terms of exclusion and the paths to persisting war and genocide, as well as the integrality of war and genocide to the framework of global antiracist confrontation and organization.

In their provocative chapter, Ruth Thompson-Miller and Joe R. Feagin provide an overview analysis of the long legal segregation (Jim Crow) era in the United States. They examine how, during the near-slavery realities of this legal segregation epoch, African Americans were under quite *extreme* social, economic, and political control, which was often backed up with racial violence such as lynchings. They also demonstrate how individual African Americans and their families coped on a daily basis with one of the most oppressive systems of racial oppression ever developed, one paralleling the South African system of violent apartheid. Drawing on in-depth interviews from many older African Americans in two southern towns, they detail the views, understandings, and experiences of older African Americans who lived for decades under legal segregation, revealing, among other things, how these men and women are still, today, affected by the negative experiences of legal segregation.

The volume's epilogue, by Hernán Vera and Joe R. Feagin, discusses the idea of racism as a *total* social phenomenon, a theoretical perspective that opens to research and discussion several aspects of racial-ethnic relations thus so far unexplored.

## CHAPTER 2

# White

CHARLES A. GALLAGHER

In everyday vernacular “white,” the racial category, is understood as a group of people who share a common set of phenotypes (skin color, hair texture, facial features) and trace their genealogical roots to Europe. This account where Caucasian, European ancestry, and “fair” skin color are synonymous with whiteness is problematic for a number of reasons, most notably the ahistorical and homogenizing treatment of whiteness and the omission of how white as a social identity is inextricably linked to power, privilege, and dominance.

Popular accounts that reduce whiteness to simply a matter of geography and skin pigment reveal the hegemonic nature of this identity. Whiteness remains a relatively unmarked and invisible category, yet white supremacy, since its ascendancy in the 17th century, continues to define, construct, and control a global order organized around race.

The inherent power of whiteness is the confluence of multiple social and political fictions that have transformed this category into the dominant, universal racial norm other racialized groups are forced to mirror. The maintenance of whiteness as both a hegemonic and normative racial identity is achieved through the international reach of the Western media, geo-politics, and the marketing of white patterns of consumption and lifestyles around the globe. Given that whiteness is often viewed as a status symbol, it is not surprising that a marketing study in 2006 found that 40% of women in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan routinely use skin whitening creams (Fuller 2006). In these countries “whiter” skin functions as a mark of beauty for women, a tangible asset that privileges those with lighter skin above those who are darker or less white. “Whiter” Asian women are perceived to be more attractive to men and hence more likely to have the opportunity to “marry up” socio-economically. Far from a benign act of status enhancement, these whitening creams can disfigure, burn, scar, and lead to various forms of skin cancers. This example of whitening points to the complicated ways whiteness is bound up in patriarchy, class location, cultural imperialism, and how white desires reflect a racist form of rational choice modeling (Knowles 2003; Gabriel 1998; Dyer 1997).

Given that the dictionary definition of whiteness is how most individuals (at least in the West) understand this word, it is instructive to quickly outline what this definition excludes. Mainstream explanations of what constitutes membership in the category white ignore the socio-historic process that created a hierarchical social system based on white supremacy

(Allen 1994; Smedley 1993; Fanon 1968). Nor do everyday accounts of whiteness acknowledge the relational, socially situated, and inherently political foundation that constructs all racial categories (Omi and Winant 1994; Roediger 1991; Lipsitz 1998). Popular understandings of whiteness are typically unconscious of how a classification scheme based on pseudo-science and religious dogma became globally hegemonic (Smedley 1993; Baum 2006). Missing from the common-sense understanding of white is how an amalgamation of diverse and warring populations from what is now Europe came to see themselves and their own self-interests as whites, place themselves at the top of this hierarchy, and impose a system of racial stratification on the rest of the world (Jacobson 1998; Baum 2006). Contemporary understandings of white do not begin to map the emergence of a new racialized system of global stratification that quickly shifts whiteness from mere phenotypic description to one that signifies white privilege and domination (Baum 2006; Omi and Winant 1986). There is no acknowledgment in the current definition of this racial category concerning the plasticity, instability, and changing parameters of whiteness. Present-day accounts of whiteness do not detail the genealogy of this category; what is or was considered white in one social, historic, or geographical context is outside the bounds of whiteness in another (Hartigan 1999; Perry 2004; Jacobson 1998; Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992; Twine 1998). Missing from this definition where white is reduced to simply being the relative absence of melanin is the assumption that whiteness is a naturally occurring, unproblematic, unchanging, and uniform social identity rather than one that was and continues to be forged out of political contestation, coercion, and violence (Omi and Winant 1994; Lopez 1996; Gallagher 2004; Bonilla-Silva 2001). The unacknowledged privileges that accrue to whites because of their skin color, the role racist ideology plays in normalizing white supremacy, and a history of racism that is peripheral to most whites is why whiteness is often invisible to those who occupy this racial category. The incomplete and truncated definition of “white” one finds in a dictionary mirrors how the general population, particularly whites, have come to understand this racial category; one that is situationally or only partially marked as a racial identity but one that continues to confer unearned privileges to its members (Gallagher 1997; Harris 1993; Lipsitz 1998).

The belief that human populations can be placed neatly into discreet, nonoverlapping, mutually exclusive categories based on anatomical features is not only false, it is, relatively speaking, a rather recent development (Smedley 1993; Allen 1994). The discredited view that race is a valid scientific category that correlates perfectly with phenotypes came into being around 1500 as Europeans exploring new regions for natural resources and potential colonial conquest interacted with populations in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Prior to these contacts there is simply no record of race being used as it is *now* currently, generally, and incorrectly understood (Smedley 1993; Baum 2006).

Creating a system of social and economic stratification where the category white could become hegemonic required the creation of mutually reinforcing binaries where white cultural practices and belief systems could be put in place by Europe’s colonial projects. Eminent 18th-century scientists like Carolus Linnaeus and Johann Blumenbach fused cultural bias, religious dogma, and ethnocentrism with the assumed inferior behavioral and psychological traits of non-Northern European human populations to create a hierarchical taxonomy organized around skin color. Not surprisingly, the “civilized” white race was situated on the upper reaches of this hierarchy while lesser “races” occupied lower rungs of this pecking order. The term “Caucasian” itself reflects the extent to which these groupings mirror cultural bias and ethnocentrism. Blumenbach chose the word Caucasian to represent the “white” race “because he felt that the women of the Caucasus region in Russia were the most beautiful in all of Europe” (Smedley p. 167). The construction and reification of racial categories through a now discredited branch of science not only justified European cultural and economic domination

throughout the globe, but the rise of white supremacy became the rationalization for equally nefarious activities, namely slavery, colonialism, genocide, and the eugenics movement.

Writing in the 18th century, scientists like Count de Buffon, Carolus Linnaeus, and Johann Blumenbach debated if human population were divided into three, four, five, or six distinct races. By the end of the 19th century, these categories were collapsed into the three Great Races: Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid. Once this racial ideology was in place, race and whiteness became synonymous with power and privilege as European military and technological superiority allowed these nations to colonize much of the “new” world. The new system of conquest, slavery, and colonial control destroyed indigenous social, religious, and economic systems, extracted wealth in the form of slavery and natural resources, and imposed a framework throughout Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Australia where the colonizers could lord over those who were colonized (Fanon 1963; Allen 1994; Omi and Winant 1994).

The classification of the earth’s population into racial categories ostensibly based on sound scientific principles was nothing more than the religious dogma of the day given a veneer of respectability by the scientific community. Almost every scientific theory that justified and normalized white over non-white had some rationalization, empirical starting point, or assumption based in Holy Scripture. The supposed essential races of mankind (Negroid, Mongoloid, and Caucasoid) and which groups were destined to dominate became a scientific retelling of the curse of Ham, manifest destiny, and God’s will that heathens (anyone not white and Christian) must be converted, controlled, or eliminated. Science confirmed what Christian theologians knew all along: The white race was God’s chosen people and as such had the right to claim all natural resources and to subjugate any population deemed culturally inferior, heathen, pagan, or uncivilized.

This self-serving Biblical mandate to enlighten created the “white man’s burden” to civilize (through slavery if need be) the non-white masses. The narrative that emerges from white colonizers is one that depicts those colonized as quasi-human, atavistic throwbacks occupying a branch far down the tree of human evolutionary history. In relatively short order a hierarchical social system that sorted people by physical characteristics was unilaterally imposed on Europe’s far-flung colonies in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, placing the architects of this system, the European colonizers themselves, atop this racist social order.

Although the struggle over the meaning of racial categories has been in play for over 500 years, there remains the tendency to see race as a static entity. The category white, like all racial categories, is in a constant state of flux and contestation. The parameters of what constitutes racial binaries are constantly being recalibrated and redrawn through various political, cultural, and economic pressures. There has never been, nor is there now, one definition of white. The construction of the category white, however loose, variable, or inconsistent this classification was or continues to be, signifies the supremacy of one socially defined population over others based on physical characteristics deemed meaningful and important through the political and social process of racialization. The racial formation perspective holds that “social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings” (Omi and Winant, 1994 p. 55). Once this racial formation process is set in motion, a “racialized social order” (Bonilla-Silva 2001) is cemented in place where all levels of society (politics, economics, ideology) organize, reproduce, and allocate resources along racial lines.

The U.S. Census’s definition of which groups were considered white provides a clear example of both the instability of whiteness as a social category and the role institutions play in structuring the racial order. Starting with the first decennial census in 1790, the U.S. Census has changed, redefined or recategorized who was “officially” white numerous times

(Baum 2006; Lopez 1996; Prewitt 2005). The official government definition of who was inside or outside the bounds of whiteness decided who would be a slave, who could own land, who one could marry, who could vote, where individuals could live, who would be targeted for lynching, and who could fill menial versus primary sector jobs. Jurisprudence and the courts have also played an important role in shaping the contours of whiteness. One such example is the 1923 Supreme Court case revolving around Bhagat Singh Thind, a college-educated man born in India who had petitioned for citizenship after living in the United States for 10 years. The Supreme Court argued that although some anthropologist might categorize Mr. Thind as “Caucasian,” he did not have the right to naturalized citizenship because the “common man” would not consider this individual white (Lopez 1996). The Supreme Court rejected Thind’s contention that his Aryan (and not Mongolian) roots, high caste status, and his animosity toward racial minorities established his whiteness. The Court took the position that the social definition of white was what the man on the street understood it to be, not the musings of the “scientific” community. Drawing on the cultural biases of the day, these judges decided by fiat what constituted membership in the white race and hence the rights of citizenship of Mr. Thind, and by extension all “Asians” in the United States.

Social definitions of what constitutes the category white are even more slippery and expansive than those divined by the census or the courts, in part because what constitutes membership in the category white is always mutating. The inclination is, however, to view racial categories as unchanging entities that reflect a “natural” order in a fixed racial hierarchy. What is quickly forgotten by each subsequent generation is that these racial designations are social definitions forged out of conflict and contest. From 1619 through the early 1800s, enslaved West Africans representing a myriad of cultures, ethnic identities, and languages collectively became “Negroes” upon arrival into the United States. Diverse ethnic groups like Russian Jews, Greeks, Southern Italians, and the Irish, each at one time outside what the “common man” would consider was part of the white dominant racial group in the United States, became, through an act of social alchemy and racism, white (Ignatiev 1995). James Baldwin succinctly puts the process of White On Arrival (WOA) for European immigrants in this way, “No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this became a white country” (Baldwin 1984 p. 178). From a material resource perspective, there was much to be gained by European immigrants embracing a white identity. Beyond the “psychological wage of whiteness,” which meted out status and social honor based on membership in the white race, new immigrants who could reposition themselves as being marked as white could (eventually) enter the first rung on an industrial occupational ladder that was by and large upward. In discussing how whiteness served as a wage, David Roediger explains that “the Problem is not that the white working class is at critical junctures manipulated into racism, but that it comes to think of itself and its interests as white” (Roediger 1991 p. 12). Just as class cleavages shaped the process of white racialization for European immigrants so to did newly emerging nation states, through the action of elites and institutions they controlled, consciously forge a national identity across antagonistic and often warring white ethnic populations. In the United States and South Africa, and to a lesser extent in Brazil, a national identity was achieved by embracing white supremacy. The unification of intra-ethnic white populations was accomplished primarily by sacrificing the rights and lives of non-whites to achieve peace and stability in countries that were experiencing civil wars and insurrections that threatened their existence as emerging or new nations (Marx 1998).

The U.S. Census includes in its definition of who is white people having origins in “the Middle East and North Africa,” but this official definition of who is part of the dominant

group and who can claim the privileges such membership provides has changed significantly since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on U.S. targets (Akram and Johnson 2002). Before the smoke had cleared from the terrorist attacks, Arabs and Arab Americans went from being white Americans (albeit marginally) to the racial “other.” The profiling, detainment, harassment, and discrimination directed toward Arab Americans since 9/11 are examples of how whiteness, and the civil rights normally granted to this population, can be revoked or suspended.

If the category white has meant different things at different times in various locals in the United States, such incoherence and confusion pale in comparison to the multiplicity of white identities throughout the world. Someone considered something other than or not quite white in the context of the United States’ racial hierarchy could easily glide into the category white in Brazil (Twine 1998), Puerto Rico (Rodriguez 1992), or South Africa (Steyn 2001). In the United States half of all Latinos (recognized as an ethnic group by the U.S. government) defined themselves as white in the decennial census. A segment of the Asian-American and Latino population is, according to recent research on identity construction in this community, “whitening” in ways that parallel how the Irish, Italians, and Jews came to see themselves and be defined as white (Gans 1999; Bonilla-Silva 2001; Gallagher 2003).

All racial categories are by definition social relations of power. Within this system of racial stratification, being white typically affords a disproportionate share of status and greater relative access to the material resources that shape life chances. It is for these reasons that white is defined as a form of property (Harris 1993) that yields both tangible assets (land, jobs) and privileges (citizenship, social honor) to whites that are or have been denied to non-whites. The “possessive investment in whiteness” as George Lipsitz puts it, is the bundle of perks, benefits, and privileges that accrue to whites simply because of their skin color and can, like most assets, be passed down from one generation to the next (Lipsitz 1998). These societal perks of whiteness are by no means uniformly distributed to all whites. White privilege is not, as Ruth Frankenberg points out “absolute but rather crosscut by a range of other axes of relative advantage or subordination; these do not erase or render irrelevant race privilege, but rather inflect and modify it” (Frankenberg 2001, p. 76).

It is within this context where whiteness, privilege, and the institutional arrangements that reproduce racial hierarchies that the category white itself should be understood as a racial project. Omi and Winant (1994) define a racial project as being “simultaneously an interpretation, representation or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines (p. 56) . . . [it is] racist if it creates or reproduces structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” (p. 71). Institutions and social practices redistribute resources along racial lines in ways that are often made invisible or justified through racist ideology. For hundreds of years religion and science justified white supremacy on epistemological and moral grounds. These institutions were, and in many ways continue to be, racial projects because they maintain, reproduce, and normalize white privilege. Just as a geocentric view of earth’s relationship to the sun was replaced with a heliocentric one, so too have geneticists, biologists, and social scientists come to accept the idea that race is a social construction. The fact that race (and hence whiteness) is now defined by the scientific community as a social construction does not, however, change the perception among most individuals that race is responsible for traits like intelligence, criminality, motivation, behavior, or athletic prowess. The power that white as an identity continues to hold is the fiction that race itself, rather than exploitation, poverty, or institutional racism, is responsible for social inequality between races.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, Theodore W. 1994. *The Invention of the White Race: Racial Oppression and Social Control*. New York: Verso.
- Baldwin, James 1984. "On Being 'white' . . . and Other Lies" in *Black On White: Black Writers on What It Means to be White*, edited by David Roediger. New York: Schocken Books.
- Baum, Bruce. 2006. *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity*. New York: New University Press.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2001. *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Doane, Ashley W. and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2003. *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Dyer, Richard. 1997. *White*. New York: Routledge.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1968. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, Inc.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 2001. "The Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness" in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, edited by Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene Nexica, and Matt Wray. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fuller, Thomas. 2006. *International Herald Tribune*, May 31.
- Gabriel, John. 1998. *Whitewash: Racialized Politics and the Media*. London: Routledge.
- Gallagher, Charles A. 2003a. "Color-Blind Privilege: The Social and Political Functions of Erasing the Color-Line in Post-Race America" in *Race, Gender Class*, Vol. 10, No. 4.
- Gallagher, Charles A. 2003b. "Racial Redistricting: Expanding the Boundaries of Whiteness" in *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking*, edited by Heather Dalmaige. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Gallagher, Charles A. 1997. "White Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century" in *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*, edited by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Gans, Herbert. 1999. "The Possibility of a New Racial Hierarchy in the Twenty-First Century United States" in *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity*, edited by Charles A. Gallagher. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers; 3rd edition, 2007.
- Harris, Cheryl. 1993. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review*, 106, 1710–1795.
- Hartigan, John Jr. 2005. *Odd Tribes: Towards a Cultural Analysis of White People*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hartigan, John Jr. 1999. *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. 1998. *Whiteness of a Different: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Knowles, Caroline. 2003. *Race and Social Analysis*. London: Sage Press.
- Lipsitz, George. 1998. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lopez, Ian F. 1996. *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race*. New York: New York University Press.
- Marx, Anthony. 1998. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States and Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.
- Perry, Pamela. 2004. *Shades of White: White Kids and Racial Identities in High School*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Rodriguez, Clara and Hector Cordero Guzman. 1992. "Placing Race in Context," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 14, 1.
- Roediger, David R. 2005. *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*. New York: Basic Books.
- Roediger, David R. 1991. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso.
- Steyn, Melissa. 2001. "Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be": *White Identity in a Changing South Africa*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Twine, France Winddance. 1998. *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.



## CHAPTER 3

# The Struggle of Indigenous Americans: A Socio-Historical View

JAMES V. FENELON

### ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS

Indigenous peoples and modern science differ in key ways as to their original locations, resembling philosophical differences in approach toward “creation” and “tribalism,” which debatably resonate in contemporary disagreements found in mainstream society. Perhaps the most fundamental of these is the nature of creation and sacred origin stories. American Indians generally believed they were created from the spirits and the land, thereby connecting their philosophies with particular places, and with all forms of life. (Important to note in this respect is the great similarity with the Biblical creation story written in Genesis, while most American Indian peoples followed their oral traditions.) Western societies used their ocean-going technologies to explore the Caribbean area, supported by their vast militaries and war-like approaches, following news from the Columbus expedition. These religion-driven societies called their invasion “discovery” and exploited their technological superiority and early notions of race and “savagery” with utter disregard for the societies that they encountered, “conquered,” and then set to work on the lands taken from them. So a socio-historical view of indigenous Americans must include these histories of conquest, racial stratification, and at times genocide, and perhaps most important, the effects on the culture and societies of Native Nations.

### **Racial Construction of Indians and Blacks for Conquest and Enslavement (1490–1620)**

Initial formation of “race” for indigenous Americans became salient shortly after 1492.<sup>1</sup> The first practical usage is over indigenous peoples by the Catholic Church and various Southern

---

JAMES V. FENELON • California State University, San Bernardino

<sup>1</sup> “Race” was not used as a term during this first formation period, rather “savages” were connoted to be non-Christian and uncivilized, terms that were conflated. The inquisition in Spain and southern Europe was instigating

European nation-states interested in colonial expansion in the “New World.” Taino-Arawak peoples living on the large islands later called Hispaniola are perfectly representative of this initial stage of European conquest.<sup>2</sup> A few were taken back by Columbus to Spain on his first voyage, were shown to the monarchs to prove their existence as “*los Indios*,” and were then sold in the slave markets of Seville. These indigenous Natives represented racially identified peoples, rather than their own cultures or ethno-national constructs. On the western half of Hispaniola, a nearly complete genocide of Arakakan peoples by 1542 caused a lack of an indigenous labor force, which had been replaced by the importation of “blacks” from Africa to be slaves in the colonies, ending in the country Haiti’s becoming a “black” nation in the western hemisphere. Las Casas and other priest-philosophers of the time later regretted having supported the enslavement of black Africans to replace the indigenous Arawaks.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, within a few decades, Cortez and his military force conquered the Aztecs, reducing them and all indigenous peoples in Mexico to the lowered status of “Indian” although they ruled over one of the world’s great empires. Skin-tone visibility, compounded by vast cultural differences, allowed the dominating groups to have instant and permanent recognition of status by “race” stratification (Berkhofer 1978; Fenelon 2002). In this way, notions of the “savage” were connoted to have “racial” distinctions that were inescapable and lifelong. The conquistadors, and their descendants for generations, were thereby in a permanent elite status over the “native” populations. Various racial hierarchies would continue to be utilized for three centuries by the Spanish, until they became essentially unmanageable, partly because of all the racial miscegenation that began to blur any coherent system.<sup>4</sup> However, the effect on native peoples in the “new world” was always

---

these terms against the Moors and especially against Jews (Frederickson 2002), along religious lines, which transported well to the Spanish colonies using Catholic Church ideologies. One apparent place to observe this is a continuing tradition in Europe to use more expansive terms of race to include religious minorities, which is less explicitly about the skin-tone identification arising in the Americas.

<sup>2</sup> The Taino Arawak people living on Hispaniola, in the area now called the country of Haiti, was the first place that the first Columbus expedition stopped and spent a significant amount of time, and actually left the better part of the crew of one of his ships that had foundered just off the city called Cape Haitian. When Columbus returned on his second voyage, they had been wiped out after heaping much abuse on women and the local leaders, called *caciques*, and so Columbus started killing off large scores of them, forcing even more to work in the mines in his feverish search for gold to pay for the expeditions and *conquista*, quickly reducing the overall numbers from an estimated three million indigenous peoples to somewhere around 20,000 to 30,000 within 30 years. Having eliminated his workforce, and having new constructs of categorizing people by race rather than ethnicity or national origin, Spain began to import blacks from Africa to be the first race-based slaves in the Americas, so by 1540 the complete genocide of the Taino-Arawak and the construction of the world’s first race-based slave population were complete. Later the French wrested this incredibly rich and forested colony away from the Spanish and built what is now known as Haiti, destroying the country’s environment and entrenching a brutal system of slavery, ending only with the Haitian Slave Revolution successfully fending off all the colonial armies of the day, leading to the impoverished and often occupied black nation of Haiti in the French West Indies. Thus, egalitarian and community-based indigenous societies, often led by women, living in one of the most beautiful places on earth, were turned into a ravaged environment of the descendants of black slaves, what is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

<sup>3</sup> This requires explanation and a disclaimer related to contemporary race theory. “Indios” were a lower-order race of people, partially enslaved and killed off in large numbers. As Las Casas, and in Mexico Bernal Diaz and others, decried the brutalization, in a set of debates with Supelveda and European theorists from the Church, colonists began replacing the slave labor force with blacks, initiating race-based slavery into forms as we now know them. However, the Spanish systems always had fractionation of heritage related to manumission and civil status. Two or more trajectories of race began during this time period, one of conquest by race over the Indians, and the other as enslavement by race over the blacks. It would take the English to harden and institutionalize these systems into the forms and typologies we know today.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that the *repartimiento* (apportionment) and *encomienda* (landed labor or slavery) systems were developed by Columbus and fully enforced by 1502, institutionalized as a base of operations for Spanish conquest expansion before Cortez invaded Mexico and toppled Tenochtitlan. By 1550 the plantations of the rich colony relied upon black slaves imported from Africa. When the French retained the *conquista* rights over western

the same, either outright genocidal destruction or racial subordination with an attending loss of culture (Dippie, 1982), and more powerfully the loss of sovereignty and freedom.

Thus millions of peoples and hundreds of societies were racially reduced, ranging from the relatively beautiful and egalitarian Taino-Arawak peoples of Hispaniola to the great cities and empires of the Aztec peoples ruling over the diverse Native peoples living in what is now called Mexico. This same pattern was enacted throughout Central and South America, including the great Incan peoples of the Andes, the Calusas of the Floridian peninsula, and in one of the huge genocidal romps of history, a destruction of the Mobile peoples and other large Native Nations by deSoto in what would later be the southeastern United States. The de Soto expedition introduced another incredibly destructive element into the Americas, diseases such as smallpox that spread like wildfire among the peoples that had no resistance, literally killing hundreds of thousands of American Indians, sometimes as much as 70 to 80% of a particular community or nation (Thornton 1986). But even if it was only 20 or 30%, Native Nations across the eastern North American continent were devastated and destabilized to the extent that they could no longer pose effective resistance to the “guns, germs and steel” of the Europeans (Diamond 1999).

Movement of racial distinctions into clear demarcation within social institutions was therefore considerably more ambiguous in the Caribbean colonies dominated by Spain and France, than the system the English developed over the Irish, and later transported to their American colonies. “Savage” tribes and chieftains of Ireland were systematically excluded from social institutions within the English system, and subsequently barred by religion and “national” (cultural) origin (Smedley 1999). However, when the English moved this system into their colonies in the Americas, they married this conceptually with notions of the “race” of Indians and subsequently of blacks, and the subhuman status of savagery and lack of civilization. Origins of Indigenous peoples and “Indians” in the Americas, in terms of race, ethno-nationalism, and racism, from the Caribbean through colonial conquest and domination, and later into the English colonies and the development of the United States, lifted “race” above all categories of ethnicity, national origin, or culture. These are the racial categories nearly all scholars use today, although they were considerably more fluid from 1600 to 1800.<sup>5</sup>

The first major colonies of England in the Americas represent these relationships very well, with the Jamestown settlement in Virginia starting about 1607 and the Plymouth settlements in early Massachusetts, starting about 1620. Both of these colonies were preceded by English ships on fishing, trading, and sometimes slaving expeditions along the coastal areas, and usually caused violent conflicts. Both of these settlements tried to befriend some of the local indigenous communities in order to get food and supplies, although they also had some conflicts, usually over land and leadership. After numerous colonists migrated into the region, the settlements expanded and entered into many wars with the local Native Nations, often interrupted by agreements and treaties. Both colonies broke their treaties, with the Powhatan and Wampanoag peoples, respectively, under the justification that Indians were not civilized or Christian, and thus could not enter into such agreements with civilized peoples. In both cases,

---

Hispaniola, which they renamed *San Domingue*, they inherited fully developed, race-based slavery plantations over 100 years old, which they built into the richest colonial holdings in the world, intensifying the oppression until the Haitian slave revolution overthrew colonial domination.

<sup>5</sup> Again, the racial categories and labels were in formation throughout this period, so the Spanish enforced racial enslavement/genocide against the Arawak Indians in Hispaniola, replacing them with black slaves, even as they brutalized and partially enslaved Indian peoples in Mexico, but leading to *mestizaje* (mixing) rather than clear racial boundaries. It took the English, over the following hundred years, to institutionalize and harden the racial categories of Indian (to be eliminated) and Black (to be enslaved), and another 200 years to clarify Whites (with the U.S.) and therefore the typologies we know today.

and numerous others, the Native peoples were eliminated in upwards of 90% of their population, and those who survived either were hiding in small isolated villages or were sold into slavery (Jennings 1975). The entire political philosophy behind this genocidal expansion over the indigenous peoples was racist grouping of diverse peoples collectively called “Indians.”

When English colonists in Virginia first bought and kept black “African” slaves, around 1619, they simply adapted existing systems of race-based slavery to their own knowledge of how to maintain dominance over subordinated peoples through laws in their existing social institutions. “Race” thereafter became immutable and permanently stratifying<sup>6</sup> (Hannaford 1996) precisely because of the typification of different races for different purposes—conquest and thereby elimination for Native Nations or indigenous peoples; enslavement and subordination for the people called Negro or Black of African descent; and supremacy and cultural domination for those people first considered Christian, Anglo, and then gradually as “white” of European descent (Frederickson 2002).

The United States of America inherited this system, at least for its agricultural economies in the southern and central colonies that became states. It replicated central institutional features, social engines for setting up and maintaining systems of domination and perpetual stratification, that were so highly developed in Ireland. These were laws governing the control over property, land-holdings and inheritance, education, political participation, exclusion from systems of law, control over the military and police forces, taxation, trade, language, religion, and manipulation over family systems.

Clearly, “blacks” under race-based slavery had every one of these component spheres of their life either highly regulated or completely denied to them. “Indians” presented a much more complex group to control in this manner, since many Native Nations were still very strong around the new country with their own social systems, under constant attack and erosion. Also, there were many treaties that required legal interpretation, and existing land tenure and socio-economic relations. These systems were controlled through the simple expedient of denying all indigenous peoples citizenship in the new country that was built on the very lands they once controlled (Wilkins 1997).

The central sociological features of racial domination in the first years of the United States were built around three foundations—the most obvious and powerful feature that overlapped all others was the construction of laws, social policies, and legal practices that maximized and enforced the deep-set stratification and race-based inequality that fueled the entire system<sup>7</sup> (Montague 1997). The controlling systems of racism were built over, around, and for

---

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that this was “race” in formation, taking a hundred years or more to take shape into the immutable and hardened categories that the United States inherited and further developed.

<sup>7</sup> These three systemic foundations would now be identified as laws and social policies, social institutions structured around inequality in all sectors, and the ideological underpinnings. While the ideologies may shift and be transformed over time and changing societal conditions, they are set in place in the 16th century, beginning around 1493 and continuing until the late 1500s, when an advanced slave system over Indian peoples in the Americas was inherited by the English. The English quickly transported existing systems of domination over the Irish to the Americas, taking its present form around 1619, when “black” slaves were bought and sold in the Virginia colony. Here is where the English slavery system began to diverge from the Spanish and French systems. Non-English systems, while race-based and slipping between genocide of indigenous peoples, slavery over all non-Europeans, and vast land control and labor stratification, such as *encomienda*, were complex and allowed for some mobility. The English, borrowing from their Irish colonies, created immutable racial barriers of English or white, and uncivilized inferior non-white “races.” Other Europeans were thus still “civilized” even as it became necessary to wage war with them over lands and new colonies. However, the uncivilized “non-whites” began to be broken into two major groupings: those destined for slavery, and those destined for elimination. For the next 150 years, this system gradually

social institutions that separated Christian “white” immigrant Americans from “black” slaves and “Indian” peoples. At first, the English borrowed from the pre-existing enslavement of Native Nations throughout the southeastern area of North America by the Spanish and sometimes the French. However, in utilizing the systems identified above, reaching from the 1620s until 1690 and on to 1700 and even beyond, English colonies hardened their racial codification systems, coding all the “Indian” peoples for elimination, often paying bounties for “redskins,” and making alignments with treaties that were repealed as soon as the external threat was gone. For the indigenous peoples coming into contact and conflict with these expanding systems of colonization, this meant a construction of Anglo or “white” with early purity rules that excluded them, hardening of racial rules for blacks, and underpinnings of “blood” descent for Indians, that would not acknowledge national origin, and always refuse them full citizenship.<sup>8</sup>

## CONFLICTS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The struggles of indigenous Americans and Native Nations in a North American context, over a 400-year period, would focus especially on sovereignty and their survival in the face of genocide and culturicide (Fenelon 1998), by the colonies and the countries that grew out of their expansion, the United States and Canada. The indigenous nations resisted these invasions and their policies of domination, a main subject of this chapter. We also need to discuss the construction of laws, by race and racism as well as by nation, that discriminated against American Indians, and the ideological apparatus put into place to justify their oppression, that coincides with the rise of scientific racism.

---

became dichotomous with two racial domination systems: non-English (mostly blacks and Indians) versus “English” and later European descent peoples (typically represented as the black–white dichotomy today) as the overarching racial hierarchy; and differential treatment toward blacks and Indians as differing races. Thus social institutions become constructed around these systems of racial hierarchy and treatment. More importantly, laws and social policies favoring English and Europeans in the American colonies were constructed around enhancing and refining slavery systems over blacks, and another set were then constructed for continuing elimination of Native peoples and development of legally justified dehumanization, destruction, and removal of “foreign” savages with no claim to any citizenship. These essential constructions, of European “whites” over racially inferior “people of color,” along with a race-based slavery for blacks and a race-based social destruction for Indians, are precisely the systems inherited by the fledgling United States of America in the late 18th century, and codified into law (Feagin, 2002). Therefore, the United States of America developed its constitution with clearly stated laws about racial slavery only for blacks and racial domination only for Indians, that were constructed into the well-known racialized social institutions of the 19th century, extended in various permutations toward Mexicans and Asians, and continued to be the ideological underpinnings of 20th century racial inequalities and racism. In this way, the ideologies of racism have survived and transformed themselves many times over the 500 years of racial domination in the Americas, even as policies, laws, and social institutions are violently constructed and then violently deconstructed with the changing socio-political orientations toward race, racism, and racial hegemony in the Americas.

<sup>8</sup> These three forms continue formation in the English and later American systems, from the 17th century until mid-19th-century political and legal constructions. Purity for “Whites” is mostly Anglo and Christian at first, although there are periodic references to “free white” in colonial and American documents. Hardening of racial hypodescent rules for blacks occurs during the later 1600s and early 1700s but is formally fixed by U.S. laws and court decisions throughout the 19th and into the 20th century, often noted as “one drop rule” by later scholars and critical race theorists. Indians as a firm racial category are under attack from 1492 on, yet all treaties and agreements are made with specific Native Nations, leading to further fractionation in the mid-19th century with distinction of “full bloods” and “mixed bloods” ultimately forming into diverse “blood quantum” rules by the 20th century. The formations for all three racial categories are only complete as the United States move into the early 20th century. However, the scientific underpinnings were classified during the years of the American Revolution by Blumenbach, defended by Kant, and utilized by Thomas Jefferson with clear racial hierarchies placing the Caucasian on top (see Feagin 2002:33, 81 on).

The first official actions respecting colonial claims of “sovereignty” over Native Nations occur with the Inter-Cetera Papal Bull of 1493,<sup>9</sup> declared shortly after Columbus’s return. In this time of developing European nation-states, there was no separation of church and state, hence the Spanish and other western sea-faring powers intent on taking new lands were given justification to wage war over native peoples, under the new “Christianizing” ideologies for conquering peoples who had less than fully developed “souls” (Lyons 1992; Berman 1992). The “race” of *los indios* was initially constructed with religious differentiation that also marked the racially perceived level of civilization.

The two primary legal principles employed in this grand scheme were the Prince’s “Rights to Conquest” (for Europeans only) and the developing “Doctrine of Discovery” (over indigenous peoples in “New World” America) (Wright 1992; Deloria and Lytle 1984). Sundry forms of conquest directed solely for the western hemisphere were put in place. Mechanisms for using these tactics were formalized in “laws” such as the *Requerimiento*, composed about 1512 by Palacios Rubios (Berkhofer 1978),<sup>10</sup> appearing to give natives “choice” in the manner of a coming domination and destruction, but amounting to little more than legal cover for war. This was deeply embedded in English colonial reasoning as a “Cant of Conquest” (Jennings 1975)<sup>11</sup> in American colonies, leading to formal application of the “Great White Father” (Prucha 1984) first to colonial administrators and later the U.S. President when dealing with the Native Nations that stood in the way of their expansion (Berkey 1992).

These claims of legitimate conquest and extinguishing of aboriginal title to lands, usually but not always enacted under various “treaties” between nations, led to complex forms of “multiple sovereignty” (Todorov 1984; Cornell 1988;<sup>12</sup> Wunder 1994), contested in terms of establishing nation-state authority. However, in the United States of America these were circumvented for national purposes, under the “Manifest Destiny” ideology that allowed the U.S. Congress and other federal bodies sufficient interpretation to avoid following treaties, even those made by the United States itself (Berkey 1992).

## U.S. Claims to Sovereignty as Racism and Genocide

The United States brought Indian Nations into sovereignty discourse under the infamous “Indians Not Taxed” clause (representation without taxation), leading to the Non-Intercourse Act of 1790 that formally established nation-to-nation relationships, albeit with an intent of

<sup>9</sup> This theological position statement placed the Native peoples in quite inferior positions, requiring European civilization dominance. Expeditions to a “new world” therefore had “just” cause to conquer and civilize in the name of “God and Righteousness” (Lyons 1992; Berman 1992; Wilkins 1997).

<sup>10</sup> “To legalize this view of forceful conquest and prove its righteousness, Spanish policy required that a document, probably composed around 1512 by Palacios Rubios, an authority on just-war doctrine, be read to native populations about to be colonized. Although ship captains had the *Requerimiento*, read from their ship deck as they approached an island, or brave commanders had it delivered in safe but empty places far from the Indian enemies to be attacked, the natives were to understand that they possessed a choice of peace or war as a result of the history of God’s creation of the world, and the patronage of the Catholic Church . . .” (Berkhofer 1978:123).

<sup>11</sup> These historical roots were central to establishing European-based sovereignty, with future interpretations for institutional legitimization. This meant leaving residual, and very real claims to sovereignty. At this point a “Cant of Conquest” (Jennings 1975) meant “claims to sovereignty” were not completely extinguished, provided a potential threat to hegemonic domination.

<sup>12</sup> Todorov (1984) has expressed these claims as issues of “multiple sovereignty,” in situations of collective action and revolution. Although untempered by a “complex unfoldings of multiple conflicts” that take into consideration conditions of how a “situation emerged in the first place” (Deloria and Wilkins 1999), the presence of multiple claims (real or potential) on legitimate sovereignty greatly informs processes and outcomes of U.S. struggles with Native Nations.

conquest. The Louisiana “Purchase” (1803, Lewis & Clark 1804–1806) was another formal relationship. Essentially, “rights to conquest” using the “doctrine of discovery” were “purchased” by the United States (hence, the “voyage of discovery” expedition title). President Jefferson ordered Lewis and Clark along their journey to make declarations of “sovereignty” and “great white father” to the Indians, especially the *Tetonwon*-Sioux (Lakota) throughout the journey, similar to the *Requerimiento* both in content and delivery (Ronda 1984; Prucha 1984). Jefferson had complicated, often opposing, views of Americans Indians, sometimes being paternalistic and seeing them as more assimilable than blacks, as in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and at other times calling for their outright elimination. In this way he was the supreme racist hypocrite, celebrating and developing the Noble Savage, which he called for the “rights of all men,” while conversely holding black slaves and warring upon Native Nations and peoples.

As the United States continued its expansion westward, and its attempts at extinguishing Indian land claims through the treaty-making and war-waging process were successful, the already internalized Indian Nations posed problems to “sovereign” relationships. None stands out more in this respect than the so-called Five Civilized Tribes, including the Cherokee Nation. Not only did these people refuse to be removed to the “Frontier” or “Indian Country” as other Native nations were so forced, but they began sophisticated attempts at bi-cultural assimilation, including with U.S. laws. Local states, especially the Carolinas and Georgia, took umbrage at this resistance and attempted taking Cherokee land by force and unilateral declaration of sovereign dominance. This led to the next round of official relationships between the United States, its own “states,” and Indian Nations (Deloria and Lytle 1984; Champagne 1992).

The Cherokee, with limited support by some missionaries, took legal action to resist continued state encroachment over their lands, leading to a set of U.S. Supreme Court decisions; the first was *Johnson v. Mc’Intosh*, (1823), where the Court acknowledged a limited “sovereignty” but sided with individual states.<sup>13</sup> Following that was the moot *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S.(5 Pet.) 1 (1831), which called the Cherokee “domestic dependent nations,” thereby setting the precedent as sovereigns. Finally, the Court ruled against Georgia in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), and in a limited way for Indian Nations.

Sovereignty, decided by Supreme Court’s majority decision under Chief Justice Marshall, therefore was accorded the Cherokee Nation (and by legal precedent all Indian Nations), although still under federal sovereignty, with ambiguous relationship to the individual states. Nonetheless, U.S. President Jackson broke the constitutional interpretation and began removing Indian peoples from the Southeast states, cajoling Congress into passing the Indian Removal Act of the 1830s (from 1834 to 1868) and thus causing the genocidal “Trail of Tears,” extinguishing Indian land claims for a lack of sovereignty (Wallace 1993), based primarily on essentialist notions of the “race” of American “Indians.”

Many indigenous peoples or Native Nations attempted to adapt their culture and socio-political relations to the invasive society. The Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, and Chickasaw) stand out in this respect, but ultimately it was only their status as “Indians” that mattered. The death rates of Indian removal by military force along the routes to “Indian Country” ran from 20 to 40%, without counting the dead after arrival in what would later be Oklahoma and Kansas. Many traditionalists went into hiding in the mountains and forests and tried to hold on to their culture. So-called Indian Wars on an

---

<sup>13</sup> The Court did not, however, acknowledge Native Nation “ownership” of the land, ironically forcing legal discussion of group/tribal “trust” rights, therefore sovereignty (Wilkins 1997).

expanding “frontier” caused Native Nations in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and New York, and all the territories, to experience similar suppression. Many had barely survived the aforesaid domino effects of the slave-raiding and fur trade practices, developing and maximizing inter-tribal warfare, during the colonialism era, when they came into violent conflict with the United States. While a few militaristic coalitions arose in opposition to the advancing U.S. imperialism, others attempted peaceful revitalization movements. All were met with massive military destruction, whether the peoples had entered into non-aggression pacts or not.

This ruthless rejection of even its own laws concerning sovereignty was continued by U.S. administrations along with Congressional oversight all the way until the Treaties Statute of 1871 ended treaty-making and future nation-to-nation status in agreements with “Indians.” This was firmly connected to the U.S.—“Sioux Nation of Indians” (Lakota) Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 (Lazarus 1991) determining land claims that should have been inextinguishable (Fenelon 1998). For 20 years, during battles over the Black Hills, and in the southwest with the Apache, U.S. lawmakers and military leaders lied to and coerced Indian Nations about legal issues concerning sovereignty. The killings at Wounded Knee and death of the Ghost Dance in 1890 ended the conflicts, as the General Allotment (or Dawes) Act of 1887 was now utilized across the United States to allot Indian land to “non-Indians” on “treaty” reservations and “trust” lands. Civilian and military authorities in the United States predicted that early in the 20th century Indian (nations) “tribes” would disappear forever (Cadwalader and Deloria 1984).

However, first reports of a demise of Indian nations were both premature and untrue. Long-term protracted struggles over the cultural existence of Indian people, and thereby their claims, ensued throughout the first decades of this last century, leading to many contemporary struggles, whether understood as “tribal” or originating from “Indian Nations” in treaties. This is where sharp differences between American Indians as a race and Native Nations began to emerge, with the former becoming a racialized “minority” without citizenship or civil rights in the dominant society, but the latter with sovereignty claims and an existing sense of social membership as “citizens” in traditional societies. This became the underpinning of all law as well as treatment of indigenous Americans. This is when racial categories for Blacks and Indians went in sharply different directions.<sup>14</sup>

The United States centralized federal sovereignty as the overall authority over most matters, especially those international, of concern to the nation as a whole. However, individual state sovereignty as an outgrowth of the colonial concerns and differences maintained effective control over the social institutions within the purview of the states, especially their taxation, judicial system, public education, transportation, and many economic enterprises. This meant that any conflict (or cooperation) between federally recognized Indian Nations and/or “tribes” operating within these and other regulated activity within states was and is dealing with two sovereigns. While federal sovereignty was supposed to be over-arching and the only required relationship, states often exercised their real economic and political power to force Indian “tribes” to the table, especially when financial resources were at stake (Pommersheim 1995; Deloria and Wilkins 1999). The most contested relationships in the 20th century were between the “Tribal” (Indian Nation) sovereignty and individual state (each U.S. “state”)

---

<sup>14</sup> Blacks become the most despised of all racial minority groups, and their subordinate marker overcomes all others, contributing to reification of the “one drop rule.” American Indians are increasingly fractionated by “blood quantum” rules for ethno-national identification and are subsumed into other racial groups whenever mixing occurs, except of course for Anglo whites. Some analysts believe demographic pressures were no longer a “threat” to racial hegemony, with Natives comprising less than 1% of the population.



sovereignty, even as the general public continued with racially identifying indigenous peoples as “Indians.” Confusion over racial, political, and ethno-national identities persisted to the present day.

## Historical and Current Struggles over Tribal Sovereignty

Cyclical struggles over sovereignty led to a long series of policies meant to eliminate, suppress, or subordinate the cultures and resistance of indigenous peoples—as tribes or nations—that have often produced just the opposite effects from the desired results—namely the cultural continuance of Indian peoples and therefore their ability to resist total assimilation into the social, political, and economic systems of the dominant society. In the 20th century two distinct forms of this struggle over sovereignty began to emerge: socio-political sovereignty, usually related to Supreme Court decisions and jurisdictional relationships with individual states, and “cultural” sovereignty, which has been expressed as the ability of a people to speak their own languages, practice their spirituality, and raise their families with “traditional” values, similar to cultural self-determination.<sup>15</sup> Also, arising during and after the civil rights movement and urbanization of many Indian families in the United States, social movements converged on many related issues, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM). However, first we need to identify governmental policies that show the development of these complex conflicts.

First are the “Indian Offences” (1882) and “Tribal” Courts involving tribal jurisdiction. These policies specifically outlawed many cultural practices, even traditional religious and educational practices, with ostensible purposes of assimilation into a mainstream, dominant “white” American society, albeit without citizenship or other polity rights. Traditionalists from Native societies, such as the Lakota, were being put into conflict with U.S. government-backed “progressive” groups who rejected the primitive “savage” cultural practices. Perhaps the clearest attacks on cultural sovereignty were prohibitions against the SunDance, a community religious practice. Coercive assimilation against group property and kinship holdings, such as with the *tiyospaye*, broken up by allotment in the 1887 Dawes Act, were also forms of culturicide (Fenelon 1998).

Second are the Indian Reorganization Act (1934) policies and resulting Tribal Councils—“Tribal” governments put into place and supported by the various agencies of the United States. This continued the practices of reformulating Indian “governments” that answered to and were funded by federal authorities, that to a large extent were opposed by “traditionalists” and “treaty” groups, who wanted to retain cultural practices such as their own language and value systems (White Hat 1999; Biolsi 1992).

Third were the Termination policies (1954) and the Relocation programs (1950s and 1960s)—accompanied by resistance and Tribal recognition that focused on reservations, Indian agencies, and some reconfigured “tribes” around such historical legacies as missions or removal locations (Fixico 1986). Sovereignty became highly contested, often revolving around “internal colonial” social structures and external political groups that themselves were designed and implemented to suppress “sovereignty” claims arising from traditional cultural knowledge (Coffey and Tsosie 2001; Fenelon 2002).

---

<sup>15</sup> Wallace Coffey and Rebecca Tsosie observe “Cultural Sovereignty” as critical to survival for Indian Nations, in their article “Rethinking the Tribal Sovereignty Doctrine: Cultural Sovereignty and the Collective Future of Indian Nations” (*Stanford Law & Policy Review*, Volume 12:2, Spring 2001).

A fourth grouping involves various economic development strategies that are connected to federally recognized “tribes” and political structures, chief among them an Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1988) and its regulatory controls that act like tribal economic “confederacies.” Herein lies the dilemma of competing notions of sovereignty locked into the historical struggles. Sovereignty, often based on a treaty, an agency, a reservation, or a reconfigured “tribal” group, remains separate from individual state governments yet is still under the federal government. Traditionalists may oppose any or all three of the politically sovereign groups (Young Bear and Theisz 1994). Tribal governments must negotiate with state governments concerning compacts and elaborate tax plans in order to implement development like Indian Gaming (Fenelon 2002, 1998). Many states interpret these negotiations as subordination to state sovereignty. As is discussed below, iconic imagery of “Indians” as “noble savage” or as “hostiles” played an important part of these relations, including with sports mascots and team names. Thus the resistance activism growing around the nation protested the ongoing use of these racist symbols.

During the 1960s and into the early 1970s, mostly in the cities of the northern region, there arose urban movements to struggle against the extreme discrimination that many American Indians experienced. Starting in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, and quickly spreading throughout the United States, AIM and other forms of resistance linked up with ongoing struggles on Indian reservations, especially the embattled Lakota in the Dakotas. These movements garnered considerable press, as did the occupation of Alcatraz Island, under a claim to federal land arising from the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. This helped to lead the Trail of Broken Treaties caravan to Washington, DC, where the protest groups ended up occupying the buildings for the Department of the Interior. The Federal Bureau of Investigation had already launched counter-movement activities, entitled COINTELPRO, which were intensified, leading to conflicts across the nation and finally to a spectacular re-occupation of the hamlet of Wounded Knee, where the last genocidal act of the United States military had taken place against surrendered Lakota families in the winter of 1890. The summer of 1973 struggles were put down after a three-month siege by the U.S. army, and the federal government began aggressive actions upon anyone associated with AIM and at reservations with civil war-like conditions, such as on Pine Ridge in South Dakota. By 1975 there had been many arrests, some false imprisonment, selective assassinations, and a virtual prison industry against American Indian activists across the nation, finally coming to a head, again on Pine Ridge, when two FBI agents were killed as they tried to enforce a chase unto the Jumping Bull complex<sup>16</sup> where traditionalists had accepted help from AIM members. Within the next few years, the movement was deeply suppressed even as the great sovereignty movements of the 1980s came into their own strength. Activism stayed alive, especially in the cities and as linked up with other movements, especially in the universities, but most traditionalists were more concerned with cultural retention, which allowed for tribal groups or Indian Nations to survive in the first place (Ortiz 1984), while some tribal governments entered into Indian Gaming, increasing their financial base but bringing them squarely into legal systems of the federal government.

---

<sup>16</sup> The FBI agents were allegedly chasing after a Lakota teenager who *it was said* had stolen a pair of cowboy boots in Rapid City. They came in shooting and were wounded and then killed, leading to one of the greatest manhunts in FBI history and months later to the arrests of some AIM members who were present, and who were ultimately acquitted by a jury in federal court. The FBI extracted the one other alleged AIM member from Canada, Leonard Peltier, cooked up the case against him, and got a conviction on falsified evidence and tainted testimony, putting Peltier into prison for life in the most hardcore conditions possible, where he remains (see Peter Matthiesson’s *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*).

## Case Study – the Lakota

The Lakota (and Dakota) people make an excellent example of how these various forces have worked out over time and in political frameworks. The traditional “Lakota Oyate” and the U.S.-defined “Sioux Nation” were socio-political identities, named in treaties, with different cultural origins. There are three major temporal phases of Lakota “constructions” that can be so identified: the ancient and traditional “Oceti Sakowin”; two separate “Nations”; followed by six separate Lakota–“Sioux” Indian reservations (Fenelon 1997). There arose two separate “Nations” of “Santee” Dakota and “Teton” Lakota. Ironically, in 1851 the United States conducted treaties with these two “Sioux Indian Nations”—the Dakota peoples in the “Traverse-de-Sioux”—Dakota nation treaty, and a first “Fort Laramie” treaty–Lakota multinational (multitribal) compact (treaty). This was followed by the 1868 Treaty with the “Sioux Nation of Indians”—the Lakota (“Teton Sioux”) in the other, better-known, Fort Laramie Treaty that established the United States and the Lakota (“Teton-Sioux”) geo-political boundaries. This was a direct result of two years of warfare. However, the United States broke the agreement to get the gold mines and natural resources of the Black Hills, after many Lakota became adjusted to or dependent on reservation life and rations. Many Lakota and Cheyenne resisted these illegal incursions and defeated the U.S. Army at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 but had to flee when the United States responded with a relentless quasi-genocidal pursuit.

As the century ended, the United States divided the 1868 treaty lands into six separated Lakota–“Sioux” reservations, thus formally and unilaterally breaking up the “Lakota Oyate.” By 1890 the “Sioux” Agencies had become reservations divided by “band” into six separated BIA agencies, bounded in 1889, with the two Dakota states accompanied by land-takings. Agencies made the Lakota into dependent people, with great corruption, even denying them meager rations owed by treaty law, while creating the aforesaid laws to suppress them and destroy their cultural systems. When the 1889–1890 Ghost Dance came into the region as a religious revitalization movement, the U.S. military and various civilian authorities responded by arresting and killing the intransigent leaders, including Sitting Bull, and purposefully slaughtering over 300 refugees they surrounded at Wounded Knee Creek.

By 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act had created the “Standing Rock Sioux Tribe” (one “agency” from six reservations acting politically separate as “tribes”) into a separate council and (BIA) tribal identity. This evolved into six individual claims of a “tribal sovereignty” so that in 1990 Standing Rock “Nation” (Standing Rock “Sioux” Indian Reservation) operated both as a reservation and as an Indian Nation (tribal government) within the United States, one of six Lakota divisions with Dakota people relocated too.<sup>17</sup> Although the treaty was made with the “Sioux Nation of Indians,” meaning the Lakota people as a whole, the sovereignty that continued was allocated only to reservations that had survived from the original agencies, producing new and smaller socio-political constructs that further eroded traditional life.<sup>18</sup>

Lakota often use the phrase *ikce wicasa* (“common red man”) when they undertake many leadership roles, and it can be glossed to mean, “I am no better or worse than the people.” Herein we observe how resistance to western and colonial forms of cultural domination, especially personal aggrandizement, is also often linked to revitalization of

---

<sup>17</sup> Typically the Indian Office would locate different peoples together on one reservation, which would deny some their traditional lands and become a constant source of friction for enrollment and local politics.

<sup>18</sup> See Fenelon, James V. 1997. “From Peripheral Domination to Internal Colonialism: Socio-Political Change of the Lakota to the Standing Rock ‘Sioux,’” *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 3:259–320 (Summer 1997).

traditional lifestyles that are further connected to ongoing oppression and injustice, such as treaty rights and lawful or ethical behavior. This is also demonstrated when Frank Fools Crow and another “headman” Frank Kills Enemy were selected to represent all the traditional Lakota in terms of monetary “settlement” for treaty-breaking that led to the loss of land. Again, land is perceived spiritually and collectively, just as relations with “the people” are understood to change the behavior and orientation of a person selected to be “leader,” who is better called a “spokesperson” for the councils of elders to represent the people.

#### **WE SHALL NEVER SELL OUR SACRED BLACK HILLS**

##### **Joint statement of Chief Frank Fools Crow and Frank Kills Enemy**

on Behalf of the **Traditional Lakota Treaty Council** (September 1976)

Kola (friends). . . I am Frank Fools Crow, Lakota Chief, and I am here today with Frank Kills Enemy, respected headman and expert on Indian treaty rights. . .

We have come here from Pine Ridge today to discuss this house bill which permits the tribal councils to get interest on the award given by the Indian Claims Commission. . . Our people have been holding meetings on the Black Hills for many years and we have just held such a meeting at Porcupine. . . the people authorized us to come to this hearing today and speak for them. *The people unanimously reaffirmed our long-standing position that the Black Hills are not for sale under any circumstances.* We are therefore standing behind the resolution we passed at Fort Yates, reading:

##### **Resolution on 1868 Treaty**

Whereas a meeting of all Sioux Tribes concerned with the 1868 Treaty was called by the Standing Rock Sioux and all elected and traditional leaders were invited. . . Be It Resolved, the delegates of the eight Sioux Reservations have unanimously agreed that all land involved in the 1868 Treaty is not for sale, and all monies appropriated for such sale will not be accepted by members of the Traditional people of each reservation.

I want to repeat that there can never be an acceptance this bill or the total Black Hills Claim under any circumstances. This is the wish of the people. We have a treaty and it requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all adult male members to sign before our land can be sold. I believe that this provision was stuck in the treaty by the whiteman because Lakota do not sell their land. The whiteman claims that he is not bound by the  $\frac{3}{4}$  provision of the treaty. . . The treaty was broken by the whiteman before it was even signed by him. But we Lakota are more honorable men. We have signed the treaty and we will try to live by it, and respect it. Even though this treaty may not be binding on the whiteman, it is binding on us until we vote it out. It says that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Lakota adult male members must sign before land can be sold and the Lakota people can never accept any payment until this provision is fully complied with.

The Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota people. Both the sacred pipe and the Black Hills go hand and hand in our region. The Black Hills is our church, the place where we worship. The Black Hills is our burial grounds. The bones of our grandfathers lie buried in those hills. How can you expect us to sell our church and our cemeteries for a few token whiteman dollars. We will never sell.

There are two important points to make in this chapter from the above passage: first, traditional people can be quite sophisticated in their understanding of treaty relations, law-making, and “realistic” objectives; and second, the value systems of indigenous peoples are interconnected with orientations to land, community, and spirituality. This is doubly important in a society that is undergoing forms of globalization, subordinating all people and communities and societal values to economic determination. It is not just that many indigenous peoples are most often at the bottom of this stratification system, but that their very values and beliefs are under attack, and that they have rather sophisticated responses to these attacks, including the electoral and legal systems of the dominant society.

We have observed these long-term processes of incorporation and suppression within Lakota traditional societies as essential features of resistance and for societal survival, and how traditional groups have continued their historical, treaty-based interpretations of these issues. Now we need to ask, expanding the discussion to all indigenous Nations, whether these issues of the Lakota “traditionalists” resonate on the “pan-ethnic” level? We can find an answer in the 1993 “Statement of Vision toward the Next 500 Years,”<sup>19</sup> where very similar declarations were made by delegates from many tribes and nations (mine) that are representative of American Indians’ socio-historical perspectives.

**Statement of Vision Toward the Next 500 Years from the Gathering of United Indigenous People at the Parliament of World Religions, Chicago, 1993<sup>20</sup>**

We as Indigenous peoples and Native Nations, honoring our ancestors and for our future generations do hereby declare our present and continuing survival with our sacred homelands.

Since time immemorial, we have lived in a spiritual way in keeping with sacred laws, principles and values given to us by the Creator. That way of life is predicated on a sense of honor and respect for the Earth, a sacred regard for all our relations, and a continuation of our languages, cultures and traditions. In the presence of this world gathering we call for recognition of the past, acknowledgement of the present, and a commitment to support our just demands for dignity, justice and human rights. These rights include:

the right to practice our *spiritual traditions* without interference or restrictions, the right to raise our children in *our own cultures*, and the right to sovereignty and *self-determination*.

One hundred years ago, at the 1893 Parliament of the World’s Religions, we, Original Nations of the Western Hemisphere were not invited. A century later, even as this Parliament convenes, the following issues have yet to be addressed: \* The destruction of Native spiritual traditions; \* Historical and continuing genocide and holocaust against our peoples; \* Repatriation and reburial of *sacred artifacts* and funerary remains; \* Protection or return of *sacred sites and traditional lands*; \* Legitimization of native medicinal, and health practices; \* The *cultural education of our children*, including spirituality; \* Misrepresentation and theft of *spiritual traditions*, and ethnic fraud; \* Teaching and learning of *traditional language and culture*; \* Environmental abrogation of *sacred sovereign rights*; \* Respect and awareness of prophecies and *traditional teachings*; \* Church silence and complicity in dominating native spirituality; \* Ongoing federal policies designed to destroy our way of life.

## INDIGENOUS STRUGGLES IN LATIN AMERICA(S)

Indigenous struggles in the Americas, especially in Latin American contexts, include the contemporary conflicts above, Zapatistas in Mexico, uprisings in many other countries, including the Miskito against the Sandinistas, “Quechuan” peoples linked up in Ecuador, Venezuela, the Aymara in Bolivia, Mapuche in Chile, and other Central and South American countries where resistance and rebellion are under way.

<sup>19</sup> The document “Statement of Vision toward the Next 500 Years from the Gathering of United Indigenous People at the Parliament of World Religions, Chicago, 1993” was created by “multi-tribal” Indian Nation delegates as reported in Fenelon (1998).

<sup>20</sup> (Fenelon 1998: 310) I was the rapporteur for the traditional spiritual leaders who congregated there, taking down these notes that were delivered to the United Nations representative and news agencies.

## Popol Vuh

They tore off our fruits, they broke off our branches, they burnt our trunks, but they could not kill our roots. (Popol Vuh)<sup>21</sup>

Indigenous peoples are involved in struggles over local autonomy, land tenure, community relations, and socio-economic “development” that are often viewed as anti-globalization efforts when viewed through the lens of world systems analysis. In many parts of the world, these struggles take on definitive forms of de-colonization strategies, none more poignantly than Mexico and other Latin American countries. In this section, I consider situations and perspectives of indigenous peoples in Mexico and Latin America, and then make comparative analysis with other cases and struggles by indigenous peoples in other locations in the Americas.

## Mexico Profundo

The recent history of Mexico, that of the last five hundred years, is the story of permanent confrontation between those attempting to direct the country toward the path of Western civilization and those, rooted in Mesoamerican ways of life, who resist. (Bonfil Batalla 1996:xv)

We immediately observe from Bonfil’s quote that the struggles of indigenous peoples extends back over time and space from before conquest and invasion occurs, identified within the Americas as five centuries. Bonfil furthers states that it is only after European invasion and the installation of the colonial regime that the country became “unknown territory” whose contours and secrets need to be “discovered” (1996:8–9). Thus essential features of indigeneity also become a partial foundation, however denied, for the nation-state and new cultural forms built over those who preceded it. Bonfil identifies this as “De-Indianization” as a “historical process through which populations that originally possessed a particular and distinctive identity, based on their own culture, are forced to renounce that identity, with all the consequent changes in their social organization and culture” (1996:17). What I believe Bonfil identified, however, was a targeted cultural destruction of individual “Indian” or indigenous communities, nations, cultures, and collectivities for the purposes of domination and the subsequent building of racialized concepts of “the Indian” that no longer has these diverse relationships, but only represents the primitive and undeveloped. Thus stark contrasts on the nature of the land, autonomous socio-political relationships, and community as a collectivity emerge in relationship to “modernity” and capitalist expansion over increasingly large territories. “The clear and undeniable evidence of our Indian ancestry is a mirror in which we do not wish to see our own reflection” (Bonfil Batalla, 1996:18).

Activists and scholars in Mexico now call American indigenous communities “*Pueblos Indios*” for convenience to identify important differences from other groups resisting cultural domination and potential erasure or assimilation. I refer to the United Nations definition for one usage:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those who have a continuous historical connection with pre-colonial societies that preceded the invasion . . . that have the determination to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral lands and their ethnic identity. . . .” (Jose Martinez Cobo, 1987)

---

<sup>21</sup> Quote from *America Profunda*, 2003 meetings held in Mexico City, by and for Indigenous scholars.

As noted earlier (Bonfil, 1996:88), one of the basic relationships of indigenous peoples is having a relationship to the land. This relationship is often sacred, rarely has direct economic value, and is usually held collectively rather than individually. This orientation to the land is in direct opposition to how modern, capitalistic society approaches land, with direct economic values and individual title.

The larger problem for the Indians was the struggle against breaking up the communal lands. The Liberals made private property sacred . . . the communal ownership of land in Indian communities became an obstacle to be removed. (Bonfil Batalla, 1996:100)

Bonfil, as do a host of scholars working on indigenous peoples of the Americas, identifies other areas of social organization that differ markedly from dominant groups, and mainstream “modern” society, including medicine (p. 34) and community service, *cargo* systems in Mexico that are “simultaneously civil, religious, and moral” (p. 36). Thus we observe that it is the collective nature of indigenous life which appears to be at conflict with modern social systems that invade and incorporate the indigenous. This collectivity includes the land, distributive economics, shared decision-making, and the community. Invasive systems want to take over the land, stratify the economy to build a power elite, centralize political systems into hierarchies they control, and relate all social issues to ever-larger urban areas that dominate in all arenas the surrounding communities. Since indigenous peoples utilize alternative systems of social organization, and do not dissolve relationships, they are seen as obstacles, and if they resist, they are seen as the “enemy.”

In seeing the “Indian as Enemy” Bonfil observes (1996:103–104):

The radical denial of the imaginary Mexico. The struggle over land, involved one side, which wanted free trade and individual property, while the other side protested the land was communal and inalienable.

With the ensuing conflict over resources, and increasingly played out over culture, indigenous peoples literally became the enemy, of dominants and later civilization itself. Value systems, one placing private property and maximum monetary profits as mainstay, and the other with community relations at heart, came into sharp conflict, with violence employed by the invasive systems, and often by the defending systems.

“To civilize” is meant to pacify them, domesticate them, end *their* violence. (Bonfil Battata, 1996:105)

Western colonial powers and later the United States created a “minority” ethnic group—the “Indian”—while they tried to destroy the culture, history, and knowledge of individual Native nations or cultures. Even as this process occurred, place names and land-based knowledge systems evolved from the previous indigenous systems. In Mexico, I refer to “Day of the Dead” posters and celebrations, which in Oaxaca represent the “pre-Hispanic origin of the celebration of the dead” that is now often understood to be Mexican culture. These layers of domination—500 years and more in Mexico—reveal Bonfil’s Mexico Profundo, the indigenous “Indian” foundation even as oppression stratifies every aspect of life—cultural, political, economic, and social. Therefore, the indigenous represents both the foundation of the society itself and the “enemy” to be overtaken and then destroyed. Once we dispel the notion of primitive people without historical memory, we need to address how indigenous peoples understand these histories, often denied and/or distorted by dominant historical perspectives. Murals painted over the walls of a mostly indigenous neighborhood in Mexico City, the *barrio Santo Domingo* in their cultural center *La Escuelita*, itself the site of considerable resistance, demonstrate the detailed knowledge and perspectives of these relationships, even among more

urbanized peoples. Similar to how urban resistance arose in the United States, indigenous peoples in Mexico build new sites of revitalization, resistance, and survival, inevitably revolving around indigenous ideas of social justice.

The Zapatistas' indigenous resistance and revitalization movement, at times revolutionary and always about transformational change that is positive for autonomous communities, represents one of the best and latest attempts to fuse traditional indigenous social justice with responsive and reflexive "governance" that are representative of those communities choosing to participate. I discuss these and other examples in this section of the chapter.

Indigenous peoples in the extremely poor but resource-rich state of Chiapas alongside Guatemala have experienced deep discrimination, and saw a new set of opportunities to challenge the destructive forces of invasive globalization with the signing of the NAFTA agreements, opening up their regions to further "development." From 1984 until 1994, these people met with revolutionaries in the Lacandon jungle and planned uprisings that would restore some semblance of justice and fairness in their lives. On the same day that Mexico woke up to celebrate its business with the United States, New Year's Day 1994, the EZLN armed uprising took the capitol San Cristobol and most of the countryside. Withheld from military pacification because of the possibility of indigenous uprisings throughout the country, especially in Oaxaca and Guerrero, and because of international human rights groups observing the *Encuentros* and mediating talks, Mexico entered into protracted agreements with the Zapatistas, and thus changed the entire orientation toward *Pueblos Indigenas* and their movements. Although paramilitaries arose as arms of the national army, and engaged in suppression techniques such as the massacre at Acteal, indigenous resistance has proven successful in the state of Chiapas.

Zapatista-led communities began to organize in new ways that attempted to respect traditional culture, but sowed new patterns as well, including equality and involvement for women, direct challenges to local and state authorities, and community self-defense. Conflicts took various forms, forcing struggles with para-militaries, government officials, military forts, restive localities, peasant organizations, and a depressed economy. One set of social changes by the Zapatistas was to form offices called *Junta del Buen Gobierno* that heard local issues and resolved them for the betterment of harmonious relations within the community (Ramirez 2003), similar to the restorative justice systems of North American Indian Nations such as the Lakota, who actually wrote them into treaties in the 19th century (Fenelon 1998). These exemplify mediating social structures that place community relations as the highest value.

Zapatistas use *normas y costumbres* (Bonfil Batalla 1996) in their conflict mediation that takes place in the *Junta del Buen Gobierno*. This means they defer to indigenous cultural norms and values as defined by the communities themselves. People may take any set of issues, whether a property problem, or labor-related, or even familial including the nature of divorce, child care, and domestic abuse, to have a fair and open hearing. The government systems of "justice" have been corrupted with politics and bribery, so the Zapatistas banned monetary restitution for the Juntas or any others, and keep a tight focus on conflict resolution to restore harmony for those community members affected.

Community organizations in Los Altos and other contested regions, where conflicts between indigenous and government-supported forces were common, transformed most basic socio-political relations so they were both modern and responsive to contemporary issues, and yet were traditional and sensitive to local concerns. A municipal sign at *San Pedro Polho* represents this well, identifying itself as an autonomous rebel community banning drugs, stolen property such as cars, and alcohol abuse as threats to local lifestyle, exemplified with the phrase "*Aqui el pueblo manda y el gobierno obedece*" (here the people speak and the government obeys. . .).



Latin America's Indian struggles, as compared to First Nations in the United States and Canada, mostly revolve around formal recognition issues arising from their treaty relationships, development of racialized "minority" groups, and their historical change. Our work discusses these relationships as long-term social change (Hall and Fenelon 2004), with specific focus on three major socio-political relations with dominant states—sovereignty, autonomy, and minority status. Indigenous peoples with historical treaties have established various forms of legal sovereignty in the United States and Canada. Indigenous peoples have established both recognized and unrecognized autonomous zones and communities in various locales in the Americas and globally, usually at some expense, with Nicaraguan Miskito and Mexican Mayan-descent Zapatistas standing out. Indigenous peoples still considered or treated solely as "minority" groups within their nations are the most vulnerable, and often form resistance groups and/or movements, such as *Comunidades Indígenas* in Oaxaca (Maldonado 2002).

The key comparative issues here are fourfold (contrasting across both of the Americas). Sovereignty is recognized in First Nations, though they are historically genocidal states. Minority or conflicted autonomy in Latin America, although historically *mestizo* states, confers neither sovereignty claims nor clear legal protections for its indigenous peoples. Therefore, indigenous peoples can experience different relationships depending on their spatial (place) and temporal (over time) conditions. Within Mexico and throughout most of Latin America, the indigenous peoples are suppressed and held down to the lowest rungs of the economic order, although they did not experience as powerfully a genocidal regime in earlier centuries, as the colonies that preceded the United States and Canada did practice upon the indigenous (American Indian) nations falling under their conquest. This is directly correlated with race and racism for the last two or three hundred years, coinciding with racist systems developed in North America that sometimes used genocide or war to suppress indigenous nations, and always kept American Indians in subordinate roles through racist laws, coercive assimilation, and lack of access to full citizenship. Now, making up no more than 1% of the total population, Canada and the United States broker sovereignty struggles to maintain an appearance of democracy and freedom, allowing limited recognition of sovereignty as First Nations or American Indian Tribes. *Mestizo* states in Mexico and most of Latin America, while periodically resorting to war, brutal suppression, and segregated status, rarely rose to the level of genocide after colonial powers were installed. The creation of a *mestizaje* population, although highly stratified, kept indigenous peoples as significant, low-level presence of their respective countries, constantly struggling for autonomy and recognition. In some parts of Mexico as noted, and in some countries, especially Peru, Ecuador, and notably Bolivia, indigenous peoples make up a large percentage of the total population yet have little socio-political status. This is one of the many anomalies of indigenous peoples in the Americas.

Perhaps the most important element of indigenous struggles for observing resistance to globalization is a connectedness that many movement groups see with other indigenous peoples. For Zapatistas this has led to actual invitations, referred to as the international *Encuentros* and the Inter-Continentials, represented in the "four directions of hands united" mural image on a headquarters building in Oventik, Chiapas, with the words *Democracia* (democracy), *Libertad* (liberty), *Justicia* (justice), and *Paz* (peace) over the meeting hands with fists, put in a medicine wheel design with the surrounding words *Unidad y Victoria*. The colors used are Lakota traditions, which vary from those used by Mayan, and so two very different indigenous traditions and social movements are connected in their vision and struggle. It is this set of relationships to which we now turn.

Comparative analysis is important to see, underscored above, as the basis of indigenous resistance and consciousness and as being absolutely integral to all of Latin@ America; from the revitalization resistance of Zapotecs in southern Mexico to the recognition fights of the Wampanoag in the United States; and from the movement resistance of Zapatistas, compared with Lakota resistance forces, to overall indigeneity and its many intersections with resistance to globalization and to “neo-liberalism” out of a Washington consensus. We now turn to this indigenismo as a collective orientation to social organization.

### **Basis of Indigenous Resistance/Consciousness Integral to Latin America**

Indigenous peoples represent significant percentages of the population of many Latin American countries, and in some cases, when grouped together, they constitute the majority. This is certainly the case in Bolivia, where we reference an indigenous leader, Felipe Quispe Huanca (*Aymara*), Head of the Indian Movement *Pachacuti*, that initiated protests in Bolivia that contributed to the downfall of the sitting president. (*Washington Times*, March 3, 2004)

We believe in the reconstruction of the Kollasuyu, our own ancestral laws, our own philosophy. . . We have. . . our political heritage (that) can be successful in removing and destroying neoliberalism, capitalism and imperialism.

It is community-based socialism. . . That is what the brothers of our communities hold as model. . . In the Aymara and Quechua areas, primarily in La Paz, we have been working since 1984 on fostering awareness of community-based ideologies.

Felipe Quispe speaks of social movements arising throughout “Indian” Latin America, shared struggles, that are based on a diversity of indigenous peoples and nation-states. While each is reconstructing traditions unique to their culture, and often relative to the specific lands they inhabit, they are also finding commonalities across many fronts, notably in opposition to cultural domination and capitalist expansion over their lands. Even as the essence of a community, economic cooperatives, shared decision-making, and land tenure relations vary, indigenous peoples seem to rely on these foundations both to resist in their individual situations, and increasingly in global networks.

Ecuador is an outstanding example, with recent protests and insurrection rising to levels of revolutionary activity, some of it in concert with mainstream military forces, leading to the Quito accords, and ultimately a broken alliance. Indigenous peoples are often in the middle of social unrest and rebellion, especially when there are high numbers and they are well organized. Unfortunately, all too often they are left out of resolutions and agreements arising out of the conflict. This marginalization has been a distinctive feature of indigenous social movements and, when accompanied with cultural suppression and oppression, has caused revitalization movements to arise. Usually the dominant society reacts with military pacification reminiscent of the *conquista* hundreds of years ago. We can observe current resistance and attempted revitalization in social conflicts in Canada, with the Mohawk, in the U.S. over federal recognition fights and sacred lands dispute, with the Wampanoag, or Lakota over Bear Butte, in Mexico with Zapatistas in Chiapas and Zapotecan resistance in Oaxaca, in Ecuador with the Quechuan land tenure fights, and notably with Aymara coca-leaf growers aligning with leftist unions in Bolivia.

Mayan-descent peoples in Guatemala, and in the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca, Mexico, are moving away from Liberation Theology to new indigenous “Liberation Philosophy,” which is partly based on traditional understandings of culture, the land, and community. These are epistemological movements that reject not only the hierarchy of European social orders, but the very nature of their social organization.

The Nicaragua Miskito communities realized their “autonomous” zones of *Zelaya Norte*, first in armed conflict with the Sandinistas who were in a low-intensity war with Contras funded by the United States (part of resistance to capitalist globalization as socialism, but more importantly as community responsibility and resisting privatization), and later with coalition governments. This has led to a series of legal challenges by Nicaraguan indigenous groups, all of which further the causes of resistance and cultural revitalization.

Mapuche peoples in Chile have also organized their resistance along cultural lines, again relating their struggle to community and land. While many of these inter-ethnic conflicts find flashpoints around some major economic activity, such as mining or land appropriation for large-scale agricultural development in some cases, their underlying issues remain focused on maintaining traditional lifestyles in order to retain community cohesion. (Fenelon and Hall 2005)

As Quispes describes above, and Evo Morales speaks to as the elected head of Bolivia, and as traditionalists throughout the history and the current reality of the United States’ and Canada’s indigenous nations have struggled with, it is the essence of community, economic cooperatives, traditional decision-making, and land tenure relations that may sometimes lead to violent uprisings or perhaps a more localized economic re-organization. Yet indigenous peoples rely on these foundations to resist in their individual situations, and within global networks (Ramirez 2003; Sklair 2002). These new movements have collective orientation toward communities that are transparently anti-globalization, and specifically target neo-liberalism as modern “evil” for the poor, indigenous, marginalized peasants making up their constituency. Examples such as the coca leaf growing in Bolivia, disconnected from United States’ cocaine markets, as indigenous horticultural practices challenge regional dominance and hegemony operated by corporate economic practices. Similar issues are addressed in the draft “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” now before the United Nations, supported by the Mohawk of Canada, the U.S. Lakota, *Pueblos Indigenas* of Mexico, and Indigenous movements throughout the Americas.

Herein we see how the historically developed concepts of the “hostile” against the U.S. conquest or domination are fully realized in many 21st-century Latin American conflicts. We also observe how important such racist icons and symbology are in American society, why they are fought over in many universities and social institutions by dominant groups, and how they connect with hegemonic histories and struggles over racialized imagery. Autonomy movements such as the Zapatistas in southern Mexico and the Aymara in Bolivia have become typified as “socialist” or even as “terrorist” in nature, even though they actually represent over 500 years of indigenous struggle in the Americas.

## GLOBAL CONFLICTS OVER INDIGENEITY AND CONCLUSION

Some of the most important issues for contemporary Indigenous Peoples are their socio-political struggles with dominant modern “state” structures, as seen in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. These three large nation-states represent the entire North American continental areas and reflect the differing trajectories that arise from the socio-historical circumstances. In terms of identity relationships, Champagne (2005:4) differentiates indigenous claims toward “government, land ownership. . . resource management and community organization and identity” and calls for a “multinational” state structure that respects Indigenous People’s rights and societies. In other work Champagne finds that “most Native nations are

striving to gain greater responsibility over their communities through strategies of economic development, renegotiating relations between tribal and federal governments, and reintroducing Native history and culture into reservation institutions, education, and government” (Champagne and Goldberg 2005).

International borders often run across and divide traditional lands of indigenous people. Shrum (2005) analyzes U.S. “border crossings” of the *Kumeyaay* and *Tohono O’odham* with Mexico and the Iroquois and Blackfoot Confederacy with Canada, finding linkage and policy shifts over two centuries that are still fractionating communities and tribal identities, somehow managing to survive. But that survival has come at some cost, even when limited sovereignty is recognized, within the United States and Canada. Dempsey discusses definitions of a “status Indian” in Canada, how this was historically based on gender discrimination, and how many new governmental policies divide aboriginal communities in terms of changing membership, often polarizing First Nations (2005). In each of these cases, we see how socio-historical struggles have shaped contemporary realities, and cause us to re-evaluate embedded concepts of race and racism rather than ethno-national struggles, perhaps leading us closer to Champagne’s call for using a multi-national model, inclusive of indigenous peoples, in relation to large state structures.

In Central and South America, we need to identify the indigenous perspective on social problems arising from hundreds of years of conquest, colonization, and ongoing cultural domination of North America. Marcos tells us how *Zapatismo* incorporates traditional family approaches to critically assess colonization gender constructs that have stratified Mexican society and indigenous women, and how *Commandanta* Esther’s speech to Parliament in Mexico represents the EZLN and Zapatistas, showing how indigenous struggle informs non-indigenous society as well (2005). The Zapatistas, reformulated from their initial revolutionary uprising, had negotiations over limited autonomy during the San Andreas Accords and now support and defend community development strategies in the areas under their control. Their uprising has caused Mexico to begin indigenous relations in earnest, with limited progress happening across the entire nation.

Nash identifies the “Mayan Quest” for indigenous forms of autonomy in southern Mexico and Guatemala, noting the genocidal repression in Guatemala against indigenous peoples who resisted the “threat of dislocation brought about by neoliberal trade and economic policies” (2005: 122). By identifying the “practice of autonomy” as “deeply embedded,” she sees a primary struggle as collective interests against state-supported corporate interests, or as the Mayas say “ants and bees” (working together in cell-like organizations of flexibility), with inherent tendencies to “listen” and “obey.” The *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* run by the Zapatistas are emblematic of this resistance, borne out of violent uprising but with metamorphosis into a blending of traditionalism and modernity, also engaging in resistance and revitalization. And as noted in the earlier section, these movements see a certain solidarity and common purpose in maintaining their traditional culture in a modern world that continues to discriminate against them collectively, therefore racially. As noted above by Fools Crow, often against treaties and agreements, with the Black Hills for the Lakota, and the San Andreas accords for the Zapatistas, indigenous peoples see their struggle in a global context.

Indigenous struggles of resistance and survival, which are linked to social movements, internally over sovereignty and autonomy, and externally often as anti-Globalization movements, contest dominant versions of social organization and dialectics of history, especially in contemporary “development” discourse, and the nature of democracy. The Hodenosaunee or Iroquois Confederation, composed of more than five Native Nations, better represented their people in civil discourse than the fledgling and deeply racist, sexist, and classist American systems before, during, and after the Revolutionary War. Women, especially

maternal grandmothers, could hold important positions in society, while their Anglo counterparts could only plead a legal case to an all-male jury through their husbands or fathers. Yet American history has depicted this early League of Nations as “primitives” and “savages” with its primary military leader and first President George Washington waging genocidal war against them to the extent that the Onondagas still refer to him as “Town Destroyer.” The Zapatistas, representing more than five indigenous peoples in their uprising in the highlands and rainforests of Chiapas, have provided better local justice systems than the Mexican government ever has, or probably ever will. They have highlighted their traditional family systems, evidenced in the *Tzotzil* communities, placing special offices for women to find support and dignity in male-dominated areas. Yet Mexican government officials have typified them as “insurgents” and “terrorists,” with para-military pacification strategies that have a long history of western domination. And Bolivian indigenous leaders Felipe Quispes and Evo Morales have clearly stated their support for the poorest indigenous communities in their attempts at social change in the poorest South American country with the largest percentage of indigenous peoples. Yet the United States and powerful corporate forces have consistently charged them with being socialist pawns, or simple-minded rural activists, rather than community leaders arising to resist oppression and to reinforce the revitalization of indigenous cultures.

Conversely, the United States Justice Department refused to believe its own analysis, a finding that of all racially or ethnically defined groups in the United States, Native Americans were the most likely to be victims of violent crime, exceeding even African Americans, and that they were the only people who were primarily attacked by members of other racial groups, mostly “whites” in and around border-town regions. So at a time that a few Indian “tribes” or nations have managed to lift off the floor of poverty and discrimination within the United States through Indian Gaming or other economic development actions, historical systems continue to oppress and stratify these indigenous peoples in America. Much of the historical oppression is now realized through the United States and a few other core nation-states with advanced capitalist systems, exporting labor exploitation and expropriating property and profits from other poorer countries, with especially strong deleterious effects on the indigenous peoples in those societies, who continue to occupy the lowest strata in their countries, and who continue to be the target of discriminatory systems that target whatever natural resources, landholdings, or labor they may have. Liberation movements, each specific to their own situation just as the American Indian Movement joined up with the traditionalists in the United States, are thereby viewed or perceived as a “threat” to the well-being of the same nation-states that oppressed them. Struggles for local autonomy and cultural sovereignty rage across the Americas, being the legacy of invasion, conquest, and domination over indigenous peoples.

In describing the modern constructs of empire, George Steinmetz describes the early steps in the process as, “Colonialism entails the seizure of sovereignty from locals and the formation of a separate colonial state apparatus” (2005: 344). But countering that, recently elected Bolivian President Evo Morales (*Aymara* Indian) has stated, “With the unity of the people, we’re going to end the colonial state and the neoliberal model.” Morales went on to speak for indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, in stating: “The time has come to change this terrible history of looting our natural resources, of discrimination, of humiliation, of hate” (Associated Press, 2006).<sup>22</sup> Struggles of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas have come full circle in sociological terms, with Native Americans resisting ongoing racism

---

<sup>22</sup> Reported by the Associated Press, also in Forero, Juan and Larry Rohter, “Bolivia’s Leader Solidifies Region’s Leftward Tilt” January 22, 2006, *The New York Times* (electronic, nytimes.com).

against the “race” of “Indians” and for sovereignty within their nation-states, and with indigenous peoples throughout the hemisphere engaged in struggles for recognition and autonomy against the nation-state, and when possible, as agents for change that could indeed prove better for all peoples.

## CONCLUSIONS

The expansion of Europeans into the Americas produced conflicts with devastating results for indigenous peoples, and the racialization of “Indians” in North America. European colonizers of American Indians continued to use the “Doctrine of Discovery” and “Rights to Conquest” to justify the racialized destruction of Native Nations.

The United States further developed these racist ideologies, at times resorting to genocide policies, found in the Trail of Tears (1823–1838), elimination of California Indians (1850–1880), and acts of mass killing such as at Wounded Knee (1890). After the nadir of the American Indian population, around 1900 north of Mexico, historical and contemporary struggles in the United States and Canada were over sovereignty, tribal and ethno-national, even as the “Indian” was still racially defined.

As a case study for the United States, the Lakota make an excellent example, extending from the “purchase” by President Jefferson, through invasion and conquest, and then cultural domination and internal colonialism of the 20th century. The Lakota also exemplify resistance over sovereignty by maintaining their claim to the Black Hills through the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty and in the AIM/traditionalist conflicts at Pine Ridge.

Indigenous struggles in Latin America were less racialized over time, but just as intense in terms of stratification and oppression at the bottom of their respective societies. Just as important is the underlying basis of indigenous resistance/consciousness being integral to Latin America identity, as found in Mexico Profundo and lately in Bolivian resistance. Racist iconography of the “hostile” from North America, still existing in social discourse, has been transported to fights over indigenous movements in Mexico and Bolivia.

Conflicts over indigeneity have become more universal over time. Similar to what scholars now refer to as “global racism,” the frames and labels used during the conquest of American Indians are now generically applied to indigenous peoples around the world. The struggles of Black Americans at the bottom of a U.S. racial and economic hierarchy closely resemble the stratified positions of Indians elsewhere in the Americas, and many indigenous peoples globally. Historically developed racist systems in the United States have been transformed into the international social struggles of Indigenous Americans.

## REFERENCES

- Associated Press, “Bolivian President-Elect Evo Morales Seeks Blessing in Indian Temple,” Fiona Smith, Associated Press, January 22, 2006.
- Berkey, Curtis G. 1992. “United States–Indian Relations: The Constitutional Basis” in *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution*, edited by Oren Lyons and John Mohawk. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.
- Berkhofer, Robert. 1978. *The White Man’s Indian*. New York: Random House.
- Berman, Howard R. 1992. “Perspectives on American Indian Sovereignty and International Law, 1600 to 1776,” *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution*, editors: Oren Lyons and John Mohawk. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.

- Biolsi, Thomas. 1992. *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. 1996 (translated by Phillip A. Dennis) *Mexico Profundo—Reclaiming a Civilization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Cadwalader, Sandra D. and Vine Deloria (eds.). 1984. *The Aggressions of Civilization: Federal Indian Policy since the 1880's*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Champagne, Duane. 2005. "Rethinking Native Relations with Contemporary Nation-States" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, edited by Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen, and Susan Steiner. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, (2005: 3–23).
- Champagne, Duane. 1992. "Organizational Change and Conflict: A Case Study of the Bureau of Indian Affairs" in *Native Americans and Public Policy*, edited by Lyden and Legters. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Champagne, Duane and Carole Goldberg. 2005. "Changing the Subject: Individual versus Collective Interests in Indian Country Research," *Wicazo SA Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2005: 49–69).
- Cornell, Stephen. 1988. *The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cobo, Jose R. Martínez. 1987. *Estudio del Problema de la Discriminación contra las Poblaciones Indígenas (Vol. V, Conclusiones, Propuestas y Recomendaciones)*. New York: Naciones Unidas.
- Coffey, Wallace and Rebecca Tsosie. 2001. "Rethinking the Tribal Sovereignty Doctrine: Cultural Sovereignty and the Collective Future of Indian Nations," *Stanford Law & Policy Review*, Vol. 12:2 (Spring 2001).
- Deloria, Vine, Jr. 1992. "The Application of the Constitution to the American Indian" in *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution*, edited by Oren Lyons and John Mohawk. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.
- Deloria Jr. Vine and Clifford Lytle. 1984. *The Nations Within, the Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Deloria Jr. Vine and David E. Wilkins. 1999. *Tribes, Treaties, and Constitutional Tribulations*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Dempsey, L. James. 2005. "Status Indian: Who Defines You?" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, edited by Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen, and Susan Steiner. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Diamond, Jared. 1999 [1997]. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (new edition). New York: Norton Publishers.
- Dippie, Brian W. 1982. *The Vanishing American, White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2000. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Preparations*. New York: Routledge.
- Fenelon, James V. 1997. "From Peripheral Domination to Internal Colonialism: Socio-Political Change of the Lakota on Standing Rock," *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 3:2 (Spring, 259–320). [<http://jwsr.ucr.edu/index.php>]
- . 1998. *Culturicide, Resistance, and Survival of the Lakota (Sioux Nation)*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- . 2002. "Dual Sovereignty of Native Nations, the United States & Traditionalists" *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 27:1: 106–145.
- Fenelon, James V. and Dorothy LeBeau. 2006. "Four Directions for Indian Education: Curriculum Models for Lakota/Dakota Teaching & Learning" in *Indigenous and Minority Education*, edited by Duane Champagne and Ismael Abu-Saad. Beer Sheva, Israel: Negev Center for Regional Development.
- Fenelon, James V. and Thomas D. Hall. 2005. "Indigenous Struggles over Autonomy, Land and Community: Anti-Globalization and Resistance in World Systems Analysis." in *Latin@s in the World-System: Towards the Decolonization of the US Empire in the 21st Century*, edited by Ramón Grosfoguel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, and Jose David Saldivar. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press (2005: 107–122).
- Fixico, Donald. 1986. *Termination and Relocation, Federal Indian Policy 1945–1960*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Frederickson, George M. 2002. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fools Crow, Frank. 1986. "To My People from Eagle Bear, Better Known as Chief Frank Fools Crow" in recording *Fools Crow*. Denver: Tatanka Records.
- Hall, Thomas D. and James V. Fenelon. 2004. "The Futures of Indigenous Peoples: 9/11 and the Trajectory of Indigenous Survival and Resistance," *Journal of World Systems Research*, Vol. IX, No. 3.
- Hannaford, Ivan. 1996. *Race: The History of an Idea in the West*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jennings, Francis. 1975. *The Invasion of America—Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Joseph, Alvin. 2002 [1994]. *500 Nations*. New York: Knopf, Gramercy [Random House].
- Lazarus, Edward. 1991. *Black Hills, White Justice. The Sioux Nation versus the United States, 1775 to the Present*. New York: Harper Collins.

- Lyons, Oren R. 1992. "The American Indian in the Past" in *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution*, edited by Oren Lyons and John Mohawk. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.
- Maldonado Alvarado, Benjamin. 2002. *Autonomia y Communalidad India, Enfoques y Propuestas desde Oaxaca. INAH, Secretaria de Asuntos Indigenas*. Oaxaca, Mexico: CEDI.
- Marcos, Sylvia. 2005. "We Come to Ask for Justice, Not Crumbs" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, edited by Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen, and Susan Steiner. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press (97–107).
- Mohawk, John C. 2000. *Utopian Legacies: A History of Conquest and Oppression in the Western World*. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.
- Montague, Ashley. 1997 [1942]. *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Nash, June. 2005. "The Mayan Quest for Pluricultural Autonomy in Mexico and Guatemala" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, edited by Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen, and Susan Steiner. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press (121–142).
- Ortiz, Roxanne Dunbar. 1984. *Indians of the Americas, Human Rights and Self-Determination*. New York: Praeger.
- Pommersheim, Frank. 1995. *Braid of Feathers: American Indian Law and Contemporary Tribal Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prucha, Francis. 1984. *The Great Father, the United States Government and the American Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Ramirez, Gloria Munoz. 2003. *EZLN: 20 y 10, el Fuego y la Palabra*. Mexico City: Revista *Rebelia*.
- Ronda, James P. 1984. *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.
- Shrum, Steven J. 2005. "Border Crossings/Crossing Borders: Native Americans and the Issue of Border Crossing" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, edited by Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen, and Susan Steiner. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press (24–32).
- Sklair, Leslie. 2002. *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smedley, Audrey. 1999. *Race in North America, Origins and Evolution of a Worldview*, (2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Steinmetz, George. 2005. "Return to Empire: The New U.S. Imperialism in Comparative Historical Perspective," *Sociological Theory*, 23:4, December.
- Thornton, Russell. 1987. *American Indian Holocaust and Survival*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. 1984. *The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Wallace, Anthony. 1993. *The Long and Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians*. Philadelphia: Hill and Wang.
- White Hat, Albert et al. 1999. *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language: Lakota Lyapi UN Wowapi Nehan Yawapi*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Wilkins, David E. 1997. *American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Wright, Ronald. 1992. *Stolen Continents, the "New World" through Indian Eyes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Wunder, John R. 1994. "Retained by the People": *A History of American Indians and the Bill of Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Young Bear, Severt and R. D. Theisz. 1994. *Standing in the Light, a Lakota Way of Seeing*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.



## CHAPTER 4

# Unconscious Racism, Social Cognition Theory, and the Legal Intent Doctrine: The Neuron Fires Next Time

DAVID WELLMAN\*

## INTRODUCTION

In certain periods of American history, the law has been an effective weapon for dismantling racial apartheid. Responding to black peoples' demands for racial justice between 1954 and 1971, for example, Congress and the courts righted the wrongs of Jim Crow practices like segregated schools, second-class citizenship, and employment discrimination. In 1954, the Supreme Court decided that the legal doctrine of "separate but equal" was neither and therefore unconstitutional (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and, in 1965, the Voting Rights Act.

When the Supreme Court interpreted Congress's objectives for Title VII of the civil rights statute in 1971 (*Griggs v. Duke Power*), it based the decision on a broad conception of equality of opportunity. "The Act proscribes not only overt discrimination," the Griggs opinion reads, "but also practices that are fair in form, but discriminatory in operation. . . . If an employment practice which operates to exclude Negroes cannot be shown to be related to job performance, the practice is prohibited."<sup>1</sup> Distinguishing between discriminatory impact and discriminatory purpose, the Court ruled that establishing disparate impact alone was adequate to find that Title VII had been violated. The decision was understood by some legal scholars as saying that "unjustified racially disparate effects, standing alone, constituted a violation of

---

DAVID WELLMAN • Department of Community Studies University of California, Santa Cruz

\* I am grateful to Andrew Barlow, Troy Duster, Ian Haney-Lopez, Diana Penney, Stephen Steinberg, and Hernán Vera for insightful suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay.

<sup>1</sup> *Griggs v. Duke Power*, 401 U.S. 431 (1971).

Title VII; intent played no part in a disparate impact claim.”<sup>2</sup> The discriminatory impact standard articulated in *Griggs* had profound implications for African Americans accusing employers of job discrimination. It meant that they did not need to prove the employer *purposefully* discriminated against them. Discrimination could be unintentional.

As the political winds shifted toward the right in the 1970s, the Court narrowed the parameters of discrimination and introduced what came to be known as the “intent doctrine.” In its 1976 *Washington v. Davis* decision, the Court determined that without a finding of “intentional discrimination or purposeful discriminatory acts,” there was no violation of the Equal Protection clause in the Constitution.<sup>3</sup> “. . . [T]he invidious quality of a law claimed to be racially discriminatory,” it ruled, “must ultimately be traced to a racially discriminatory purpose.”<sup>4</sup> The *Davis* rule departed significantly from the *Griggs* approach. While it did not erase the distinction between discriminatory impact and purpose, the Court held that racially neutral laws that led to racially disparate effects would “receive strict scrutiny only on a demonstration of discriminatory intent.”<sup>5</sup> *Washington v. Davis*, write Richardson and Pittinsky, “places the nearly impossible burden of proof and persuasion on those who have experienced the exclusion. . . . [I]t asks the victim to go into the mind of the perpetrator and demonstrate that there exists an unconstitutional motivation.”<sup>6</sup>

Reaffirming this “intent doctrine” 10 years later in *McClesky v. Kemp*, the Court virtually eliminated the disparate impact standard in Equal Protection jurisprudence. Practically speaking, the Court made it impossible to prove that discrimination might be unintentional. Ruling against a prisoner alleging racial disparities in the imposition of the death penalty, the Court found that the death row inmate would have to prove that both Georgia state legislators and members of the jury in his case acted with discriminatory purpose. Reiterating the already high standard for finding an unconstitutional level of intent, the Court raised the bar higher. To prove intent, *McClesky* had to establish that the decision makers in his case selected or reaffirmed their course of action at least in part “because of,” not merely “in spite of,” its discriminatory impact.<sup>7</sup>

This current standard of discrimination, which is required to prove that Equal Protection principles have been unconstitutionally violated, is based on a particular, historically focused set of conceptual lenses. It assumes that personal prejudice, or purposeful malicious intentions, mainly produces racial inequality. Prejudice, in this view, is crude, explicit, obvious, and motivated by individual bias. As the Court adopted the personal bias theory of discrimination, it moved from its pre-civil rights movement insistence that an analysis of motive was inappropriate in constitutional adjudication<sup>8</sup> to a higher standard: the only way to prove discrimination was to demonstrate that the accused consciously intended to exclude

<sup>2</sup> Barbara J. Flagg, “Was Blind, But Now I See: White Race Consciousness and the Requirement of Discriminatory Intent,” *Michigan Law Review*, 91 (1993): 963.

<sup>3</sup> *Washington v. Davis*, 426 U.S. 235 (1976).

<sup>4</sup> *Washington v. Davis*, 426 U.S. 240 (1976).

<sup>5</sup> Flagg, “Was Blind,” *op. cit.*, 962.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Richardson and Todd L. Pittinsky, “The Mistaken Assumption of Intentionality in Equal Protection Law: Psychological Science and the Interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment,” John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, February 2005: 14.

<sup>7</sup> *McClesky v. Kemp*, 481 U.S. 297–298 (1987). For a more detailed discussion of this case, see Richardson and Pittinsky, *op. cit.*, 15–18.

<sup>8</sup> Reva B. Siegel, “Why Equal Protection No Longer Protects: The Evolving Forms of Status-Enforcing State Action,” *Stanford Law Review*, 49 (1997): 1111–1148.

someone based on his or her race. This requirement raised the bar for proof of discrimination and lowered the standard for white innocence. It became virtually impossible to prove that discrimination was being practiced. Thus, instead of being an instrument for dismantling the residue of American apartheid, the Court has become an obstacle to removing racial discrimination from American life. Indeed, one could say the Court now either ignores or tacitly tolerates accumulated racial inequality rather than reducing it, as it did under the *Griggs* standard.

As the Court constructed its theory of personal bias, social scientists moved in the opposite direction. They developed empirical and theoretical research that demonstrated intentional bias was no longer the crucial determinant of racial discrimination. In a major departure from traditional accounts of prejudice, they found that racial discrimination could be unintentional. Psychologists suggested it was the product of hidden, unconscious motives, stereotyping and implicit beliefs rather than invidious intent. Sociological researchers, on the other hand, argued that the persistent inconsistency between values and principles professed by white Americans and their actual practices made their stated intentions irrelevant.<sup>9</sup> The accumulated history of racial exclusion, they pointed out, meant that bias need not be critical to the formation of racial inequality. Rather, taken-for-granted institutional practices, scripts, and deeply rooted cultures were central to the exclusion of racial groups.<sup>10</sup>

Like trains running along parallel tracks, however, the divergent legal and social science understandings of discrimination did not come to a crossroad until the 1980s when Critical Race theorists, legal scholars, and practitioners began to publish articles in law journals citing social science research in order to challenge the Court's intent doctrine.<sup>11</sup> Revisiting and challenging the Court's assumption that discrimination was intentional and expressed through individual bias, they contended that the intent doctrine did not reflect the actual practices of race discrimination in post-civil rights America, especially instances in which racially neutral policies had a disparate impact on racial minorities. The Court, they argued, was using an outdated and discredited understanding of discrimination. It had not kept up with state-of-the-art research in the social sciences.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on intentionality no longer made sense, they argued; it rendered the Court unable to effectively adjudicate allegations of racial discrimination in America after the civil rights movement.

While deeply divided over the meaning of "unconscious," the social science upon which legal theorists based their critique of the intent doctrine shared one essential supposition: racial discrimination could be *unconscious* or *unintentional*. Invidious intent—animus—was the exception, not the rule. Until recently, legal scholars and activists have largely based their challenge to the intent doctrine on psychological and social psychological

---

<sup>9</sup> Howard Schuman, Charlotte Steeh, Lawrence Bobo, and Maria Krysan, *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations, Revised Ed.*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> M.K. Brown, Martin Carnoy, Elliott Currie, Troy Duster, David B. Oppenheimer, Marjorie M. Shultz, and David Wellman, *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. Ian Haney-Lopez, "Institutional Racism: Judicial Conduct and a New Theory of Racial Discrimination," *Yale Law Review*, 190 (2000): 1717–1192.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Alan David Freeman, "Legitimizing Racial Discrimination through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Review of Supreme Court Decisions," *Minnesota Law Review*, 62 (1978); Neil Gotanda, "A Critique of 'Our Constitution Is Color-Blind,'" *Stanford Law Review*, 44 (1991): 1–68; Charles R. Lawrence, III, "The Id, the Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism," 39 *Stanford Law Review* (1987): 317–388.

<sup>12</sup> For a brief, though thorough, account of the evolution of Critical Race Theory, see the "Introduction" to *Critical Race Theory*, Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, eds., New York: New Press, 1995.

theory. Alternatively referred to as “ordinary prejudice,” “implicit bias,”<sup>13</sup> or “cognitive bias,”<sup>14</sup> these theories focus on individual bias, attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice, negative feelings, and in-group preferences. Discrimination, proponents of these theories argue, need not be explicit or conscious; it can be implicit, unknowingly produced by cognitive bias.

However, while they contain the trappings of modern science and make sense intuitively, when one digs beneath the surface it becomes apparent that implicit or cognitive bias theories do not provide an effective critique of the intent doctrine and may actually be counterproductive; an invitation to legal “blowback.”<sup>15</sup> As this essay will demonstrate, they reproduce some of the assumptions that are central to the intent doctrine. For the most part these theories operate, as the Court does, with their own discredited understanding of discrimination. They are consistent with the legal conception they seek to replace. Despite the sounds of science, these accounts rely on a simple and old notion of discrimination. It is as if, paradoxically, the neo-conservative equation of discrimination with individual prejudice has become the standard for challenging the Court’s obsolete grasp of discrimination.

In contrast, the sociological understanding of unconscious racism avoids these conceptual pitfalls and contains a compelling critique of the Court’s outmoded definition of discrimination. Because they operate with different assumptions and an updated understanding of discrimination, sociological theories of institutional and structural discrimination,<sup>16</sup> transparency,<sup>17</sup> coded languages,<sup>18</sup> and accumulated racial privilege<sup>19</sup> provide a far more potent critique of the intent doctrine than social cognition neuroscience. They do a much more convincing job demonstrating that the intent doctrine makes no sense in the present context.

## SOCIAL COGNITION THEORY AND IMPLICIT BIAS: THE NEUROLOGY OF RACISM

Proponents of implicit or cognitive bias theories make a series of claims about the nature of present-day discrimination, which they believe will undermine the assumptions of the Court’s intent doctrine. Their first claim is that current jurisprudential understandings of discrimination

<sup>13</sup> Mahzarin R. Banaji, “Ordinary Prejudices,” *Psychological Science Agenda*, 8 (Jan./Feb. 2001). Gary Blasi, “Advocacy against the Stereotype: Lessons from Cognitive Social Psychology,” *UCLA Law Review*, 49 (2002): 1241–1281. Anthony G. Greenwald, Debbie M. McGhee, and Jordan L. K. Schwartz, “Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74 (1998). Jerry Kang, “Trojan Horses of Race,” *Harvard Law Review*, 118 (2005): 1489–1593.

<sup>14</sup> Linda Krieger, “The Content of Our Categories,” *Stanford Law Review* 47 (1995): 1161–1223.

<sup>15</sup> “The term ‘blowback,’ which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency first invented for their own internal use, is starting to circulate among students of international relations. It refers to the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people.” Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, New York: Henry Holt, 2000: 8.

<sup>16</sup> William Darity, Jr. and Samuel L. Meyers, Jr., *Persistent Disparity: Race and Economic Inequality in the United States since 1945*, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998. Haney-Lopez, “Institutional Racism,” *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Flagg, “Was Blind,” *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Pamela Perry, *Shades of White*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. David Wellman, *Portraits of White Racism, 2nd Ed.*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Brown et al., *op. cit.* Daria Roithmayr, “Locked in Segregation,” University of Illinois College of Law: Law and Economics Working Papers, No. 18 (2004): 1–69; Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro, *Black Wealth/White Wealth*, New York: Routledge, 1997. Dalton Conley, *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth and Social Policy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

were not produced by federal discrimination caselaw. Rather, discrimination jurisprudence today is based on the outdated theory and research of personality and social psychologists that studied discrimination between the 1920s and the 1980s, before the cognitive approach was introduced.<sup>20</sup> Since then a “revolution”<sup>21</sup> has taken place, creating “a vast new intellectual agenda,”<sup>22</sup> which is “jaw dropping” and “eye-opening.”<sup>23</sup>

The second claim is that with the emergence of social cognitive neuroscience, “Researchers . . . have developed techniques for illuminating not only how but *where* in the brain race is processed.”<sup>24</sup> This evolving science, proponents project, will advance the “understanding [of] how race (and other stereotypes) function in the human mind.”<sup>25</sup>

The third claim advanced by advocates of social cognitive neuroscience is that due to the way the brain processes information, discrimination need not be conscious and intentional. Produced by cognitive structures, stereotypes are also unconscious and operate at an implicit level. Thus, the explicit beliefs individuals purport to hold often contradict their implicit attitudes.<sup>26</sup>

In order to function in a complicated world, argue cognitive researchers in their fourth claim, human beings develop strategies to simplify their perceptual environment and consequently act on imperfect information. One of the major ways simplification occurs is through the creation of categories.<sup>27</sup> Thus, they conclude in a remarkable proposition, that in and of themselves, “. . . normal cognitive processes related to categorization might produce and perpetuate intergroup bias.”<sup>28</sup> Stereotyping, adds Linda Krieger, “is nothing special.”<sup>29</sup> It is similar to the categorization of natural objects. Like any other categorical structures, stereotypes “are cognitive mechanisms that *all* people, not just ‘prejudiced’ ones, use to simplify the task of perceiving, processing, and retaining information about people in memory.”<sup>30</sup> In short, stereotypes are central to normal cognitive functioning.

Though stereotypes may be normal, neuroscientists contend in their fifth claim, categorical functioning biases “what we see, how we interpret it, how we encode and store it in memory.”<sup>31</sup> These biases in turn can lead to discrimination and “predictable types of

<sup>20</sup> Krieger, “The Content of Our Categories,” *op. cit.*, 1174–1185.

<sup>21</sup> Kang, “Trojan Horses,” *op. cit.*, 1493.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1494.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1497.

<sup>24</sup> Blasi, *op. cit.*, 1243, emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 1245.

<sup>26</sup> John F. Dovidio, Samuel Gaertner, and Kerry Kamakami, “Implicit and Explicit Prejudice and Interracial Interaction,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82 (2002). Anthony Greenwald and Mahzarin R. Banaji, “Implicit Social Cognition: Attitudes, Self-Esteem, and Stereotypes,” *Psychological Review* 102 (1995): 8.

<sup>27</sup> Eleanor Rosch, “Human Categorization,” in *Studies in Cross-Cultural Psychology* 1 (Neil Warren, ed., 1977): 1–2. Krieger, “Content,” *op. cit.*, 1189.

<sup>28</sup> Krieger, “Content,” *op. cit.*, 1187. See also David L. Hamilton and Tina K. Troler, “Stereotypes and Stereotyping: An Overview of the Cognitive Approach,” in *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism: Historical Trends and Contemporary Approaches*, Dovidio and Gaertner, eds., 1986.

<sup>29</sup> Krieger, “Content,” *op. cit.*, 1188. See also W. Edgar Vinacke, “Stereotypes as Social Concepts,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, 45 (1957); Joshua A. Fishman, “An Examination of the Process and Function of Social Stereotyping,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, 43 (1956): 45–52.

<sup>30</sup> Krieger, “Content,” *op. cit.*, 1188, emphasis in original. See also Blasi, *op. cit.*, 1254.

<sup>31</sup> Krieger, “Content,” *op. cit.*, 1190. See also David L. Hamilton, “Cognitive Representations of Persons,” in *Social Cognition: The Ontario Symposium* (E. Tory Higgins, C. Peter Herman, and Mark P. Zanna, eds., (1981): 149–156.

error in social judgment.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, the very organization of human cognition “predisposes us to stereotyping.”<sup>33</sup>

Finally, discounting human agency, advocates of neuroscience claim that biases are fixed. “Once behavior has been interpreted and encoded into memory,” writes Krieger, “its meaning is in a sense ‘fixed.’”<sup>34</sup> These dispositional judgments are not only fixed; they are automatically and unconsciously encoded.<sup>35</sup> Information and knowledge about groups, in Banaji’s view, are “automatically activated.”<sup>36</sup> In sum, the bias associated with categorical structures is “a natural, automatic, and inevitable aspect of imperfect learning about the individual members of overlapping groups.”<sup>37</sup>

These claims can be boiled down to seven assumptions about discrimination.

1. It is located in the individual; more specifically, in the brain.
2. It is produced by bias and stereotyping.
3. It operates independently of context.
4. It is natural, central to normal cognitive functioning.
5. It is based on errors in social judgment.
6. It is implicit or unconscious.
7. It is fixed, inevitable, automatic.

### TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

The implicit/cognitive bias critique of recent discrimination jurisprudence contains important insights. The law does lag behind new knowledge produced by social psychologists and sociologists. The Court’s understanding of social perception is wrong. Like most white Americans, cognitive neuroscientists accurately observe, the Court’s theory of discrimination is outdated. Proponents of cognitive neuroscience are also correct to point out that intentional bias is no longer the primary cause of racial discrimination and the intent doctrine is either ineffective or an obstacle to dismantling racial inequality in post–civil rights America. Finally, they are right to note that legal disparate treatment theory is based on unsound assumptions; that the Court’s articulation of discrimination in contemporary Equal Protection cases is invalid. However, these critical insights notwithstanding, implicit and cognitive bias research is not an effective tool for *dismantling* the intent doctrine and *replacing* it with a jurisprudence that accurately represents modern discrimination.

To begin with, instead of challenging the intent doctrine’s basic premise, theories of implicit and cognitive bias leave in place the focus on biased individuals. Thus, the conception

---

<sup>32</sup> Krieger, “Content,” *op. cit.*, 1200.

<sup>33</sup> Krieger, *Ibid.*, 1198. See also David L. Hamilton and Terrene L. Rose, “Illusory Correlation and the Maintenance of Stereotypic Beliefs,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39 (1980).

<sup>34</sup> Krieger, 1203. See also Lee Ross, Mark R. Lepper, Fritz Strack, and Julia Steinmetz, “Social Explanation and Social Expectation: Effects of Real and Hypothetical Explanations on Subjective Likelihood,” 35 *J. Personality & Soc. Psychol.* (1977): 827–828.

<sup>35</sup> Krieger, 1214, emphasis added. See also Laraine Winter and James S. Uleman, “When Are Social Judgments Made? Evidence for the Spontaneousness of Trait Inferences,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47 (1984); Kang, *op. cit.*, 1504.

<sup>36</sup> Mahzarin R. Banaji, “Ordinary Prejudices,” *op. cit.*, (2001). See also Margaret Richardson and Todd L. Pittinsky, *op. cit.*, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Donald T. Campbell, “Enhancement of Contrast as Composite Habit,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 53 (1956).

of discrimination is outmoded, narrow, and discredited. Like the theory they purport to replace, advocates of cognitive neuroscience locate the sources of discrimination in the minds (brains) of individual actors. Discrimination, in their view, is attributed to individual preferences.<sup>38</sup> This account, however, does not disturb the Court's assumption that individual bias is a major source of discrimination. Indeed, the cognitive neuroscience account reaffirms the presumption that discrimination is caused by bias. Instead of challenging this, the claim is that, for reasons over which individuals have no control, they do not *intend* to be biased; their biases are either implicit or unconscious. But they remain biased.

In fact, the Implicit Association Test (IAT) actually reaffirms this assumption. Scholars responsible for this measure persuasively argue it can show whites that report they harbor no prejudice actually have a preference for whites.<sup>39</sup> But even if one assumes these findings are valid, they do not disrupt the Court's focus on individual bias. Rather, they establish the disconnect between professed and implicit beliefs, which is to say biased individuals are not conscious of their real sentiments. This focus on consciousness sidesteps the fundamental assumption underlying the intent doctrine: namely, that discriminatory behavior is intentional. Rather than engage or challenge the issue of intentionality, the theory of implicit bias indicates that individuals can be biased without knowing it.

Using the Implicit Association Test (IAT), researchers may quantify unconscious attitudes;<sup>40</sup> they may also determine the relative strength of attitudes held by an individual about a particular group.<sup>41</sup> By measuring how quickly white faces are evaluated positively and African American faces negatively, they may even demonstrate group "preferences."<sup>42</sup> But proving that racial preferences are unconscious leaves undisturbed the Court's understanding that discrimination is caused by bias. While the IAT may find that bias is unconscious, it remains bias.

Finally, the cognitive critique of current jurisprudence may have been subverted by the Court's ability to accommodate or co-opt the theory. Referring to disparate treatment cases in which cognitive bias is recognized by the court, Professor Martha Chamallas writes that "Such action can plausibly be labeled 'intentional,' because in such cases the decisionmaker acts deliberately rather than accidentally and the decisionmaking process is infected by race and gender bias."<sup>43</sup> Thus, even if cognitive bias can be established, the Court may define it as "intentional" because the decision is made deliberately. This would leave the fundamental issue of intentionality in place, allowing cognitive bias theory to win the battle of recognition only to lose the war against the intent doctrine.

The very narrow notion of intent with which proponents of cognitive bias theory operate also limits the effectiveness of their research as tools for dismantling the intent doctrine. Instead of contesting the Court's constricted construction of intent as purpose, these researchers adopt it and work with the restricted definition. However, while current equal protection law requires that plaintiffs always prove specific "purpose" to win, Professor Pamela Karlan argues that "Several analytically distinct levels of intent can satisfy the mens rea

---

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Margaret Richardson and Todd L. Pittinsky, *op. cit.*, 28; Banaji, "Ordinary Prejudices," *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Mahzarin R. Banaji, William Cunningham, and Kristopher J. Preachers, "Implicit Attitude Measures: Consistency, Stability, and Convergent Validity," *Psychological Science* 12 (2001): 163.

<sup>40</sup> Allen R. McConnell and Jill M. Liebold, "Relations between the Implicit Association Test, Discriminatory Behavior and Explicit Measures of Racial Attitudes," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 37 (2001): 435.

<sup>41</sup> Banaji, Cunningham, and Preacher, *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Martha Chamallas, "Deepening the Legal Understanding of Bias: On Devaluation and Biased Prototypes," *Southern California Law Review* 74 (March 2001): 754.

requirement.” In her judgment, the Model Penal Code recognizes four: “purpose; knowledge; recklessness; and negligence.”<sup>44</sup> Karlan’s proposal to expand the definition of “discriminatory intent” to include knowledge, recklessness, and negligence would, she states, “better serve the Constitution’s twin goals of condemning socially offensive attitudes and protecting legitimate activity.”<sup>45</sup> It would also make a considerable dent in the current intent doctrine.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle preventing implicit and cognitive bias research from being an effective tool for dismantling the intent doctrine is that, like the jurisprudence it putatively challenges, this research is based on an outmoded understanding of modern workplace discrimination. Stated simply, like the Court, this research operates with a faulty notion of current workplace discrimination. Once hierarchical and bureaucratic, job boundaries in today’s workplace are now blurred; work is allocated on a team basis, and methods of evaluation are more skill-based, individualistic, and flexible.<sup>46</sup> As the workplace mutates, so does the nature of discrimination. Tristin Green’s assessment is that “discrimination in today’s workplace may frequently hinder opportunity and development without resulting in an identifiable decision to exclude, such as denial of promotion within a single institutional hierarchy.”<sup>47</sup> Decisions made by individuals today, Green adds, “are made only in the context of the opportunities and limitations posed by the overall structure and practices of the organizations in which they work.”<sup>48</sup> Since cognitive bias research relies on a narrow, individualistic conception of discrimination and assumes the structure of work is hierarchical and bureaucratic, it cannot provide a “meaningful examination of the ways in which the (modern) employer’s organizational systems and structures may have enabled the operation of discriminatory bias to the detriment of women and minorities.”<sup>49</sup>

When workplace discrimination moves from individual decisionmaking to organizational systems and structures, cognitive bias theory is seriously undermined as a challenge to the intent doctrine. Specifically addressing Linda Krieger’s approach, Green writes that

[I]t is doubtful that a reformulation of disparate treatment theory to focus on causation, standing alone, is sufficient to address discrimination in the modern workplace. Such a reformulation simply fails to provide a conceptual foundation for addressing the role that organization structure and institutional practices play in enabling discriminatory bias and perpetuating inequity in the modern workplace.<sup>50</sup>

Green not only faults cognitive bias theory for being an insufficient approach to present-day employment discrimination but also suggests that it can be counterproductive. In Professor Green’s view, the approach “tends to reinforce a conception of discrimination as largely individualistic, as something that derives from individuals in isolation rather than from individuals in the context of organizational structure, dynamics and group interaction.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Pamela S. Karlan, “Discriminatory Purpose and Mens Rea: The Tortured Argument of Invidious Intent,” *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 93, No. 1 (Nov. 1983): 121.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>46</sup> For a general discussion of changes in the workplace, see Tristin Green, “Discrimination in Workplace Dynamics: Toward a Structural Account of Disparate Treatment Theory,” *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 91 (Winter 2003). For a specific account of radical change on the San Francisco waterfront docks, see David Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong*, Chapters 7–9.

<sup>47</sup> Green, *op. cit.*, 100.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*



Referring to the decision in *Thomas v. Eastman Kodak Co.*, Green points to another limitation of cognitive bias theory. In this case, the Court did what proponents of cognitive bias theory propose: it “framed the legal issue in terms of causation rather than conscious motivation.” However, because it also embraced the individualistic conception of discrimination contained in cognitive bias theory, the litigants as well as the Court framed the issue in terms of the defendant’s state of mind. In Green’s estimation, this foreclosed “consideration of Kodak’s institutional role in facilitating discriminatory bias or its efforts to identify, prevent, or redress subtle forms of exclusion and bias.”<sup>52</sup> In other words, the theory of cognitive bias is not just ineffective in a modern context. Under certain conditions, the framework actually *forecloses* consideration of subtle exclusion in the contemporary work situation.

### **ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK: CONCEPTUAL/LEGAL BLOWBACK**

Implicit and cognitive bias critiques of the intent doctrine are not simply too little, too late. Nor is the major deficiency of these theories a narrow, outdated conception of intent, discrimination, and individual bias. These theories are conceptually flawed. They are not only ineffective, but, in some instances, the assumptions on which they rest may lead to more harm than good. The cure for the intent doctrine proposed by implicit and cognitive bias theory may well be worse than the disease.

#### **The Social Location of Perspective: The Implicit Bias in Cognitive Bias**

Perspective is never free-floating or neutral. There is no such thing—to use Thomas Nagel’s appropriate phrase—as a “view from nowhere.”<sup>53</sup> Americans’ perspectives on race mirror their experience on one side of the color line or the other. In the American jurisprudence of equality, for at least the last 25 years, the Supreme Court has adopted what Allan Freeman calls a “perpetrator perspective” on racial issues.<sup>54</sup> This perspective looks at issues involving race from the vantagepoint of white Americans. It is preoccupied with the guilt or innocence of whites and sees intent as an essential element of racial harm. That view, Barbara Flagg writes, “reflects a distinctively white way of thinking about race.”<sup>55</sup>

Flagg’s insight echoes one heard almost 60 years ago. At that time, describing an American “rank order of discriminations,” the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal observed that white and black Americans did not share the same rank order of emotional investment in racial issues.<sup>56</sup> He found distinctively white and black ways of thinking about issues associated with race. White Americans were most concerned about intermarriage and personal relations and least interested in official discrimination and its impact on earning a living.

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 130–131.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

<sup>54</sup> Freeman, *op. cit.*

<sup>55</sup> Flagg, “Was Blind,” *op. cit.*, 963.

<sup>56</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy*, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944: 60–67.

The order was reversed among blacks, for whom economic discrimination was their first order of concern and personal relations last.

Myrdal's recognition of the distinctively different ways in which white and black Americans think about issues of race has been duplicated repeatedly by sociological research. Exploring the experiences of college students on a recently diversified campus, Duster et al.<sup>57</sup> reproduced Myrdal's rank order of discrimination. They found that the most salient issue for white students was the ways in which they had been personally treated by students of color and the least important was the institutional expressions of racial inequality in the curriculum and the small number of faculty of color. Just as Myrdal had found nearly 50 years earlier, a the order was reversed for students of color. These discrepancies were duplicated in a 2001 poll published by *The Washington Post*.<sup>58</sup> While 50 percent of whites thought America had achieved racial equality in access to health care, and 44 percent thought African Americans had jobs about the same as those of whites, almost three-quarters of African Americans thought they had fewer opportunities for jobs and health care than whites.

Clearly there is more than one perspective on issues associated with race in America. Barbara Flagg states the difference concisely:

[W]hite people tend to view intent as an essential element of racial harm; nonwhites do not. . . . The white perspective can be, and frequently is, expressed succinctly and without any apparent perceived need for justification. . . . For black people, however, the fact of racial oppression exists largely independent of the motives or intentions of its perpetrators.<sup>59</sup>

Ignoring the issue of multiple, socially located, perspectives, implicit and cognitive bias theories focus on a single racial standpoint. Flagg summarizes the content of this viewpoint well: "Studies of the impact of race on white decisionmaking," she argues, "nearly always explain disparate race effects by focusing on negative assessments of, or undesirable outcomes for, nonwhites, rather than positive results for whites. That is, they adopt a conceptual framework in which unconscious race discrimination tends to be associated with bias or stereotyping rather than transparency."<sup>60</sup> In other words, cognitive and implicit bias theory unwittingly adopts and reproduces the white perspective, the perpetrator's point of view on race.

A number of serious consequences follow from this perspective. For reasons never explained, it privileges one standpoint to the exclusion of others. More importantly, it *normalizes* that perspective. Given that implicit bias theory interprets intergroup bias as being normal, produced and perpetuated by cognitive processes related to categorization that *all* people use to simplify information processing; and given that the theory does not recognize multiple perspectives, "normal" becomes associated with the white perspective. This, then, reinforces and naturalizes the white perspective upon which the current intent doctrine is already based.

Reducing bias to normal cognitive functioning also makes it impossible to account for multiple, changing, and contested ways of seeing. That is because cognitive bias theory ignores one of the first principles of the sociology of knowledge. Namely, that what individuals see, and the meaning they make of these images, is determined by their social position.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Troy Duster et al., *The Diversity Project*, UC Berkeley: The Institute for the Study of Social Change, 1992. For the same finding in a different context, see David Wellman and Howard Pinderhughes, "Epilogue: From Bensonhurst to Berkeley," in Wellman, *op. cit.*, 1993.

<sup>58</sup> "Washington Post/Kaiser Foundation/Harvard University Racial Attitudes Survey," *The Washington Post*, July 11, 2001.

<sup>59</sup> Flagg, "Was Blind," *op. cit.*, 968-969.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 983.

<sup>61</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936.

People interpret what they see differently because they operate with different perspectives, histories, and orientations. Moreover, because cognitive bias theory fixes meaning making in the brain, it is unable to explain changes in the ways people see and interpret their world. This obviously limits its usefulness for challenging existing discrimination jurisprudence.

### **Automaticity: It's Neurology, Stupid!**

Perhaps the most compelling argument leveled against the intent doctrine by proponents of cognitive and implicit bias theory is that cognitive biases “operate automatically.”<sup>62</sup> Normal cognitive functioning associated with categorization that simplifies information processing—stereotyping—is not only unconscious, but also it is automatic as well. Because stereotyping operates automatically—“*without conscious intention and outside of our awareness*”<sup>63</sup>—the intent doctrine cannot be applied to decisions in which cognitive biases are functioning. In these circumstances, the intent doctrine makes little sense because intentionality plays no part in the decisionmaking. As Richardson and Pittinsky conclude, “These findings directly undermine the assumptions of Equal Protection jurisprudence that discrimination and prejudice are assumed absent unless definitively proven to have motivated actions of the parties in question.”<sup>64</sup>

The concept of automaticity is a regular feature in the discourse of cognitive bias. Some examples: Donald Campbell writes that cognitive biases are “a natural, automatic, and inevitable aspect of imperfect learning about the individual members of overlapping groups.”<sup>65</sup> Concurring, Linda Krieger adds, “intergroup discrimination, in both evaluation and reward allocation, appears to result almost automatically from the categorization of people into groups.”<sup>66</sup> Commenting on how people observe behavior, she suggests, “we automatically and unconsciously encode dispositional judgments about the actor.”<sup>67</sup> Like stereotypes, contends Jerry Kang, “schemas automatically, efficiently, and adaptively parse the raw data pushed into our senses.”<sup>68</sup> Citing Greenwald, he reiterates, “. . . schematic thinking operates automatically, nearly instantaneously.”<sup>69</sup>

When advocates of cognitive bias theory use the language of automaticity, they are not being metaphorical. The theory is rooted in a neurological understanding of bias. Gary Blasi is therefore not engaged in overstated hyperbole when he writes, “researchers have developed techniques for illuminating not only how but where in the brain race is processed.” The statement you just read is not misquoted. Based on a newly emerging field known as social cognitive neuroscience, theories of implicit and cognitive bias locate the sources of bias in the brain.

“The basic premise behind social cognitive neuroscience,” writes Beth Azar, “is to infuse social psychology with brain science methodology in the hopes of deciphering how the brain

<sup>62</sup> Krieger, *op. cit.*, 1216, emphasis added. For additional evidence that cognitive biases operate automatically, see John A. Barth, “Conditional Automaticity: Varieties of Automatic Influence in Social Perception and Cognition,” in James S. Uleman and John A. Bargh, eds., *Unintended Thought*, 1989: 155.

<sup>63</sup> Kang, *op. cit.*, 1506; emphasis in original.

<sup>64</sup> Richardson and Pittinsky, *op. cit.*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, 355, emphasis added.

<sup>66</sup> Krieger, *op. cit.*, 1193.

<sup>67</sup> Krieger, *op. cit.*, 1214.

<sup>68</sup> Kang, *op. cit.*, 1504, emphasis added.

<sup>69</sup> Kang, *op. cit.*, 1499, emphasis added.

controls such cognitive processes as memory and attention, which then influence social behaviors such as stereotyping, emotions, attitudes and self-control.”<sup>70</sup> Neuroscientists use molecular biology and autonomic, neuroendocrine, and immune responses to study attitudes, prejudice, social conflict, and even “connectedness.” This research is considered cutting-edge because it uses brain-imaging technology—functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in particular—to look at brain function. The technology enables researchers to piece together “the neural pathways and mechanisms responsible for social phenomena.” Using fMRI to focus on the amygdala—a small area deep inside the brain—several teams of social psychologists and neuroscientists have begun piecing together a possible neural pathway that might lead to stereotyping. The amygdala was chosen, according to Azar, “because neuroscientists had already found that one of its primary functions is to signal the presence of emotionally important stimuli.” These researchers have since discovered that the amygdala considers people of different races “emotionally important.” They find that it is especially active at the sight of any unfamiliar face. Once the faces have been seen a time or two, the amygdala stops emphasizing faces of people the same race and, in Azar’s account, “only fires more at the sight of different race faces.” The possible neural pathway leading to stereotyping evolved with the researcher’s major finding that “the amygdala in African-American participants is more active when they look at white faces, and in whites it’s more active when they look at blacks.” Like many proponents of neuroscience, Azar is optimistic about the research. If we can understand the origin of stereotypes, she concludes, “it might some day help us ‘get a grip’ on problems such as racism.”<sup>71</sup>

Because implicit and cognitive bias theories are packaged in neuroscience, they represent an effective challenge to the intent doctrine. The sounds of science together with the high technology of fMRI and the language of neural pathways have the potential to capture the Court’s attention and possibly persuade it that the intent doctrine is a relic of past, outdated, unscientific social psychology and therefore needs to be replaced. But at what price? What are the political-legal consequences of (re)locating discrimination in the brain? Might this legal “victory” produce devastating blowback? Ironically, the strength of cognitive bias theory is also one of its greatest drawbacks.

If bias is ultimately a function of biology and neurology, human actors do not control it. Consequently, they cannot be held accountable for discriminatory behavior. The human actor in this account is a medium through which the normal cognitive processes of categorization are played out. They are passive recipients of raw data, which the brain then processes into categories that automatically bias what they see and how they act. While this may convince the Court to dismantle the intent doctrine, it comes, like a new car, with multiple “extras.”

For starters, the neuro-biological account is double-edged. Just as it can invalidate the intent doctrine, it might also provide the grounds for an effective defense against allegations of discrimination:

Yes, your honor, I did discriminate. But I didn’t intend to. My behavior was the result of implicit and cognitive bias, which automatically produced the discrimination. And as recent social cognitive neuroscience has documented, my amygdala was activated by emotionally important stimuli, which created a neural pathway to stereotyping.

<sup>70</sup> Beth Azar, *Monitor on Psychology*, Vol. 33, no. 1 (Jan. 2002), <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan02/frontier.html>.

<sup>71</sup> For additional material on Social Cognitive Neuroscience, see Alana Connor Snibbe, “Social Cognitive Neuroscience Goes Hollywood,” *The Observer* (published by the American Psychological Society), Vol.14, no. 8 (Jan. 2001); Matthew D. Lieberman, “The Neural Bases of Automaticity and Control in Social Inference Processes,” Social Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory (UCLA), <http://www.scn.ucla.edu/>.

The very thin and mechanical social psychology upon which neuroscience is built also produces as many problems as it solves. There are no human actors in the theory who identify, interpret, make sense of their world, and then act on it. There are no humanly constructed social meanings in this neurologically grounded account. “Individuals are the transducers of cultural experience—,” writes Mahzarin Banaji, “they provide the physical, social and psychological *shell* through which culture speaks.”<sup>72</sup> Because human agency plays no part in this automatic understanding of discrimination, and because there is no recognition of interactive/interpretive processes within and between human beings, implicit and cognitive biases are ultimately inevitable. It is almost as if stereotypes and bias are hardwired in the human brain. Thus, there is no space for intervention or change, except for undefined, Orwellian notions like “mental correction” or “careful process re-engineering.”<sup>73</sup> And if biases are inevitable, part of normal cognitive functioning, it is not possible to legislate or litigate an end to discrimination. Like implicit bias, racism is inescapable.

Nor is it possible to distinguish between unintentional and *intentional* discrimination. If bias is normal, a function of biology and neurology, how does one differentiate between biases that are unintentional and intentional, or cognitive and non-cognitive? Where does one end and the other begin? More importantly, if one cannot distinguish between unintentional and intentional bias, the theory is not falsifiable. How would one refute the theory of unintentional bias? And if it cannot be falsified, how would one establish the scientific status of the theory? As the philosopher Karl Popper wrote years ago, “A theory that is not refutable by any conceivable event, is non-scientific.”<sup>74</sup>

Were the Court to be persuaded that biases operate automatically and unconsciously, another equally serious blowback problem would be produced. Like a tightly woven fishing net, cognitive bias theory catches all bias, unintentional and intentional, which ironically makes it impossible to identify *intentional* discrimination, which, though illegal, is still practiced.<sup>75</sup> If the Court is sold on the proposition that bias is automatic and therefore unintentional, however, intentional discrimination will become invisible. And it will not be possible to detect an increasingly prevalent version of modern subtle racism: instances in which actors *intend* to discriminate but have developed linguistic strategies for hiding their intentions.<sup>76</sup> If proponents of cognitive bias theory successfully convince the Court that bias is produced neurologically and unconsciously, the victory will be hollow. They will have unwittingly closed off the possibility for victims of intentional discrimination to have their day in court.

<sup>72</sup> M.R. Banaji, “Implicit Attitudes Can Be Measured,” in H.L. Roediger III, J.S. Naime, I. Neath, and A. Surprenant (eds.), *The Nature of Remembering: Essays in Honor of Robert G. Crowder*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001: 141. Emphasis added.

<sup>73</sup> Krieger, *op. cit.*, 1216.

<sup>74</sup> Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York: Routledge, 2002.

<sup>75</sup> For example, see Michael K. Brown et al., *op. cit.*, 2003; Jerome Culp and Bruce H. Dunson, “Brothers of a Different Color: A Preliminary Look at Employer Treatment of White and Black Youth,” in R.B. Freeman and Harry J. Holzer (eds.), *The Black Youth Unemployment Crisis*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986: 233–260; R. J. Struyk, A. Turner, and M. Fix, *Opportunities Denied, Opportunities Diminished: Discrimination in Housing*, The Urban Institute, Research Paper Sales Office, P.O. Box 7273, Dept. C, Washington, DC 20044; Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993; Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003; Wellman, *op. cit.*, 1993; Frankenberg, *op. cit.*

An equally fundamental flaw in social cognition neuroscience is that, because it locates the sources of discrimination in normal neurological functioning, it *naturalizes* racism. Persistent, durable racial inequality becomes part of the natural order of things. The humanly constructed nature of inequality is completely ignored. Race is raw data processed in the brain, not a relationship between groups. The theory of cognitive bias reduces historically produced configurations of power, exclusion, and privilege to normal neurological brain activity. It takes political issues associated with structure, domination, and advantage off the legal agenda and replaces them with a theory based on neurons.

The political-legal consequences are serious. When applied to race, social cognition neuroscience joins an emerging framework among social and physical scientists that elevates what Troy Duster calls “inside the body explanations” to “science,” while devaluing “outside the body explanations” as “ideology.”<sup>77</sup> Inside the body discourses privilege genetic, medical, and neurological accounts of issues that traditionally have been explained by social, economic, and political variables. Genetic explanations for ethnically variable diseases are one example;<sup>78</sup> medical diagnoses of racism are another.<sup>79</sup> When society’s problems are located inside the body, two developments follow: the explanations for them are lifted to scientific status, and they are transformed from social into individual troubles, rendering solutions private, not public.

Because the neurological framework views cognitive bias as normal brain activity, discrimination is inevitable, unavoidable. Thus, cognitive neuroscience is not able to propose the kinds of social change necessary to replace the intent doctrine. Rather, neuroscience reinforces conservative American ideology, which sees racism as a problem that individuals have. Since it disregards the organization of racial privilege, focusing instead on neurons, this framework is conceptually unable to engage the organization of advantage that critics of the intent doctrine seek to dismantle.

## The Meaning of Context

Neuroscientists may have discovered that one of the primary functions of the amygdala is to signal the presence of “emotionally important” stimuli. But brain imaging sheds no light on the specific *substantive meaning* of the emotional importance. The production and exchange of meanings are produced by culture, not neurology. “Things ‘in themselves’ rarely, if ever, have any one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning,” observes Stuart Hall.<sup>80</sup> Events are given meaning by the “frameworks of interpretation” that people bring to them.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, to know the meaning of emotional importance, one needs to know the context within which it is constructed. The concept of “emotionally important” cannot be understood by examining neurons; it is a historically produced, culturally shaped language for describing

<sup>77</sup> Troy Duster, “Comparative Perspectives and Competing Explanations: Taking on the Newly Configured Reductionist Challenge to Sociology,” *American Sociological Review* 71 (Feb. 2006): 1–15.

<sup>78</sup> Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics*, New York: Routledge, 1990.

<sup>79</sup> David Wellman, “From Evil to Illness: Medicalizing Racism,” *Journal of American Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 70, no. 1 (2000): 28–32.

<sup>80</sup> *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall, ed., London: Sage Publications, 1997: 2.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

a particular set of stimuli. It is unlikely that what is emotionally important in one culture, or one period of history, will be in another. In a racially homogeneous society, race might not be an emotionally important category. Indeed, it may well be taken for granted, invisible. The same stimuli in one context may not signal emotional importance in another. Thus, the meaning of “emotional importance” cannot be found in the amygdala; it is located historically in a specific context, which neuroscience is unable to decode.

The same can be said for concepts like “unfamiliar faces,” or “different race faces.” “Unfamiliar” and “different” are historical-cultural constructions. A different race face may be “familiar” in one context and “unfamiliar” in another. Absent a grasp of context, one does not know what “familiar” means. Thus, neuroscience may be able to locate where in the brain stereotypes are constructed and the conditions under which they emerge, but without understanding what stereotypes *mean*, it is difficult to see how that finding helps dismantle the intent doctrine. Social cognition neuroscience can tell us where stereotypes are formed, but it cannot tell us what meaning they have for the people using them. And without knowing what stereotypes mean, it is hard to see how they might, as Beth Azar claims, “help us ‘get a grip’ on problems such as racism.”

### THE CHANGED CONTEXT OF RACISM

Perhaps the most serious conceptual limitation of cognitive neuroscience is that because it reduces discrimination to individual bias, stereotyping, and neurological functioning, it does not recognize the key features of post–civil rights movement discrimination, which provide compelling arguments for dismantling the intent doctrine. Despite deeply rooted changes in the nature of post–civil rights discrimination—changes that radically alter the context of modern racism—proponents of implicit and cognitive bias operate with completely outdated assumptions, which are more appropriate for pre–civil rights America than the present. While they diligently test for implicit bias and use fMRI to light up the amygdala, looking for a possible neural pathway to stereotyping, cognitive neuroscientists have been bypassed by a changed racial context, one that cannot be understood by brain functions or automatic group preferences. Oblivious to the new context and committed to an individual neurological framework, one that doggedly focuses on bias and stereotypes, proponents of this paradigm reproduce the intent doctrine’s antiquated assumptions rather than dismantling and replacing them.

Racism in post–civil rights America bears little resemblance to the system that preceded it. As noted earlier, the civil rights movement substantially reconfigured the face of racial inequality in America. No longer expressed through bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and hostility, modern racial subordination takes the form of unequal loan policies and health care, residential segregation, variation in criminal sentencing, disparate administration of the death penalty, and, despite civil rights legislation, intractable, persistent racial inequality.<sup>82</sup> The following essential features of discrimination in post–civil rights movement America both limit cognitive neuroscience’s effectiveness as a critique of *and* represent powerful challenges to the intent doctrine.

---

<sup>82</sup> See Brown et al., *op. cit.*, 56.

## The Persistence of Unmotivated Racial Disparities

The biased or stereotyped attitudes and intentions of individual white Americans, which cognitive neuroscience focuses on, no longer produce the most intractable cases of modern racial inequality.<sup>83</sup> A dramatic example is the well-documented disparities between blacks and whites in access to health care and in treatment of serious diseases. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) recently reported that cancer death rates are increasing much faster for blacks than whites, sometimes by as much as 20 to 100 times. Although the incidence of breast cancer is lower among black women, they are more likely to die of the disease than white women. Moreover, according to the NCI Director, “Black men have a cancer-death rate about 44 percent higher than that for white men.”<sup>84</sup> These discrepancies result from differential access to screening, prevention, and treatment. Although many African Americans lack access to adequate health care, these disparities persist when access is equal, as it is for Medicare recipients, or when income is controlled. In other words, while race is the major explanation for these differences in treatment, prejudice or intentional discrimination is not responsible. The case of health care, which is duplicated in numerous institutions, is particularly worth pondering precisely because it is difficult to isolate discrimination by individual health care providers as the cause of these disparities.

## Persistent Imbalances in Wealth Distribution

Discrimination in post-civil rights America is rarely manifested in biases or stereotypes. It is now more likely to be expressed in increasing discrepancies of large magnitudes extending over long periods. Rather than being produced by judgment errors or biased ways of processing information, racial inequalities today are more likely to be generated and sustained by advantaged groups over time rather than stereotypes biasing what individuals see. For example, despite the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s, white families have amassed substantially more wealth than African Americans. White median net worth is 10 times that of blacks. Virtually all whites, even those at the bottom of the income distribution, have a higher net worth than African Americans. In 2000, for example, the median net worth of white families in the bottom income quintile was \$24,000. The median net worth of African American families in that income bracket was 57 dollars (sic)! Because it has no understanding of the historical, cumulative sources of discrimination, social cognition neuroscience cannot provide an understanding for these discrepancies. Discrepancies of this size cannot be explained by individual implicit or cognitive bias. Something else is going on.

## The Limited Relevance of Intention for Gross Social Inequities

Discrimination in the modern context is subtle and difficult to detect. Were one to focus on individuals' implicit bias, they would miss the nearly invisible dynamics that operate like a web that

---

<sup>83</sup> The following two paragraphs are largely based on Michael K. Brown and David Wellman, “Embedding the Color Line: The Accumulation of Racial Advantage and the Disaccumulation of Opportunity in Post Civil Rights America,” *The DuBois Review*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (2005): 1–21.

<sup>84</sup> Marian E. Gornick, Paul W. Eggers, and Gerald F. Riley, “Understanding Disparities in the Use of Medicare Services,” *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics* 1 (2001): 135. Lorna Scott McBarnette, “African American Women,” in Marcia Bayne-Smith, ed., *Race, Gender and Health*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996: 51–52. Sally Squires, “Cancer Death Rate Higher for Blacks,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (Jan. 17, 1990): A5.



holds African Americans in place and reproduces racial inequality. Consider the following: beginning in the 1980s, black unemployment increased relative to that of whites and the wage gains of the 1970s were eroded. This was especially true for college-educated black workers, whose median wages dropped from 80 percent of white wages to 72 percent and who were three times as likely to be unemployed as college-educated white workers. Many low-income black workers lost the blue-collar jobs they acquired in the 1970s and moved into low-paying service-sector jobs. Low-income white workers were similarly affected, but they were more likely to land in better-paying white-collar jobs. The proportion of black and Latino workers in low-paying jobs increased dramatically, while the proportion in high-paying jobs dropped. Shifting institutional needs, racial cartels, and group monopolies generated labor market discrimination. It is not produced by implicit bias. Cognitive neuroscience therefore cannot explain these discrepancies because it has no theory of racial labor market discrimination.

### Color-Blindness and Coded Languages

The new ways in which white Americans talk and think about race are one of the most dramatic changes to follow the civil rights era. Unlike the past, an explicit racial vocabulary is rarely used to justify decisions in which race plays a part. The crude racial prejudice of the Jim Crow era has been discredited and replaced by a new understanding of race and racial inequality. It is the ideology of color-blindness.

This new view of race began with a backlash to the Great Society, which took hold after the Reagan-Bush revolution in the 1980s. It rests on three tenets held by many white Americans. First, they believe the civil rights revolution was successful, and they wholeheartedly accept the principles enshrined in civil rights laws. They assume civil rights laws ended racial inequality by striking down legal segregation and outlawing discrimination against workers and voters. They think racism has been eradicated.

They also believe that if vestiges of racial inequality persist, that is because blacks and Latinos have failed to take advantage of opportunities created by the civil rights revolution. In their view, if blacks and Latinos are less successful than whites, it is not because America is still a racist society. Rather, a substantial majority believes that black and Latino Americans do not try hard enough to succeed.

Finally, most white Americans believe the United States is rapidly becoming a color-blind society. Thus, they see little need or justification for affirmative action or other color-conscious redistributive policies. Like the Court, by rejecting race-conscious classifications or remedies, they adhere to a jurisprudence of color-blindness. Inspired by the ideals so eloquently expressed in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, they embrace his vision of a color-blind America. They look forward to the day when race will not determine one's fate; when Americans are evaluated, in King's words, by the content of one's character rather than the color of one's skin.

This ideology of color-blindness is a significant turn in the ways white Americans talk and think about racial issues. It effectively takes race out of the public discourse, silencing and removing it from the political agenda, making it an individual, private problem. It enables those subscribing to the idea of color-blindness to label anyone who insists on the significance of race, including sociologists who analyze discrimination as a central feature of American social organization, as race-conscious "extremists."<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Bob Blauner, "Talking Past Each Other: Black and White Languages of Race," *The American Prospect*, 10 (Summer 1992): 57.

Color-blind ideology also undermines the effectiveness of the cognitive neuroscientific framework for challenging the intent doctrine. Because it has neither the theory nor the technology to identify and interpret these modern raceless discourses, neuroscience does not have the tools necessary to demonstrate that the current jurisprudence of discrimination is obsolete. Ironically, since cognitive neuroscience naturalizes and normalizes discrimination, it also inadvertently lends credence to color-blind ideology. Because it purports that discrimination is a normal cognitive function, it provides a scientific-sounding rationale for the proposition that Americans are color-blind. By normalizing discrimination, cognitive neuroscience paradoxically also provides the Supreme Court with a scientific reason for, in Haney-Lopez's view, "transmuting the search for racism into a simplistic inquiry into the existence of explicit considerations of race. Reference to race emerges, under current doctrine, as the measure of racism."<sup>86</sup> If discrimination is natural and implicit, the Court is correct: the measure of racism is the existence of explicit considerations of race.

### WHY THE INTENT DOCTRINE MAKES NO SENSE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

While social and psychological scientists agree that the Court's emphasis on intentionality no longer makes sense, they do not agree on why. Proponents of social cognition theory argue that the Court is using an outdated and discredited understanding of discrimination. In their view, it has not kept up with state-of-the-art research in neuroscience and, for that reason, the intent doctrine should be abandoned. The sociological view is different. Advocates of this view argue that neither the intent doctrine *nor* the neuroscience framework accurately captures the actual practices of race discrimination in post-civil rights America. And for that reason they should both be replaced.

The problem with the intent doctrine is not that it is outmoded by new research findings. The problem is that this jurisprudence makes it impossible to challenge the current face of racial subordination. Even if proponents of implicit and cognitive bias were able to persuade the Court that it is operating with an antiquated understanding of intentionality, what would they ask the Court to do? Which *individual* would they point to in making the case that implicit or cognitive bias was responsible for racial profiling, intractable racial disparities in income, health care, housing, and treatment by the criminal justice system? Thus, this individual, neurological account cannot provide the grounds for effectively challenging the intent doctrine in the present context.

### TOWARD A SOCIOLOGY OF UNINTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Because there are rarely individuals to whom one can point when alleging discrimination today, the Court needs to be persuaded that the grounds for proving discrimination in post-civil rights America are radically different from those upon which it relied in the past. If post-civil rights discrimination is to be dismantled legislatively or legally, alternative grounds must be found to induce the Court to abandon the intent doctrine. The Court needs to be

---

<sup>86</sup> Haney-Lopez, *op. cit.*, 1837.

convinced that the current state of racial discrimination is not caused by individual bias, whether intentional or unintentional/implicit or explicit.

Fortunately, one can find updated and persuasive grounds for challenging the intent doctrine in the work of sociologists studying race and racism over at least the last half-century. Although adherents of cognitive neuroscience are stunningly unaware of this theory and research,<sup>87</sup> sociologists have long been critical of the empirical flaws and fundamental conceptual problems contained in the psychological focus on individual racial bias and stereotypes. Their challenge to this paradigm began as early as 1958, when Herbert Blumer first argued that racism was better understood as a sense of group position than as a collection of biased individual attitudes and misperceptions.<sup>88</sup> Since Blumer's pathbreaking article, a whole host of sociologists, social psychologists, and legal theorists have moved beyond the outdated assumptions employed by advocates of implicit and cognitive bias.<sup>89</sup> Sociologists advance an analysis that assumes racism is often unintentional, implicit, polite, and in certain organizations quite normal. They look for racism in behavior as well as in attitudes and find it in culturally and economically produced systems of advantage and exclusion that generate privilege for one racially defined group at the expense of another.<sup>90</sup> While neither focused specifically on the intent doctrine, nor an identifiable school of thought,<sup>91</sup> the present sociology of race and racism contains an understanding of unintentional discrimination, which is based on a three-part analysis that demonstrates how racial inequality persists and is reproduced independently of actors' intentions. It operates on three levels: structural, cognitive, and discursive. Contained in this framework is a compelling and thorough critique of the intent doctrine.

## The Structure and Accumulation of Racial Advantage

The sociological perspective challenges the assumption that individuals are the appropriate unit of analysis. As Ruth Milkman and Eleanor Townsley explain,<sup>92</sup>

[T]his supposition "fails to capture the depth with which gender [or racial] discrimination and the norms associated with it are embedded in the economic order—in fact, they are embedded so deeply that a willful act of discrimination is not really necessary to maintain gender [or racial] inequality.

<sup>87</sup> Or, for unknown reasons, they never cite this research tradition.

<sup>88</sup> Herbert Blumer, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position," *Pacific Sociological Review* 1 (1958): 3–7.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, Harold Baron, "The Web of Urban Racism," in Knowles and Prewitt (eds.), *Institutional Racism*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969; Harold Baron, "The Demand for Black Labor: Historical Notes on the Political Economy of Racism," *Radical America* 5 (Mar.-Apr. 1971): 1–46; Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972; S. Carmichael and C. Hamilton, *Black Power*, New York: Vintage, 1967; J. Feagin, "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiblack Discrimination in Public Places," *American Sociological Review*, 56 (Feb. 1992): 101–116; Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, New York: Scribners, 1992; M. Omi and H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, New York: Routledge, 1986; P. Siegel, "The Cost of Being Negro," *Sociological Inquiry* 35 (Winter 1965): 41–57; P. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism*, New York: Wiley, 1967; David Wellman, *Portraits of White Racism*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977; William J. Wilson, *Power, Racism, and Privilege*, New York: Macmillan, 1973.

<sup>90</sup> This account paraphrases Brown et al., *op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>91</sup> This article synthesizes three or four major currents in sociology and critical race theory as the first step toward a sociology of unintentional racism, which can be used as a critique of the intent doctrine.

<sup>92</sup> Ruth Milkman and Eleanor Townsend, "Gender and the Economy," in Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (eds.), *Handbook of Economic Sociology*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994: 611.

In contrast, the sociological analysis views race as a relationship between groups. From this standpoint, durable racial inequality is seen as a system of power and exclusion, one in which whites accumulate advantages at the expense of African Americans and Latinos. Individual choice—intentional racism—has little to do with the persistence of racial inequality.<sup>93</sup>

In this account, durable color lines are not produced by individual bias but rather when whites accumulate racial advantages over time through labor market discrimination, institutional mechanisms, and public policies. The other side of this is the denial of jobs, resources, and economic opportunity to African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans—a process of *disaccumulation*. “Accumulation” refers to the way in which small economic and social advantages compound, just like an ordinary investment, and can have large cumulative effects over many generations. The parallel and symmetrical idea of *disinvestment* and, over time, what might be called *disaccumulation*, is often ignored. Negative accumulation or disaccumulation is equivalent to debtors who fail to make timely payments and acquire penalties that increase the amount of the debt. Just as access to skilled trades or government subsidies assist in the accumulation of economic advantage, exclusion from well-paying jobs or governmental benefits can compound over time and lead to disaccumulation.

The process of disaccumulation can produce two related consequences, neither of which involves intentionality. It may work to deny groups access to an equal share of the fruits of economic growth. For example, blacks may make income gains but still lag behind whites. Disaccumulation may also reverse economic gains. A prime example of this occurred during the Great Depression of the 1930s when blacks suffered occupational losses in manufacturing and skilled crafts jobs because of labor market discrimination.<sup>94</sup>

Segregated housing markets and redlining are another illustration of how accumulation and disaccumulation can lead to economic losses over time. Because fewer blacks can obtain mortgage loans, and when they do obtain them they do so on less favorable terms, the value of the housing they purchase is lower on average than the value of housing purchased by whites. White flight compounds the problem; the value of black housing declines as whites move out, making it more difficult for new black buyers to obtain loans at reasonable rates of interest. The circle is completed when banks redline black neighborhoods, leading to a downward spiral of disinvestment. African Americans, consequently, accumulate less wealth with devastating consequences.

Cumulative inequalities are also created and sustained by racial group competition and institutional practices. Labor market discrimination is more of a group phenomenon, although individuals can and do discriminate. It is better understood as a classic case of what Charles Tilly calls “opportunity hoarding,” which occurs when members of a group monopolize access to privileges or valuable resources.<sup>95</sup> Economists refer to this as the “noncompeting groups hypothesis.”<sup>96</sup> The point is that the game is rigged well in advance of any bigoted act of discrimination. Intentionality plays no role in this process.

Unintentional racial inequalities are also generated and sustained by the routine practices of intermediate institutions and by putatively “race-neutral” public policies that privilege

<sup>93</sup> This section is largely based on Brown and Wellman, *op. cit.*; and Brown et al., *op. cit.* For additional and complementary analyses of durable racial inequality, see Conley, *op. cit.*; Oliver and Shapiro, *op. cit.*; Roithmayr, *op. cit.*; Tilly, *op. cit.*

<sup>94</sup> Michael K. Brown, *Race, Money, and the American Welfare State*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999: 68–69.

<sup>95</sup> Tilly, *op. cit.*

<sup>96</sup> William A. Darity, Jr. and Patrick L. Mason, “Evidence on Discrimination in Employment: Codes of Color, Codes of Gender,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12 (1998): 85–86.

whites. The organizational practices of corporations, law firms, banks, athletic teams, labor unions, the military, and educational institutions may generate or maintain racial inequalities, intentionally or *unintentionally*, over long periods of time. The collusion of federal housing administrators with the real estate and mortgage lending industries in creating segregated housing markets is well documented. An equally disturbing case is how institutional practices in hospitals, insurance companies, and nursing homes perpetuate and augment racial disparities in health care and mortality. Even though the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits distribution of federal funds to institutions that discriminate, the private nursing home industry remains segregated. Bias or stereotyping does not cause this situation. Rather, it is attributable to the reluctance of for-profit nursing homes to accept Medicaid patients, particularly elderly African Americans. Their unwillingness is based on economic calculations, not misperception or individual prejudice.

### Whiteness, Cognition, Transparency and the Reproduction of Advantage

Until recently, the category “white” was taken for granted; being white was being “normal.” The taken-for-granted world of white Americans, then, was their normality, not their whiteness. Consequently, the privileges that came with whiteness were not experienced as advantages. Rather, whiteness was experienced as just “being normal.” Barbara Flagg observes this when she writes, “White’s ‘consciousness’ of whiteness is predominantly unconsciousness of whiteness. . . .”<sup>97</sup>

This is the cognitive dimension in the sociological account of the accumulation of racial advantage. Because of the advantages associated with being white, Flagg observes that “to be white is not to think about it.”<sup>98</sup> In her view, when whites interact with whites in the absence of people of color, “whiteness is a transparent quality.” Whiteness, she argues, “attains opacity”;<sup>99</sup> it is the “racial norm.” Once identified as “white,” Americans become “effectively raceless in the eyes of other whites.”<sup>100</sup> She identifies the vanishing of whiteness from whites’ self-perception as “the transparency phenomenon.”<sup>101</sup>

The transparency phenomenon offers a sociological explanation for how white privilege is passed on unintentionally. Rather than focusing on the amygdala, or looking for evidence that the brain considers people of different races emotionally important, the theory of transparency postulates that “unconscious race-specific decisionmaking is so common that it is in fact the normal mode of white decisionmaking.”<sup>102</sup> Instead of trying to piece together possible neural pathways that might lead to stereotyping, the notion of transparency focuses on the outcomes of discretionary white decisionmaking. This exploration of outcomes helps explain the unintentional reproduction of advantage. As Flagg concludes,

Numerous studies indicate that whites receive more favorable treatment than blacks in virtually every area of social interaction. The weight of the evidence supports the conclusion that race affects whites’ discretionary decisionmaking in areas as diverse as hiring and performance

---

<sup>97</sup> Flagg, *op. cit.*, 970.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 969.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 970.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 971.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 969.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 983.

evaluations in employment settings; mortgage lending, insurance redlining, and retail bargaining; psychiatric diagnoses; responses to patient violence in mental institutions; and virtually every stage in the criminal law process: arrest, the decision to charge, imprisonment, and capital sentencing.<sup>103</sup>

This understanding of unconscious discrimination is historically and sociologically specific; it is not contextless. Because whites do not think about whiteness and white-specific norms, Flagg concludes, their discretionary decisions reflect unintentionally imposed white norms.<sup>104</sup> In her words, “transparency exemplifies the structural aspect of white supremacy.”<sup>105</sup>

Using the ethnomethodological and “new institutionalist” frameworks in sociology, Ian Haney-Lopez interprets the cognitive dimensions of whiteness with a theory of institutional racism. The model he proposes “neither relies on motivated behavior nor dismisses behavior altogether, but rather . . . focuses on the sort of nonintentional behavior emphasized by institutional analysis.”<sup>106</sup> The nonintentional behavior to which he refers resembles Flagg’s transparency phenomenon. “Institutional analysis,” he writes, “posits that we often act in definable ways without a consciously formulated purpose, simply because it is ‘the way it is done’.” In other words, he is providing another window on the process through which the unconscious becomes the normal. Invoking the New Institutionalism, he observes that “routinized sequences of behavior eventually come to define normalcy, or more broadly, reality.”<sup>107</sup> From this perspective, he argues, established constellations of action are seen but not noticed, relied upon but not considered, to such an extent that they become natural—“the world of daily life known in common with others and with others taken for granted.”<sup>108</sup>

Haney-Lopez’s account of how certain activities become natural and taken for granted is a sociological theory of unintentional racism. He wants to explain how organizational activity can systematically injure minority groups even when the individuals making decisions do not consciously intend to discriminate.<sup>109</sup> He does this by analyzing institutional discrimination on the cognitive level, suggesting that “organizational actors follow elaborate *scripts*, spontaneously triggered complexes of behavior.”<sup>110</sup> Locating discrimination in organizational behavior rather than individual bias, he suggests that racial beliefs do not emerge out of stereotypes, but rather are organizationally produced scripts that suffuse American society and operate as “racial institutions.”<sup>111</sup> In his view, racial beliefs “constitute unconsidered understandings of race—taken-for-granted, consistently relied on, and disrupted, if at all, with great difficulty. Social actors both inherit and remake racial institutions, which ultimately depend upon group dynamics for their perpetuation.”<sup>112</sup>

Transparency and institutional racism are concepts that offer a sociological understanding of unconscious or unintentional behavior, which does not find discrimination in the individual brain or in normal information processing. Rather, they anchor unintentional

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 983–984.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 959.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 959.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 1727.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 1723.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 1724.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 1723.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 1725.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 1806.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 1806.

discrimination in white actor's social locations as well as in institutional and cultural arrangements over which they have no control. The sociological appreciation of unintentional discrimination differs from cognitive neuroscience in other ways as well. While scripts are spontaneously triggered, they are not automatic. Relying on Harold Garfinkel's understanding of bodies of knowledge located at the core of social relationships, scripts, as Haney-Lopez uses them, are "a set of interpretive rules, repertoires of appropriate actions. . . ." <sup>113</sup>

Because scripts are interpretive rules, repertoires of appropriate actions, human agency is important to sociological notions of unintentional discrimination. These scripts are not hardwired; they are humanly constructed, historically specific social meanings interpreted by human actors. The focus is on "the organizational contexts in which interaction occurs, and on the received grammars dictating individual behavior."<sup>114</sup> Thus, in contrast to the neurological approach, there are spaces for interruption and intervention. If these repertoires of appropriate actions are humanly constructed, they can be deconstructed. Given the political will, discrimination can be contested; it is not, as neuroscience would have it, inescapable.

### The Sounds of Racial Silence

In the period following the civil rights movement, white Americans have invented new languages for talking about race without mentioning it. Like the scripts and paths analyzed in Haney-Lopez's account of institutional racism, this new discursive dimension of discrimination is taken for granted, unintentional. It is part of the routine language of race rather than a dodge or a method for disguising racially motivated goals. In addition to color-blind ideology, coded languages, strategies for minimizing race, and silences about race constitute a significant change in the ways white Americans talk and think about race. Cognitive neuroscience, however, has neither the theory nor the research technology necessary to detect or explain these most recent expressions of racialized thinking. Thus, it does not provide a viable alternative to the intent doctrine in this present era of post-civil rights America.

Neuroscientists may be able to demonstrate implicit biases about which white Americans are unaware and correlate them with discriminatory behavior. They may also be able to locate precisely where in the brain emotionally important stimuli are processed. But they cannot decode or interpret these new discursive developments. They cannot because this kind of talk and thinking about race is not part of normal cognitive functioning and is not automatic. It is a human invention, which is not based on biases or stereotypes and not found outside history. Instead, these languages are constitutive of legitimate, culturally acceptable, historically located discourses in a specific historical context.

One expression of this new language allows Americans to address issues generated by disputes related to race *without* using language that invokes race. Competent actors in American culture know when race is being invoked even when race is not mentioned. To use obvious examples for purposes of illustration, white Americans know that the concept "inner city" refers to ghettos or predominantly African American communities; that "disadvantaged youth" refers to young people of color; that "welfare queen" means black welfare mothers; that "affirmative action hire" refers to black people; that "preferential treatment" means affirmative action as does "lowering standards." As Karyn McKinney observes, ". . . race is often equated

---

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 1775.

<sup>114</sup> Haney-Lopez, *op. cit.*, 1784.

with difference, or difference is used as code for race. . . . A common assertion . . . is that one should try to ignore difference (thus ignore ‘race’) to whatever degree is possible. . . .”<sup>115</sup> On both the political left and the right, theoretically elegant and politically fashionable explanations for persistent joblessness among African Americans now invoke nonracial notions like “economic dislocation,” “moral character,” “victim focused identity,” or “impersonal economic shifts.” In each instance, race need not be explicitly mentioned to communicate a message with racial overtones.

White Americans have also developed culturally sanctioned methods for talking about racial inequality that minimize the significance of racial discrimination.<sup>116</sup> These languages enable the speaker to express their racial views without sounding like they are defending the racial status quo. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva calls this “color-blind racism,” suggesting that it has four frames: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism.<sup>117</sup> Examples of this kind of talk explain away racial inequities by attributing them to individual failure or implying they are natural occurrences, invoking cultural deficiencies to explain the persistence of racial inequality, or locating racial inequality in the past, suggesting that discrimination is no longer a problem.

Another discursive script that unknowingly minimizes the significance of racial discrimination can be heard when white speakers remove themselves from complicity in the organization of racial privilege, while at the same time placing responsibility for eliminating racial disparities with persons of color.<sup>118</sup> The language of individualism is a classic example. In this talk, people climb or fall off the ladder of economic success depending on their individual effort, qualifications, and self-discipline. The economic fate of individuals rests squarely on their own shoulders. In the post-civil rights era, as Lawrence Bobo and Ryan Smith pungently put it, blacks are the “cultural architects of their own disadvantage.” They call this “free market racism.”<sup>119</sup> Instead of looking for the causes of racial inequality in a historical-structural, state-based account, this discourse looks for them in the actions of self-interested and self-motivated individuals on either side of the color line. In this frame, race in the post-civil rights era is a problem of individual (mis)behavior.

Over time, these scripts have become taken-for-granted explanations of racial inequality. They are so deeply grounded in American culture that the white people speaking them have no understanding that they inadvertently perpetuate the racial order. As Haney-Lopez points out,

Script and path racism remain shrouded from observation, precisely because they draw on institutions, the received social grammars on which all persons rely. Racial institutions and institutionalized racial practices form part of the world-known-in-common; they constitute the reality that we have socially constructed.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Karyn D. McKinney, *Being White: Stories of Race and Racism*, New York: Routledge, 2005: 180.

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, Wellman, 1993, 1997, 2000; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Charles Gallagher, “White Racial Formation: Into the Twenty-First Century,” in *Critical White Studies, Looking Behind the Mirror*, R. Delgado and J. Stefancik (eds.), Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

<sup>117</sup> Bonilla-Silva, p. 26; see also Leslie Carr, “Color-Blind” Racism, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997.

<sup>118</sup> Wellman, *op. cit.* (1993), Chapter 2, “Prejudiced People Are Not the Only Racists in America.”

<sup>119</sup> Lawrence Bobo and Ryan A. Smith, “From Jim Crow Racism to Laissez-Faire Racism: The Transformation of Racial Attitudes,” in Wendy Katkin, Ned Landsman, and Andrea Tyree (eds.), *Beyond Pluralism: The Conception of Groups and Group Identities in America*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998: 212. See also Lawrence Bobo, J. R. Kluegel, and R. A. Smith, “Laissez-Faire Racism: The Crystallization of a Kinder, Gentler, Anti-black Ideology,” in S. A. Tuch and J. K. Martin, *Attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and Change*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997: 15–42.

<sup>120</sup> Haney-Lopez, *op. cit.*, 1843.



Perhaps most important to opponents of the intent doctrine, these frames are often used by people who see themselves as *challenging* racial inequality.

Finally, a majority of white Americans cannot or do not see racism; they are literally blind when it comes to race. For example, a recent poll found that 67 percent of the whites interviewed believed that racial discrimination no longer exists.<sup>121</sup> A recent (2005) Pew Political Typology reports that 63 percent of white Americans believe that African Americans are responsible for their own condition.<sup>122</sup> These polling data indicate that close to two-thirds of white Americans are visually impaired on matters of race; they do not notice racial discrimination.

Like the majority of white Americans, cognitive neuroscience is unable to recognize and identify these racial scripts; it cannot see the instances of persistent racial disparities cited above. Because of the assumptions upon which it rests, rather than making these new languages audible and tenacious racial inequalities visible, it contributes to racial silence and opacity. Cognitive neuroscience cannot see or hear the unintentional discourses and durable discrepancies, which are a staple of discrimination today. That is why the intent doctrine prevents the Court from understanding and seeing discrimination in the present context. That is also why cognitive neuroscience is not a viable alternative to it.

## CONCLUSION: FROM INTENT TO LIABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The sociology of unintentional discrimination provides far more powerful and compelling grounds for dismantling the intent doctrine than does cognitive neuroscience. To begin with, unlike cognitive neuroscience, it does not reproduce the fundamental assumptions upon which the intent doctrine is based and thus does not produce blowback. Rather than locating the sources of discrimination in an individual's brain, in biases that produce stereotypes, the sociological framework finds them in the history, organization, language, and ways of seeing or not seeing in a racially divided society. In comparison to cognitive neuroscience, it finds discrimination in behavior and routine organizational practices, not attitudes. Instead of attributing discrimination to judgment error or mistaken prejudices, sociologists find the sources of exclusion in the structuring of racial inequality and a sense of group position. In contrast with cognitive neuroscience, the sociological understanding of discrimination does not reproduce the white perspective on this issue. It is not preoccupied with the guilt or innocence of whites but rather the advantages they gain from racial discrimination and the disaccumulation this relationship produces in communities of color.

Secondly, the sociological understanding of unintentional discrimination generates a shift in antidiscrimination jurisprudence from intent to liability and responsibility. Assessing an individual's intentions might be appropriate when deciding whether to put him or her in jail. With the exception of hate crimes, however, no one goes to jail for discrimination. The focus of discrimination litigation is on the fairness of employment decisions or whether the distribution of scarce opportunities and resources is equitable. The purpose is to ameliorate injustice. In these instances, it makes more sense to focus on and remedy the consequences of discrimination rather than determine the motives and culpability of individual perpetrators by establishing blame.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> Bonilla-Silva, *op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>122</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Commentary: The Black and White of Public Opinion," October 31, 2005: p. 8.

<sup>123</sup> This paragraph paraphrases Brown et al., *op. cit.*, 39.

The sociology of unintentional discrimination can make an important contribution to this conceptual shift. “Institutional racism theory,” Haney-Lopez points out, “spotlights the importance of fashioning remedies for policies and practices that impose disproportionate harms on minorities, irrespective of whether accompanied by conscious racial animus.”<sup>124</sup> A number of possible remedies follow from this observation. One is to shift from the “discourse of blaming” to a “discourse of responsibility.” Because the discriminatory intent rule only finds conscious discrimination blameworthy, Barbara Flagg argues it subverts the goal of racial justice. The search for conscious racism gives whites no incentive to explore their participation in contexts that unintentionally produce racial disparities. “Thus,” she concludes, “norms that label only conscious discrimination as blameworthy may be counterproductive.” As an alternative, she proposes a nonblaming framework in which “courts might become more effective participants in the effort to address and eradicate all forms of race discrimination from government decisionmaking.”<sup>125</sup>

In this model, she writes, “one takes responsibility for correcting undesirable states of affairs without thereby accepting either blame for, or even a causal connection with, the circumstance that requires correction.”<sup>126</sup> Tristin Green proposes that a mechanism such as “a reasonableness inquiry” be incorporated to limit employer liability to “those situations in which there is reason to believe that the employer has some meaningful degree of influence over the operation of discriminatory bias.”<sup>127</sup> The purpose of this shift in jurisprudence is to move away from the outmoded and often irrelevant focus on individual blame and concentrate instead on the effects or consequences of unintentional discrimination with an eye toward instituting practices that promote equality.

Expanding on the move away from discourses of blame or intentionality, Green suggests that the antidiscrimination project be broadened to directly focus on how employers enable workplace discrimination. Green suggests that employers be held directly liable under Title VII “for organizational choices, institutional practices, and workplace dynamics that enable the operation of discriminatory bias on the basis of protected characteristics.”<sup>128</sup> Consistent with the sociology of unintentional discrimination, this focus on institutional and organizational practices represents a methodology for locating ameliorative remedies rather than establishing guilt or innocence.

Brown et al. offer concrete legal alternatives for Green’s proposal.<sup>129</sup> Instead of requiring that employers be conscious of discrimination, they argue the law should be changed to a negligence standard. This would require employers to be legally responsible when they act carelessly or inattentively and, consequently, African American or Latinos are treated differently than they would have been otherwise. If they recognized negligent (careless, reckless) discrimination as a basis for action and remedy, Brown and his colleagues contend, the courts could become more responsive to the harmful *effects* of employers’ actions.

Another approach to antidiscrimination jurisprudence that is consistent with the sociology of unintentional discrimination would be a policy of strict liability where the actor’s fault is irrelevant and attention is focused on results. The paradigm is product liability law, which requires manufacturers of goods to internalize the costs of all injuries associated with the

---

<sup>124</sup> Haney-Lopez, *op. cit.*, 1840.

<sup>125</sup> Flagg, *op. cit.*, 989.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 991.

<sup>127</sup> Green, *op. cit.*, 147.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>129</sup> Brown et al., *op. cit.*, 238–239.

products they make, regardless of whether the injured party can prove that a particular blame-worthy action caused the harm. This legal approach would also make producers (of products or discriminatory effects) far more careful about what they do.

To successfully replace the jurisprudence of intentionality, Daria Roithmayr argues, the very definition of discrimination must be radically expanded. “. . . [D]iscrimination could be defined,” she contends, “to include any institutional rule, practice or decision that has racially disparate effects . . . if the rule, practice or decision creates, reproduces or reinforces specific racial disparities that were historically associated with intentional discrimination.”<sup>130</sup> The critical element in her formulation is that the motivation for the rule, practice, or decision is irrelevant. It matters not whether malice, economic self-interest, or administrative efficiency motivates the rule. Roithmayr’s proposal is more than a theoretical possibility. She points to two examples in which this expanded definition of discrimination has been implemented into law. “The South African equal protection clause, Section 9,” she reports, “prohibits ‘unfair discrimination’ on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, and a number of other listed grounds.” This definition, she suggests, appears to be based on the Canadian Supreme Court’s definition of discrimination as any differentiation that “has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations or disadvantages on such individual or group not imposed on others, or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other members of society.”<sup>131</sup>

Finally, the sociological framework contains considerably more transformational potential than its psychological counterpart. It is able to shed light on, and in some instances, literally see features of modern discrimination that cognitive neuroscience misses completely. For example, using the concept of transparency, sociologists are able to see how whiteness vanishes from whites’ self-perception, which allows unintentional race-specific decisionmaking to become the normal mode of white decisionmaking. In contrast, because cognitive neuroscience assumes discrimination functions normally and automatically, it minimizes the power of racial structuring in American society. Since the sociological view, on the other hand, does not reduce relations of power and exclusion to natural, neurological functioning, it puts race back on the political-legal agenda. The sociological account interrogates and disrupts the normality of discrimination. By treating discrimination as a humanly constructed project rather than an automatic cognitive response to difference, it enables one to see instances of racial inequality, which were once seen as the natural order of things. Because cognitive neuroscience considers encoded bias as fixed, automatic, inevitable, it has no theory of social change. The sociological understanding, however, sees discrimination as socially constructed, variable, and changeable. Moreover, because racial inequality is understood to be a human invention, and not a natural or normal feature of social cognition, in the sociological framework, human beings have the ability and responsibility to alter those policies and practices that reproduce the American system of racial advantage and exclusion.

---

<sup>130</sup> Roithmayr, *op. cit.*, 54.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

## CHAPTER 5

# The Work of Making Racism Invisible

AMIR MARVASTI AND KARYN MCKINNEY

Our lives are increasingly intertwined with social institutions that control or facilitate our actions. As is true in other aspects of social life, racial groupings mediate one's status and treatment in institutional settings. In studies of race and ethnicity, the inequalities minorities experience in social institutions are referred to as "institutional discrimination." This type of structural discrimination is distinguishable from individual racism in that (1) it is often not attributable to one person, (2) it is sanctioned by the norms and values of an institution, (3) it is part of the everyday operations of the institution and a pervasive feature of "business as usual." Joe Feagin suggests that institutional discrimination can be direct or indirect. He defines direct institutional discrimination as "organizationally-prescribed or community-prescribed actions which have an intentionally differential and negative impact on members of subordinate groups" (1986: 30). He cites racial segregation policies as an example of this kind of discrimination. Feagin defines indirect institutional discrimination as "practices having a negative and differential impact on minorities and women even though the organizationally prescribed or community-prescribed norms or regulations guiding those actions were established, and are carried out, with no intent to harm lying immediately behind them" (1986: 31).

Economists have elaborated on how direct and indirect discrimination may work in employment markets and in the loan application process. They argue that in the absence of full information regarding how productive a worker will be, or how likely a person will be to repay a loan, employers and banks often must rely on "proxies" for productivity and reliability. In the case of direct institutional discrimination, an employer or loan officer uses race, gender, or some other characteristic as a proxy. In other words, the person in charge allows race to serve as a "stand-in" for full ability to predict behavior. In the case of indirect institutional discrimination, an employer or loan officer relies on some other characteristic as a proxy that on its face is racially neutral but has more detrimental effects on some groups than others. For example, relying heavily on the type of university a person attended in hiring decisions can disadvantage people of color and those in the working class, who may not have been able to afford an Ivy League education. Focusing on "job stability" may

disadvantage both women and minorities, as in cases of downsizing it is often the “last hired” who are the “first fired.” In evaluating a loan application, relying on traditional measures of credit may disadvantage women and members of minority groups, who may have had less access to credit.

It has been suggested that such practices have become more prevalent in recent decades. The more overt racial discrimination (i.e., *de jure* discrimination) has been replaced with more covert forms (*de facto* discrimination). Further, for many people of color, institutional discrimination is a primary concern, more than overt individual acts of discrimination. The growth of institutional discrimination may also account for the fact that whites are more likely to believe that great progress has been made in ending discrimination, while people of color usually state that much less progress has been made than whites believe. Institutional discrimination is more difficult for whites to identify than overt, violent acts that were more common a few decades ago (see Bluner 1994).

Since the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, overt discrimination on the basis of race has become illegal. Furthermore, the emerging etiquette of race (or so-called political correctness) has made the explicit expression of racism more socially costly. However, many social indicators, such as the disproportionate rates of poverty and imprisonment for minorities, show that the legal mandates against racism have not uprooted the problem. While overt utterances and actions have been limited, their psychological, normative, and structural foundations persist. “New,” “modern,” or “aversive” racist practices and ideologies have supplanted “old racism,” which has been relegated to fringe groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the skinheads. White privilege is now justified and rationalized through new vocabularies of attribution. In this new context, inequality is no longer the failure of mainstream society to be fair and inclusive. Instead, the focus should be on the failure of minorities to assimilate. According to this new discourse, the tumor of discrimination has been excised from the body of American life, and whatever inequality remains can be blamed on individual flaws and failures. At the core of this new “symbolic racism” is white denial that racism exists and accompanying reluctance to support social programs, such as affirmative action, that would work to combat it.

But how do we empirically examine that which is deliberately concealed and distorted? The challenge for social scientists, particularly those who are committed to social activism and change, is to show that discrimination (1) exists, (2) adversely affects ethnic and racial minorities, and (3) is founded on a set of social relations and practices that sustain it. There are two sociological realms in which this work can and should be done: public discourse and institutional practice. In recent decades, a considerable body of literature has in fact demonstrated the existence and evils of discrimination in public discourse (see, for example, Bonilla-Silva 2003; Essed 1991; Frankenberg 1993; Feagin and Vera 1995; van Dijk 1989). This type of research primarily shows how whites explain away the realities of racism and discrimination through talk and discourse. In this white, “color-blind,” discursive universe, no one is accountable for racial inequalities (with the exception of minority groups themselves). The title of Bonilla-Silva’s book, *Racism without Racists*, best illustrates what these researchers aim to expose. The new racism, unlike its old overt counterpart, is unclaimed and made invisible in the discourses of whiteness (McKinney 2005).

While the discursive studies of racism have enjoyed tremendous growth and innovation, on the institutional level, studies of discrimination have remained relatively stagnant. The dominant paradigm in this area has been to use statistical figures (e.g., higher poverty and incarceration rates for African Americans) to imply a pattern of unequal treatment for minorities. For example, Nancy Krieger and Stephen Sidney gave 2,000 African American respondents a list of settings, asking them in which of these settings had they experienced

discrimination. Most of their respondents reported discrimination in at least three settings (Krieger and Sidney, cited in Feagin 2000: 142).

“Audit studies” of some specific settings suggest discrimination is even worse than people of color realize. Blacks face discrimination in 20% of their job interviews. Employers are 16% more likely to offer jobs to whites than blacks even when the black applicant applied first and offered stronger qualifications. Employers are four times more likely to ask black applicants about job absenteeism and two times more likely to ask them why they left a previous job than they are to ask white applicants those questions (Schaefer 2006). In one study, equal credentials were fabricated for an equal number of fictional black and white job applicants. Since the applications were mailed, the employers could only distinguish these applicants based on their names (i.e., half of the applicants had stereotypically black names). Astonishingly, “white names received 50% more callbacks for interviews” (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2003).

In the same vein, housing audit studies repeatedly demonstrate that African Americans seeking to rent or buy homes are discriminated against during all stages of that process. In these audit studies, white and black testers with equal qualifications for homeownership are sent into situations where they express interest in obtaining a housing loan, viewing a home, or seeking the help of a realtor. These audit studies show disturbing results. In a 1991 audit study in which 3,800 audits were conducted in 25 areas, renters faced discrimination half the time, and home seekers faced discrimination 59% of the time (Feagin 2000: 155). In 20% of these audit studies, when testers were shown homes, racial steering took place; in other words, African American testers were only shown homes in predominantly African American neighborhoods (Feagin and Sikes 1994: 228).

Qualitative research of racial discrimination has been invaluable in adding depth to statistical data. Some qualitative research has demonstrated that discrimination is contextualized by norms and behavioral controls in a given situation (Feagin 2000: 139). In the case of institutional discrimination, it is those with some degree of power in the institutions that carry out discrimination, according to several interview studies of African Americans dealing with everyday discrimination (Feagin 2000: 141). Other research has explored the particular forms that discrimination takes in public settings such as in restaurants, in stores, in classrooms, and on the street (Feagin 1991). In Joe Feagin’s seminal study of these settings, he found four types of discrimination faced by his African American respondents: exclusion, rejection, verbal attacks, and physical attacks (Feagin 1991). His study also revealed the repertoire of responses used by African Americans when facing these incidents of discrimination. More recently, Feagin and McKinney, in interviewing middle-class African Americans, found workplace discrimination not only to still be prevalent for most, but also to have a myriad of serious health consequences for them (Feagin and McKinney 2003).

Similar studies have shown the prevalence of discrimination by interviewing white respondents (Houts 2004; Kleiner 1988; McKinney 2005; van Dijk 1993). For example, Leslie Houts’ study of the journals of hundreds of white college students shows that a different racial reality exists in the “backstage,” the space occupied by whites when not in the presence of people of color, than it does in the “frontstage.” Further, her research demonstrates that, at least on some level, whites do realize that discrimination still exists, although they often deny it (Houts 2004). Karyn McKinney’s qualitative analysis of young whites’ autobiographies shows how certain constructions of whiteness are supportive of everyday discrimination (McKinney 2005).

Such studies alert us to the existence of institutional discrimination, but they tell us relatively little about the policies and practices that make it possible. Namely, we still do not know much about how racism is made invisible in predominantly white institutions or,

to put it plainly, how do they make racism “go away” for official purposes? Few private firms and state and federal agencies are officially held accountable for racism. Yet, the majority of blacks feel that they are routinely discriminated against and whites feel that blacks are not. For example, one study showed that 86% of blacks felt that they are victims of housing discrimination, but only 61% of whites agree with that statement. Similarly, 89% of blacks believe they face discrimination in obtaining bank loans, but only 56% of whites concur (Bobo 2006). We know much about how whites deny racism discursively, but how is this done in terms of institutional practice? The question, in this context, is not regarding white motivations and the “mind games” they play with themselves and others, but how do white institutions do the work of denying racism?

Our goal in this chapter is to highlight the constructive strategies that hide racism in social institutions and make it in essence an “invisible social problem.” We argue that sometimes social institutions and their agents actively engage in the interpretive practice (Gubrium and Holstein 2000) of disguising and distorting racism and discrimination. We list several examples of these institutional practices. We end the chapter by discussing the theoretical and empirical implications of this approach for the study of race and ethnicity.

### EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE “INVISIBLE”

Much of the interest in the area of “social problems work” has been on the work of constructing social problems (e.g., homelessness, battered women, mental illness). Comparatively little attention has been given to how social institutions prevent social problems from being delineated as such in the first place. While the literature on “claims making” and “dispute resolution” allows for this possibility in theoretical terms, relatively few studies have investigated the denial of social problems empirically. In the area of race, this oversight essentially means that constructionist literature has been relatively mute on the everyday practices of making “racism” invisible. Ironically, the few constructionist studies that do address the topic of race tend to focus on how “whiteness” is constructed as a social stigma (see, for example, Killian 1985; Kusow 2004; Storrs 1989).

The problem is in part a theoretical one. Strict constructionism assumes no reality *a priori* to practice. Reality is shaped in the course of the interaction, it is not blocked, hindered or silenced, but it is *just* constructed. This branch of constructionism, particularly its ethno-methodological variant, has been critical of studies that take the existence of racism for granted. For example, McKenzie (2003) argues that allegations of “invisible” or “hidden” racism are socially constructed in the research process itself and have no external validity. These critics rely on constructionist theories to suggest that those who look for racism are bound to find it because they take its ontological existence for granted. According to strict constructionism, there is no way to study “invisible” social problems because the process of exposing reality is inseparable from creating that reality.

Constructionist feminists, however, have advanced a different point of view. Their research on the silencing of women’s voices points to the ways social institutions distort and transform the reality of gender oppression. Consider, for example, Patricia Hill Collins’s critique of pure constructionism in this regards:

Constructionists assert that only the claims-making process of social problems merits study and that the actual conditions themselves are of lesser importance. But such an approach can easily lead to studies of those having the greatest resources in raising claims, and may totally avoid, at least in theory, issues of vital concern to society. (1989: 89)

This shift in the analysis from the empirically observable to the disguised or suppressed empirical evidence is particularly important in the study of racism. The core problem with modern racism is convincing others (those in power) that it exists at all. The burden of racism is placed on the shoulders of its victims, or people of color. They have to prove it. This is precisely the mindset that pervades the legal system in racial discrimination cases—the burden of proof rests with the victims. There is a naïve and distorted perception of power at work here. What goes unnoticed is that the white elite are not incidental practitioners of racism, but they actively sustain the structure of racial inequality. They do not patiently and retroactively address minority complaints, but they constantly manipulate the structural conditions and the discursive resources (i.e., the language of the game) to “reframe” the issue.

In the following analysis, we focus on institutional practices that eclipse the social problem of racism, thus keeping it from becoming an observable empirical reality in scientific terms. As stated earlier, while the literature on social problems work alludes to the possibility of such practices, it rarely deals with them directly. We know some social experiences are constructed as “social problems” (e.g., “homelessness,” “drug addiction,” “homosexuality,” “mental illness”), but we also know that some are not—even when the injured parties want them to be. Why and how does this happen?

In his discussion of how we as a society decide what is a social problem, Joseph Gusfield states that “ ‘Social problems’ . . . assume a standard or frame from which the condition can be labeled as problematic and thus in need of remedy. As such, the act of naming a condition as a ‘problem’ is part of a process in the attempt to create a consensus about that standard or frame. It is in this sense that cultural authority is involved” (Gusfield 2006: 11). The concept of “social problems” is thus a rhetorical device that can be used to create action. However, from a conflict perspective, “consensus” is most easily created by the powerful, who are likely to prevail in these contests of meaning. The problems of the marginalized are likely to be attributed to individual or cultural shortcomings, labeled as personal rather than as social problems, or altogether suppressed. As Collins (1987: 87) notes, “This suppression, rather than the onset of organized, identifiable activism, marks the origins of a social problem.”

## DISGUIISING STRATEGIES

Using examples from educational and political settings, in the following discussion we highlight “disguising institutional strategies” aimed at making racism less visible.

### Offering Incentives for Silence

A common institutional strategy for ensuring that grievances surrounding racism and discrimination are not officially documented is to offer subtle incentives for minorities who “don’t rock the boat.” This is done at two levels. First, at the level of hiring, code words such as “good colleague,” “team player,” or “collegiality” are used to distinguish applicants who do not pose a threat to the status quo. Interviewers, recruiters, and job search committees carefully research the applicant’s references and look for any past history of “troublemaking.” During the interview, seemingly innocuous questions like “Why did you leave your last job?” or “Why do you want to work for us?” are sometimes slyly used to further probe a minority candidate’s potential for raising claims of discrimination. Through this process of screening, qualified minority candidates are denied jobs based on their potential for challenging racist practices and racist



corporate cultures. Not surprisingly, no employer ever has to openly state, “This applicant will not be hired because he [or she] is uppity.” On the contrary, minority applicants are supposedly not offered a job for their own good, using justifications like, “This person is not a good fit for our program,” or “We would not be doing this person a favor by offering him a job because he cannot fit our corporate culture and will not do well in the long run.” Rarely do institutions engage in a serious dialogue, backed with specific actions, about what can be done to make their workplace more friendly and attractive to minority applicants. Instead, it is assumed that a “good minority applicant” is one who fits the workplace as it is. Assimilation in predominantly white workplaces is thus “one-way”: the person of color makes the adjustments, while the workplace norms remain white (Feagin and McKinney 2003; Flagg 1995). This white racial framing of all the primary institutions of our society has persisted over nearly 400 years (see Feagin 2000: 185, on white framing of the legal system; Feagin 2006: 47–48, on predominant white folkways in institutions; Feagin 2006: 289, on white men’s racial framing).

It is important to note that while propensity for subservience and conformity with authority is a key factor for all applicants, the lack of these characteristics tends to eclipse all of a minority candidate’s other qualifications. A white hire’s “rowdiness” may be overlooked in light of his accomplishments, but a minority candidate in many cases is not afforded the same leniency. In this context, minority candidates who receive job offers in mainstream institutions tend to fall in the category of “model minorities” or the “likable foreigner” everyone gets along with (or the “Uncle Toms”). In some cases, entire groups are set up as “model minorities” by leaders in white institutions. For example, Asian Americans have long been seen as such a group, both in the economic sector and in society at large. This view of Asian Americans began in the 1960s, in the mainstream media. A sociologist, William Peterson, used the term in a *New York Times Magazine* article (January 6, 1960), entitled “Success Story: Japanese American Style.” In that same year (December 26, 1960), an article similarly using Chinese Americans appeared in *U.S. News and World Report* (Mar, 2006). Perhaps not surprisingly, this conception of Asian Americans was introduced before the rise in Asian immigration that began after the Immigration Act of 1965 lifted anti-Asian immigration restrictions. The introduction of this term was not benign; the term was specifically used to criticize African Americans and attack the growing black civil rights movement and has been used to discredit other ethnic groups, especially African Americans.

Since the beginnings of this view of Asian Americans, the relative economic success of some Asian American groups, particularly long-established Chinese and Japanese families, has been constructed as representative of the experience of Asians as a whole. This view ignores the diversity within the experiences of this pan-ethnic group. More recent Asian immigrants, for example, are much more likely to be impoverished than white Americans. Further, the standing of economically successful Asian Americans has been hard-won, coming only after years of discrimination, some of it formalized in immigration law. Finally, while traditionally Asian American family income is often higher than that of white Americans, per capita income of Asian Americans is lower, in part because of the “glass ceiling” that prohibits many Asian Americans from being promoted to higher management positions.

Placing Asian Americans as a model minority group serves three purposes in making racism invisible. First, it allows whites to position themselves not as an unfairly privileged group, but simply as one of many racial groups competing equally in the business world. Whites are able to suggest that there are no longer any real discriminatory hindrances to the advancement of any group, since Asian Americans have so clearly “made it,” even surpassing white success. Asian Americans as a model minority group serve as “proof” of the meritocracy of the U.S. workplace and, more broadly, of U.S. society itself.

Second, setting Asian Americans up as the model minority creates tension amongst minority groups. Repeatedly, other subordinated racial groups are shown the example of Asian Americans to suggest that they also should be able to achieve in the meritocracy that is the American workplace. Such a suggestion can create resentment and inhibit the very group cooperation that would create a larger voice for all minority groups. This larger voice could make it more likely that institutional discrimination would be recognized as a social problem.

Finally, suggesting that all Asian Americans are “doing fine” has negative affects for Asian Americans themselves. The “model minority myth” means that Asian American communities may fail to receive the support and resources they need. In other words, social problems in the Asian American community will remain invisible. Thus, while the stereotype of “model minority” may result in short-term marginal gains for some minority members, the concept is by far more functional for the long-term survival of white institutions.

Beyond the initial hiring process and selection biases, once on the job the silence of minority members is rewarded in more concrete ways. Promotions, raises, and office assignments are all ways through which a “team player” is rewarded for her deference. Again, the process of rewarding conformity in organizations is not unique or surprising, but the point here is that this system of rewards in the broader context of a racist culture takes a particularly sinister form, which has rarely been systematically studied by social scientists. The system of rewards in effect prolongs racism by making it invisible. It breathes life into the argument that if no one is complaining or reporting it, it must not be happening. The organizational hat trick, as it were, is to divert attention from the practices that create this conspicuous absence of complaints about racism and discrimination.

## Labeling Claim-Makers

The flip side of rewarding silence is to discount or disregard those who do raise their voices. Often, for the white elite, it is potentially damaging to directly argue against claims of discrimination and prejudice. Therefore, they might seek to discredit those making the claim. This tactic is often used to discredit women’s claims regarding sexism. In order to undermine the message of feminism, commentators like Rush Limbaugh, for example, have attacked feminists as “femi-Nazis,” in other words, irrationally dogmatic and forceful women. An even more preposterous accusation against activist women is that they are too ugly to “get a man,” thus casting a noble struggle for equality into a selfish act of resentment motivated by personal failure. Similarly, in the criminal justice system victims of rape find themselves in the absurd position of having their own integrity called into question (see Campbell and Raja 1999, on “secondary victimization” of rape victims).

This process of blaming the victim and her supporters is similarly applied in the case of race and ethnicity disputes in organizational settings; minority members who speak against injustice are often the target of unfair and unfounded character assassinations. For example, a graduate student reported to the first author that in his program the three faculty members who defended minority students were openly labeled as “the Three Musketeers” by the chair of his department. This graduate student also reported that the minority students who formally complained about maltreatment were themselves labeled in official departmental memos as “a small group of malcontents.”

Finally, after his own talks about the discrimination experienced by Middle Eastern Americans and Muslims, the first author was labeled as a “whiner” by some of his audience members. The attribution of “whining” in this case linguistically transforms and discredits the

demands for equality and justice into nothing more than childish bickering. At the same time, “whining” condones the implicit and explicit violence of racism by blaming the victims, who are supposed to shut up and “take it like real men.” In this context, the predicament of the victims of racism is not unlike what rape victims experience when the legal system and the public call into question their moral character instead of the rapist’s motives and actions (Kingsworth et al. 1999). In a study of Middle Eastern Americans, Marvasti and McKinney found that this strategy apparently works to silence some (2004). Several of their Middle Eastern male respondents were loathe to discuss discrimination they had experienced, apparently because it made them seem like men who cannot manage and cope or, in other words, such “complaints” feminized them.

An interesting example of this sort of labeling on a national scale is David Horowitz’s *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America* (2006). As the title of the book suggests, this book names 101 professors—one of whom, Joe Feagin, we both had the privilege of studying with—as people who pose a direct threat to the national security of the United States. Although Horowitz has no social science research credentials, he presumes to judge complex social science research, and his work is accepted in the mainstream and in some parts of academia as valid. Had Horowitz undertaken to similarly assess medical research and its practitioners, his work would have never been published. Medical research typically does not raise the same kind of challenge to the status quo raised by some social research, and thus fewer people are as interested in discrediting those challenges or reading others’ criticisms. In addition to his widely publicized book, Horowitz, as we will discuss in the next section, also leads the movement to silence unruly academics through state-sponsored legislations.

## Mandating Silence

When all else fails, organizations can officially mandate silence. The idea of silencing critics has had a long history in the United States in general. For example, Clemens P. Work’s book *Darkest Before Dawn* documents Montana’s 1918 sedition law (which inspired the Federal Sedition Act of 1918). This law, passed after the United States became involved in World War I, made it illegal to make “any disloyal, profane, violent, scurrilous, contemptuous, slurring or abusive” comment about the U.S. Constitution, the federal government, soldiers or sailors, the flag or the uniforms of the Army or Navy” (CNN). One man, for example, was sentenced to 34 months in prison after he said to a hotel owner, “This is a rich man’s war, and we have no business in it . . . . The poor man has no show in this war. The soldiers are fighting the battles of the rich” (CNN). This man and others sentenced under this law were posthumously pardoned by the governor of Montana in May 2006.

However, legislating silence has been revived since the tragic terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. A prominent form of this movement at the institutional level has been initiated in the state of Pennsylvania, where the State House of Representatives in 2005 passed HR177, or the Student’s Academic Bill of Rights; similar bills have been introduced in other states, but most have “died on committee calendars” and were never seriously pursued. In the case of the Pennsylvania law, however, the bill has resulted in the creation of an investigative committee tasked with holding hearings to inform legislators of the extent of academic freedom violations supposedly inflicted on students. A portion of the bill reads:

Students and faculty should be protected from the imposition of ideological orthodoxy, and faculty members have the responsibility to not take advantage of their authority position to introduce inappropriate or irrelevant subject matter outside their field of study. (Pennsylvania State House Resolution 177)

What is deemed “inappropriate” or “irrelevant” is any challenge against the status quo. Apparently, the legislation was motivated by a student complaint that a biology professor screened “Fahrenheit 9/11” (a Michael Moore film that is highly critical of President Bush) before the 2004 presidential election. That charge turned out to be completely fabricated. The movie in question turned out to be Michael Moore’s “Bowling for Columbine” (a documentary about the tragic high school shooting in Columbine, Colorado), and it was shown in a sociology class (Bailey 2006).

Ironically, this clamor about the “abuse” of academic freedom and “inappropriate” discussions about the abuse of power and minority rights is taking place in a state that, according to Southern Poverty Law Center, is experiencing a drastic rise in hate crimes and hate groups. With 27 hate groups, Pennsylvania is one of the most active hate states in the northeastern United States (U.S. Map of Hate Groups 2005). Racist graffiti, acts of violence, and cross burnings are on the rise in the state, and yet the state legislators see a real threat to freedom coming from a university professor who should be reprimanded for speaking about inappropriate topics in college classrooms.

In other cases of mandating silence, internal reports about race relations in the workplace may be suppressed by the authorities on the grounds that they result in “name calling” and “finger pointing.” Thus the content of such assessments is carefully reviewed to project a positive image of the organization, despite the realities that were reported in earlier drafts and later retracted. This type of underreporting of racism is most evident in official statistics of hate crimes. Consider, for example, the FBI’s statistics on hate crimes in the state of Pennsylvania. The data for this report are part of the Uniform Crime Report, which represents accumulated crime data from police agencies throughout the United States. According to this report, in 1995 there were 282 acts of hate crime in Pennsylvania (Hate Crime 1995). Ten years later, this number was dramatically cut to 105, or well less than half (Hate Crime Statistics 2004). This is despite other media and anti-hate groups’ reports that Skin Heads and Neo-Nazi groups are more active than ever in the state. To what can we attribute this miraculous change in race relations in Pennsylvania? We either have to be an optimist, and accept the claim that things have drastically improved, or doubt the veracity of these reports, an explanation that is more consistent with information from other sources.

Another subtle form of mandated silencing is setting the bar for establishing claims of racism and discrimination so high that it is nearly impossible for plaintiffs to win their cases in court. In setting the standards for proving racial discrimination higher than for proving gender discrimination, many institutions follow the example set by the federal courts. The Supreme Court has typically required plaintiffs in racial discrimination suits to prove at least one blatant, specific case of discrimination occurred, while plaintiffs in gender discrimination cases can rely on claims of a generally “hostile workplace.” Many other official institutional policies seem to follow the Supreme Court’s lead. For example, the University of Florida “Non-Discrimination” policy specifically defines sexual harassment, its complaint procedure, and possible disciplinary action, but it makes no such clarification of recommendations for race discrimination (Rules of University of Florida 2006).

### **Appropriating Anti-Discrimination Policies**

Another organizational strategy for suppressing the evidence of racism is to proactively start “diversity programs” that appropriate anti-racist causes but with no real institutional resources or support behind them. The neutralizing effect of diversity programs operates in

three ways. A first and most common tactic is “window dressing” and “lip service.” This involves empty claims about the need for diversity, followed by ceremonial and cosmetic organizational changes. Sometimes a bulletin board is dedicated to educating the employees about other cultures. In other cases, a minority member is hired for a high-profile, low-status position. This person is sometimes literally placed in the front office for public relations purposes.

The second tactic is to form boards and committees that fortuitously report no need for change or further action for diversity training. Their message is echoes of Rodney King’s famous line: “Not only we *can* all get along, we in fact *do* get along.” This signal of institutional health is then read as a basis for further isolating and silencing those who negate it as malcontents. The third and final strategy in this context is to simply ignore the recommendations of diversity programs that started with great fanfare. Organizational authorities publicly take credit for commissioning the program on the one hand and, at the same time, privately distance themselves from its finding on the grounds that the proposed changes are too ambitious or fiscally inadvisable.

### **Distorting Constructions**

Public opinion polls (Saad 2003) suggest that African Americans and other minorities see racism as a pervasive problem. The central empirical issue of race in everyday life is then whether or not racism is recognized and so labeled, particularly by institutional authorities who are then in the position to respond to the problem and take remedial action. The question is how and under what circumstances is racism misrecognized? What is the interpretive labor involved in constructing certain actions as anything but racism? Hernan Vera and Andrew Gordon’s (2003) work on “sincere fictions” addresses this issue in popular discourse, especially in Hollywood films and their portrayal of race relations. Borrowing from Bourdieu’s (1992) notion of “collective misrecognition,” they argue that whites tend to be presented as heroes and champions of racial equality even when the empirical evidence clearly points to the contrary (e.g., white FBI agents who fight for civil rights in the film “Mississippi Burning”).

Our analysis has been embedded in this frame of thought, as we have argued that in the institutionally astute climate of the 21st century (decades after the passage of federal civil rights laws), few whites in position of authority would openly embrace racist ideology. We should note, however, that we are not suggesting that “old-fashioned racism” no longer exists. Indeed, as Collin Leach (2005) suggests, “new racism” is not entirely new and old racism is not entirely a thing of the past. Indeed, there is considerable historical continuity in the rhetoric and practice of racism. For example, a 2003 Gallup poll showed that compared to 40% of black, only 16% of whites thought “worse jobs, income and housing” for black are due to discrimination (Saad 2003).

Rather than simply illustrating “new” racist practices, we think it is important to return our attention to the many ways discrimination and racism are rationalized through the rubric of institutional practice. Research on race and ethnicity should do more to uncover cleverly disguised policies and practices in conjunction with the discourses and rhetoric that justify them. While certainly unveiling the psychological and linguistic strategies underlying the denial of racism is an invaluable undertaking, we must also uncover the actual institutional practices that enact discrimination.

On a different theoretical level, as social scientists, we should rethink what is meant by “empirical reality” and consider its limitations in the study of racism. Real oppression is not

always self-evident. The kind of ontological detachment from the subject matter practiced by some constructionists and their objectivist counterparts is void of ethical commitments that could point a researcher in the direction of revealing what is not ostensibly voiced and seen.

## REFERENCES

- Bailey, Jason. 2006. "Face Off: House Resolution 177." *The Penn*.  
<http://www.thepenn.org/vnews/display.v/ART/2006/04/03/443168dad7791>. Retrieved May 7, 2006.
- Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2003. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." NBER Web site.  
<http://papers.nber.org/papers/w9873>. Retrieved May 5, 2006.
- Blauner, Robert. 1994. "Talking Past Each Other: Black and White Language of Race." Pages 27–34 in Ehrlich and pincus (eds.) *Race and Ethnic Conflict*. Boulder, Co. Westview Press.
- Bobo, Lawrence D. 2006. "The Color Line, the Dilemma, and the Dream: Race Relations in America at the Close of the Twentieth Century." Pages 87–95 in Higginbotham and Andersen (eds.) *Race and Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2003. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Campbell, Rebecca and Sheela Raja. 1999. "Secondary Victimization of Rape Victims: Insights for Mental Health Professionals Who Treat Survivors of Violence." *Violence Victims* 14(3): 261–275.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1989. "The Social Construction of Invisibility: Black Women's Poverty in Social Problems Discourse." Pages 77–93 in Holstein and Miller (eds.) *Perspectives on Social Problems*, Volume 1. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Essed, Philomena. 1991. *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. New York: Sage.
- Feagin, Joe. 2000. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe. 1991. "The Continuing Significance of Race: Anti-Black Discrimination in Public Places." *American Sociological Review* 56 [Feb. 1991]: 101–116.
- Feagin, Joe. 1986. *Discrimination American Style: Institutional Racism and Sexism*, 2nd edition. Malabar, FL: Robert Krieger Publishing Company.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Karyn D. McKinney. 2003. *The Many Costs of Racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Feagin, Joe and Hernan Vera. 1994. *White Racism: The Basics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Flagg, Barbara J. 1995. "Fashioning a Title VII Remedy for Transparently White Subjective Decisionmaking." *Yale Law Journal* 104 (8): 2009–2051.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gubrium, Jay, and James Holstein. 2000. "Analyzing Interpretive Practice." Pages 487–508 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition, N. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gusfield, Joseph R. 2006. "How Do We Decide What Are Social Problems?" Pages 11–18 in Charon and Vigilant (eds.) *Social Problems: Readings with Four Questions*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Hate Crime 1995. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Source  
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hatecm.htm>. Retrieved May 7, 2006.
- Hate Crime Statistics 2004. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Source:  
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hc2004/openpage.htm>. Retrieved May 7, 2006.
- Horowitz, David. 2006. *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc.
- Houts, Leslie. 2004. "Backstage, Frontstage Interactions: Everyday Racial Events and White College Students." Unpublished dissertation research, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.
- Kingsworth, Rodney, Randall Macintosh, and Jennifer Wentworth. 1999. "Sexual Assault: The Role of Prior Relationship and Victim Characteristics in Case Processing." *Justice Quarterly* 16: 276–302.
- Kleiner, Brian. 1988. "The Modern Racist Ideology and Its Reproduction in 'Pseudo-Argument'." *Discourse & Society* 9(2): 187–215.

- Kusow, Abdi M. 2004. "Contesting Stigma: On Goffman's Assumptions of Normative Order." *Symbolic Interaction* 27:179–197.
- Leach, Collin Wayne. 2005. "Against the Notion of 'New Racism'." *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 15(6): 432–445.
- Mar, Gary. 2006. "Are Asians Model Minorities?" Source: <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/01race/model01.htm>. Retrieved June 22, 2006.
- Marvasti, Amir and Karyn McKinney. *Middle Eastern Lives in America*. Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- McKenzie, Kevin. 2003. "Discursive Psychology and the 'New Racism'." *Human Studies* 26: 461–491.
- McKinney, Karyn. 2005. *Being White: Stories of Race and Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Pennsylvania State House Resolution 177. 2005. <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/BI/BT/2005/0/HR0177P2553.HTM>. Retrieved May 7, 2005.
- Rules of University of Florida 2006. "University of Florida; Non-Discrimination Policy." Source: <http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/1006.pdf>. Retrieved May 7, 2006.
- Saad, Lydia. 2003. "Black Dissatisfaction Simmers Beneath Good Race Relations: Slight Majority of Black Feel New Civil Rights Are Needed." Source: [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com). Retrieved May 7, 2006.
- Schaefer, Richard T. 2006. *Racial and Ethnic Groups*, 10th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Storrs, Debbie. 1999. "Whiteness as Stigma: Essentialist Identity Work by Mixed Race Women." *Symbolic Interaction* 22:187–212.
- U.S. Map of Hate Groups 2005. <http://www.tolerance.org/maps/hate/state.jsp?S=PA&m=4>. Retrieved May 7, 2006.
- van Dijk, Teun A. 1993. *Elite Discourse and Racism*. Sage: London.
- van Dijk, Teun A. 1989. *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Vera, Hernan and Andrew Gordon. 2003. *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*. Landham, MD, Rowman and Littlefield.
- Work, Clemens P. 2005. *Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in American West*. New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press.
- "World War I Critics Get Pardons" 2006. <http://www.cnn.com/2006/LAW/05/03/montana.pardons.ap/index.html>. Retrieved May 6, 2006.

## CHAPTER 6

# Anything but Racism: How Sociologists Limit the Significance of Racism

EDUARDO BONILLA-SILVA AND GIANPAOLO BAIOCCHI

*We need not live in a world we do not like, that we did not help create, and then seek minor adjustments and changed positions within that unfairly structured world. We may work for change. If we don't, everything will fail.*

—Richard Delgado, *The Rodrigo Chronicles*  
(New York and London: NYU Press 1995: 34)

### INTRODUCTION

Mainstream sociological currents on race have historically followed whites' racial "common sense."<sup>1</sup> Thus, well before Wilson published his immensely popular *The Declining Significance of Race* (1978), whites had expressed in interviews and surveys that they did not believe racism was a significant fact of life in America, that the plight of minorities was their own doing, and that it was whites who were suffering from "reverse discrimination," a view already captured in interviews conducted by Bob Blauner in 1968 for his *Black Lives, White Lives* (1989).<sup>2</sup>

In this essay we argue that sociologists have followed, rather than enlightened or challenged, whites' racial common sense (McKee 1993; Lyman 1994), as we examine and criticize the methods mainstream sociologists have used to validate whites' racial common sense on racial matters in the post-civil rights era. While we leave to others (Zuberi 2001) the detailed examination of the mathematical and statistical logic used by sociologists to justify the racial status quo, in this article we discuss six ways in which sociology helps maintain whites' declining significance of race

---

EDUARDO BONILLA-SILVA • Duke University  
GIANPAOLO BAIOCCHI • University of Massachusetts Amherst

<sup>1</sup> This is not a new trend. See Odum (1939).

<sup>2</sup> See also Caditz (1976).



thesis. While our choice of areas is neither exhaustive nor our discussion completely thorough, we believe it offers a fair rendering of the status quo and will serve as an important first step in a long overdue conversation in our discipline.<sup>3</sup> First, we examine the theory that has informed most research on racial matters and argue that sociologists have often relied on narrow analysis of racial phenomena that obscure structural features. Second, we discuss how the attitudinal research that shows tremendous levels of “racial progress” reflects, more than anything else, a new racial ideology that protects the post–civil rights racial order. Third, we discuss some of the limitations of various demographic indices to assess post–civil rights’ racial matters. Fourth, we examine how mainstream social scientists have “seen” minorities in ethnographic work and how they have presented them as “natives” with deficient cultures. Fifth, we suggest the new work on “social capital” tends to hide the centrality of racially based networks. And sixth, we briefly tackle how the manner in which social scientists report their results tends to distort the significance of racial stratification.

These are large claims, and we begin by acknowledging some limitations of our survey of the state of the field. Although we hope that our work will have repercussions beyond the narrow confines of sociology, the two of us are sociologists and the bulk of the examples in the article, not surprisingly, come from sociology. Yet, we believe the broad contours of the argument about sociology are applicable to other social sciences as well. Further, our choice of areas to discuss is neither exhaustive nor our discussion of the areas is completely thorough. Doing so would require writing a book rather than an essay, and an encyclopedic book at that. However, we believe that we provide a fair rendering of the social scientific status quo that will serve as an important first step in the long overdue conversation about how we grapple with racial matters in our disciplines.

Our goals in this article are sociological as well as political. Politically, we wish to do a blitzkrieg on the various tactics sociologists have used to minimize the significance of racism in explaining minorities’ plight and bring to the fore the need for a radical reform on how they conduct research on racial matters. Sociologically, we warn of the dangers of continuing doing business as usual without taking into consideration new patterns of racial inequality: a practice that produces “data” suggesting that race no longer matters. More generally, we hope to force a conversation on the myriad ways in which racial considerations shade the way we do sociology, exposing the façade of objectivity and neutrality of mainstream sociologists while hoping to entuse other sociologists to join in the criticism from the interstices of the sociological house to produce a more democratic, useful, and politically engaged discipline.

### **THE SOCIOLOGICAL HOUSE WAS BUILT AS A WHITE HOUSE: RACIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

Before we proceed with our examination of the various ways in which sociology’s white blind spot has limited its capacity to appreciate the true weight of racial stratification, we must set up the stage with a brief survey of the early history of the discipline.<sup>4</sup> It may not surprise readers that

---

<sup>3</sup> The authors, along with Hayward Horton (SUNY-Albany), are working on a book manuscript on the various ways in which social scientists have diminished the importance of racism, tentatively titled *Anything but Racism: How Social Scientists Limit the Significance of Racism*.

<sup>4</sup> A full analysis of how race organized the early sociological project can be found in our forthcoming book *Anything but Racism*.

among the writings of “founding fathers” of North American sociology, openly racist views such as the admiration of eugenics are occasionally found. Frank H. Henkins, president of the ASA in the 1930s and of the American Population Society in the 1940s, authored in 1928 *The Racial Basis of Civilization: A Critique of the Nordic Theory* and is today remembered as someone “who denounced racist policies” and who believed in the desirability of “racially mixed” populations.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, despite its “critique” of the “Nordic theory” of civilization, much of the book’s attempt at finding a more moderate, but in the end no less racist, theory of civilization reads today like a racist tract, lambasting “race romantics” and others who believe that races are equal, instead attempting to revive cranial measurements and other racist pseudoscience. Henkins today is little more than a historical footnote of little consequence to contemporary scholars, as are some of the other, more extreme racist writers in early U.S. sociology. What may surprise readers, however, is that the views of the like of Henkins were not that exceptional among the founders of the discipline.

Our survey of early U.S. sociology, which we more or less arbitrarily define as existing from the first sociology texts in the 1850s (the first two books with the word in the title were defenses of slavery, as we describe below) to the Chicago School in the 1930s shows that the discipline, far from being racially progressive, was deeply shaped by the dominant racial commonsense of the time. Even early scholars who today are credited as being racially progressive, like Robert Park, were part of what we’ve described elsewhere as the racial gaze of early sociologists, tending to see social differences as rooted in biology, and preoccupied with advancing U.S. civilization in face of the practices of the racially undesirable. The first two books written in the United States with the word “sociology” in the title were racist tracts in defense of slavery: Henry Hugues’ *Treatise on Sociology: Theoretical and Practical* (1854) and George Fitzhugh’s *Sociology for the South* (1854). These books reflected the paternalist concern with social problems of early sociologists, a conservative reform agenda, and the belief in biologically rooted racial differences, which was common among early authors.

What we call sociology today emerged out of two intellectual springs: the social science movement and the Social Gospel movement. The “social science movement” sprouted out of Europe with enlightenment scholars challenging religious dogma, the work of Adam Smith, and other Scottish Moralists<sup>6</sup> anchoring human behavior in individuals’ free will, and the work of Charles Darwin (Bernard and Bernard 1943; Haskell 1977). The essence of this movement was “to understand and correct the social evils of the times” and synthesized material from all fields of knowledge into “social science” (Bernard and Bernard 1943: 25–26). According to Haskell (1977), “the social science movement” in the United States grew out of charity work, literary work, romanticism, transcendentalism, and reform work and cannot be seen as what we call today “social science.” However, we need to make clear that despite the humanistic bent of the social science movement, this movement had a “conservative reform” basis (Haskell 1977: 63); a movement for the creation of “canons,” “standards,” and “authority” that culminated, among other things, with the “creation of the modern American university and a system of professional and quasi-professional functional elites built upon it” (64). More to the point,

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?section=Presidents&name=Frank+H.+Hankins>. Accessed on 04/01/06.

<sup>6</sup> This term refers to Scottish philosophers, such as David Hume, Adam Smith, and Francis Hutcheson, who, in the 18th century, wrote treatises to set the foundation for the study of “man and society.” Many scholars argue that they set the foundations for sociology. For a discussion of their work, see Louis Schneider (editor and writer of Introduction), *The Scottish Moralists: On Human Nature and Society*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press (1967).

members of the movement represented “local elites who saw increasing economic inequality as a serious threat to social stability and a moral society” (Smith 1994: 17).

The second spring from which sociology emanated was the Social Gospel movement. According to Ronald C. White (2002: xxiii), the Social Gospel movement was “basically an indigenous movement growing within the matrix of American Protestantism” that interacted with “the changing problems of an increasingly industrialized and urbanized nation” which led to “a crusade for social justice in many areas of social life.” Yet, as in the case of the social science movement, the Social Gospel movement was not as progressive as one would believe. Although almost every commentator agrees that the movement had consistently progressive views on class issues, its stand on racial matters was neither consistent nor progressive. On race issues, for instance, white members of the movement did very little until the 1940s (Carter 1954) or had views or positions that were plainly racist (Gossett 1997). Carter, for example, discusses how when the movement began to discuss race issues within the Church, “its pronouncements on race . . . very often got no further than the ‘separate but equal’ formula” (1954: 195). Gossett (1997) documents how Josiah Strong, one of the movement’s foremost leaders, conceived of race inequality as “just part of the cosmic struggle for existence and part of the larger plan of the Almighty” (179). Thus, in addressing the disappearance of native peoples all over the world, Strong stated plainly his Anglo-Saxon stance on the matter: “It would seem as if all these inferior tribes [are] only precursors of a superior race, voices in the wilderness carrying, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord’ ” (as cited in Gossett 1997: 187).

But were the first generation of sociologists much better than those who planted the seeds of sociology? We believe the record shows that most were either outright racist (e.g., Frank H. Giddings, Edward Allsworth Ross, Charles Ellwood, etc.) or what George Fredrickson (1987) has labeled as “accommodationist racists” (e.g., Albion Small, Robert E. Park, Frank Lester Ward, William Graham Sumner, Charles Horton Cooley, among others). Giddings, for example, suggested that a basic social force, and the main subject of his *The Element of Sociology* (1922), was the “consciousness of kind.” Thus, he posited that “Our conduct toward those whom we feel to be most like ourselves is instinctively and rationally different from our conduct toward others, whom we believe to be less than ourselves” (1922: 328). Giddings had also supported American colonialism in 1898 as progressive:

My studies of theoretical sociology long ago led me to believe that the combination of small states into larger political aggregates must continue until all semi-civilized, barbarian, and savage communities of the world are brought under the protection of the larger civilized nations. (1901: v)

And his plan for the colonies was ruthless:

It has been abundantly demonstrated, however, that the white races can never colonize the strictly tropical portions of the world; and if the vast possibilities of the torrid zone are to be developed for the benefit of mankind, one of two alternatives must boldly and definitely be chosen. Either the tropics must be held by northern nations as plantations, to be exploited remorselessly in the old-fashioned way for the benefit of their owners, without regard to the well-being of their native populations; or they must be held as territorial possessions, to be governed firmly, in the interest both of the world at large and of their own native inhabitants, by administrative agents appointed and directed by the home governments of the northern nations. (1901: 284)

An example of the accommodationist racist was Graham Sumner. Sumner, like many early socio-logists, did not say much about race. This fact, according to Stanfield (1985: 23), was because Sumner, like almost all early sociologists, accepted the prevailing dogma “that the inferiority of blacks made them irrelevant as subjects of inquiry.” Yet, Sumner made statements that revealed he was definitely not a race egalitarian. He stated that race mixing was “physically injurious”

[in *Popular Science Monthly*, 292] and opposed suffrage for blacks (Starr 1925: 62–63). And in case there are any doubts, he said that, “if you had asked Thomas Jefferson whether the statement, ‘All men are created equal’ was meant to include Negroes, Jefferson would have replied that ‘he was not talking about negroes’ ” (Gossett 1997: 154). In his magnum opus book *Folkways*, which some still cite as source of authority on the notion of ethnocentrism, Sumner objected to any intervention in the South—hence the continuity with his *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*—and provided the conceptual language for the Southern way of thinking with his famous indictment that mores cannot be changed through legislation.

In our Southern states, before the civil war whites and blacks had formed habits of action and feeling towards each other. They lived in peace and concord, and each one grew up in the ways which were traditional and customary. . . .The two races have not yet made new mores. Vain attempts have been made to control the new order by legislation. The only result is the proof that legislation cannot make mores. (77)

In the same book Sumner, who regarded slavery as “due to the ill feelings towards members of an out-group” (261), still described the institution as “a great schoolmaster to teach men steady work” (262). He also supported Jim Crow for health and police control reasons and rationalized the racial state of affairs as follows: “The contact of two races and two civilizations cannot be settled by any dogma . . . [or] . . . sentimental generalities” (306).

Another example of a sociologist whose racial views and their impact on his work have been largely unexplored is Robert E. Park. In 1914, at 50 years old, he joined The University of Chicago as a professor of sociology and went on to provide intellectual direction for the generation of Chicago School scholars.<sup>7</sup> Park did not write much directly about race relations and is sometimes described as being especially enlightened on racial matters in comparison with his contemporaries. He worked early in his career with Booker T. Washington and trained black scholars such as Franklin Frazier and Charles Johnson, among others.<sup>8</sup> Closer inspection reveals otherwise. At a time when the debate between biology and environment as determinant of “races” was important, it is clear that Park did not make a complete break with biological conceptions of race. Of the “racial temperament of Negroes,” he writes that “[t]he Negro is, by natural disposition, neither an intellectual nor an idealist, like the Jew. . . .He is primarily an artist, loving life for its own sake. His métier is expression rather than action.” These are “elementary but distinctive characteristics, determined by physical organizations and transmitted biologically” (1921: 138–139).

In his 1926 article “Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific,” he repeated his biologically mediated reading of race. Albeit he takes a stand against those who believe that “civilization” is a biological product [“For civilization is not . . . a biological, but a social, product” (138)] and, here and there, vacillated with a social constructionist view of race [“that somewhat mythical entity that we call race” (141)], his in-between view on race left the biological interpretation of racial phenomena in place. Following this biological analogy, he then proceeded to suggest that the great changes in technology and communication had allowed tremendous

---

<sup>7</sup> All the biographical material here comes from Winifred Raushenbush, 1979, *Robert E. Park: Biography of a Sociologist* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press) and Park’s own autobiographical note in his posthumously edited book by E.C. Hughes, Charles S. Johnson, Jitsuiichi Masuoka, Robert Redfield, and Louis Wirth, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press).

<sup>8</sup> This argument holds little water. Was slave owner Thomas Jefferson exempted from participating and endorsing the racial structure because he had a romantic liaison with Sally Hemings? Was sociologist Frank H Hankins, author of the racist tract *The Racial Basis of Civilization*, not racist because he trained—or William Graham Sumner because he mentored George A Haynes, founder and director of the Urban League?

levels of migration, which, in turn, distilled even further the biological process. He then ended his essay by repeating his naturalization and reification of race relations through the notion of “race relations cycle,” adding the notion that cross-racial “friendships” could break up and speed up the cycle:

These friendships, particularly in a democratic society like our own, cut across and eventually undermine all the barriers of racial segregation and caste by which races seek to maintain their integrity. . . . It was the intimate and personal relations which grew up between the Negro slave and his white master that undermined and weakened the system of slavery from within, long before it was attacked from without. (150–151)

Park’s racial gaze was no different than that of his contemporaries and had two elements: (1) an incomplete break with a biological conception of race, if not an outright adherence to it and (2) a commitment to a civilizational narrative, that is, tending to understand racial differences from the point of view of improving U.S. civilization by purifying, or at least neutralizing, it from the influences of racial others, who were perceived as backwards and carriers of anti-modern tendencies. Before moving on, we want to reiterate that the influence of early scholars was decisive for the ways that race would be theorized and under-theorized later on. If for early scholars biology was determinant in the last instance, and biological differences became less important for sociologists in subsequent years, other legacies remained. Subsequent scholars would continue to understand the influence of minorities as detrimental to national progress, if now blaming minorities’ cultural deficiencies rather than their biological stock. But more to the point, subsequent scholars in the discipline’s mainstream, when faced with racially distinctive outcomes, would continue to see race (as a feature of individuals or communities) but not racism (as a feature of society and as related to domination and hierarchy). This search for individual explanations is the foundation of the narrow theorization that would characterize much of the discipline in years to come.

### **A WEAK THEORY GUARANTEES A WEAK ANALYSIS: HOW SOCIOLOGISTS’ NARROW RACIAL THEORIZATIONS LEADS TO A NARROW INTERPRETATION**

Social analysis always follows our understandings of how the world is organized. As Werner Heisenberg, Nobel Laureate in physics, has pointed out, “What we observe is not nature itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning” (as cited by Shermer 1997: 46). Our contention is that contemporary mainstream sociology has observed racial matters with a weak theory and, hence, has not “seen” the significance of racial stratification in America.<sup>9</sup> In previous work, Bonilla-Silva (1997, 1999, 2001) has argued that sociology is invested in an ideological conceptualization of “racism” and has refused to take seriously any structural interpretation. In general, sociologists either begin from an atheoretical standpoint (Willie 1983) or regard racism as erratic or irrational “beliefs” (belief in the superiority of one’s group over others) that some people have about others. In this theorization, the United States is portrayed as a relatively harmonious, meritocratic, and conflict-free society afflicted by the disease of “racism.”

---

<sup>9</sup> A weak theory is one that is less explanatory, and less “deep” in its reach for causes (Bhaskar 1985).

The earliest moment in this racial theorization (1920–1950) assumed racism would go away naturally as industrialization and/or modernity advanced or as rational actors brought the market logic to bear in interracial interactions (Becker 1957).<sup>10</sup> This version of the theory became untenable in the tumultuous 1960s and alternative interpretations emerged, such as Blauner’s internal colonialism approach or the institutional racism perspective,<sup>11</sup> forcing mainstream sociology to revise its racial theory. Racism came to be defined as a set of erratic beliefs that may lead racist actors to develop “attitudes” (prejudice) against the group(s) they conceive as inferior, which may ultimately lead them to “act” (discriminate) against the stereotyped group(s). With minor adjustments, this is how mainstream sociology conceives of racism today.<sup>12</sup> Unlike the earliest non-interventionist stance, the modern-day approach has a clear social policy: educate the racists, who tend to be concentrated in the South and among members of the working class (Adorno 1950; Lipset 1963), and racism will be eradicated. Although the new version includes the notion that racism is more than just ideas, it is still bounds the problem ideologically and assumes that it is ultimately something that we could manage via education or therapy.

These two moments in the theorization of racism have functioned as a “discursive formation” (Foucault, 1972) and have kept a more structural (or institutional) view on racism at bay as an explanation for “racial” outcomes. By failing to grasp racism as a structural phenomenon, racism has therefore been regarded as (1) a disease afflicting certain individuals, (2) a phenomenon that does not affect the social body and its institutions, and (3) a social problem that has to be analyzed “clinically,” that is, by separating the “good” versus the “bad” apples in the population through surveys on racial attitudes (Wetherell and Potter 1992; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). The various alternatives (including Bonilla-Silva’s own “racialized social system” framework) to the mainstream conceptualization of racism involve (1) the recognition that racism is societal and hence not the part and parcel of a few “racists,” (2) understanding that because racism is socially rooted, it affects all social institutions, and (3) realizing that actors in racist societies develop an interest in supporting the status quo as they receive preferential treatment at all levels.

### **THERE AIN’T NO PARADOX OF WHITES’ RACIAL ATTITUDES JACK!: A CRITIQUE OF MAINSTREAM SURVEYS ON RACIAL ATTITUDES**

Guided by a weak theory that regarded racism as a problem of individual pathology (e.g., affecting workers with an “authoritarian personality”), sociologists examined whites’ racial attitudes in the post–civil rights America. Predictably they found that racism appeared to be declining in significance. An early group of analysts described the change in whites’

---

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, as in all discursive fields, there are always alternatives. In *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* [1949 (1937)], John Dollard developed a holistic and materialist (in the philosophical sense of the word) analysis of racism.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 2 of Bonilla-Silva (2001).

<sup>12</sup> Despite the theoretical break of the “racial formation” perspective (Omi and Winant 1986, 1994), this perspective runs the risk of being co-opted as it focuses too much on the *ideological* aspects of racism as well as on the “racial projects” of certain elites. See Bonilla-Silva (2001).

racial attitudes as “revolutionary” (Hyman and Sheatsley 1964).<sup>13</sup> Although many researchers have continued endorsing this interpretation of whites’ racial attitudes (Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Lipset 1996), nuanced arguments have emerged from other quarters such as the aversive racism (Dovidio and Gaertner 1986), symbolic racism (Sears 1988), and social dominance interpretations (Sidanius 1999). Nevertheless, one of the most successful books on post-civil rights’ whites attitudes (Schuman et al. 1985, 1988, 1997) has advanced the new consensus among mainstream<sup>14</sup> survey researchers: the idea that there is a paradox in whites’ racial attitudes. The paradox, according to Schuman et al., lies in that whites support the principles of integration (e.g., agree with equal opportunity for jobs, etc.) but oppose programs to implement<sup>15</sup> these goals (e.g., affirmative action, etc.), a view long defended by certain researchers (Campbell and Schuman 1968). In its most current iteration, the view defended is that “[w]e are dealing with a fundamental transformation of social norms and with the issue of what this transformation means at the individual level” (Schuman et al. 1997: 306).

Because the normative climate in post-civil rights era has delegitimized the public expression<sup>16</sup> of racially based feelings and viewpoints, however, surveys on racial attitudes have become less meaningful to assess racial practices and have become like multiple-choice exams where respondents work hard to choose the “right” answers. For instance, although a variety of data suggest racial considerations are central to whites’ residential choices (Farley, Steeh, and Krysan 1994; Emerson, Yancey, and Chai 2001), over 90 percent of them state in surveys that they have no problem with the idea of blacks moving into their neighborhoods. Similarly, even though about 80 percent of whites claim not to have problems if a member of their family brings a black for dinner (Schuman et al. 1997), research shows that very few whites (less than 10 percent) can legitimately claim the proverbial “Some of my best friends are blacks” and that whites rarely fraternize with blacks (Jackman and Crane 1986).

Notwithstanding that most research on whites’ racial attitudes is based on survey data, we believe it is time to rely more on data gathered from in-depth interviews and mixed-research designs.<sup>17</sup> Conceptually, the focus ought to be on the examination of whites’ racial ideology and ideology, racial or not, that is produced and reproduced in communicative interaction (see Bonilla-Silva 2001). Hence, although surveys are useful instruments to gather general information on actors’ views, they are severely limited tools for examining how people explain, justify, rationalize, and articulate racial viewpoints. After all, people do not express their positions and emotions about racial issues by answering “yes” and “no” or “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” to questions. Instead, they express their ideological positions in talk and text. Despite the gallant effort of many survey researchers to produce methodologically correct questionnaires, survey questions still restrict the free-flow of ideas and unnecessarily constrain the range of possible answers for respondents.<sup>18</sup>

Of more import yet is survey researchers’ insistence on using questions developed in the 1950s and 1960s to assess changes in racial tolerance. This strategy is predicated on the

---

<sup>13</sup> See also Chapter 9 in Brink and Harris (1963).

<sup>14</sup> We wish to separate them from radical survey research, such as carried out by Bobo (Bobo) and Jackman (1994).

<sup>15</sup> The more sanguine interpretation assumes that even this opposition has nothing to do with race (see Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1996; Lipset 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Although survey researchers believe surveys are private forums, survey have become public forms of communication and, thus, less reliable means to assess people’s views on sensitive matters.

<sup>17</sup> For instance, the methods already used by DuBois (1899) could be used as a model.

<sup>18</sup> For an example of the efforts of survey researchers to craft better survey instruments, see Judith Tanur (1994).

highly questionable assumption that “racism” (what we label here racial ideology) does not change over time. If instead one regards racial ideology as, in fact, changing, survey researchers’ reliance on questions developed to tackle issues from the Jim Crow era will produce an artificial image of progress and miss most of whites’ contemporary racial nightmares. The “paradox” of whites’ racial attitudes is the product of the methodology and the conceptual apparatus used to examine post-civil rights “racism” (racial ideology). Today most whites reject the old Jim Crow racial tenets in public discourse,<sup>19</sup> yet endorse new ones that help maintain contemporary white supremacy. Rather than a paradox, this is the post-civil rights way in which most whites defend the racial status quo (Brooks 1990; Smith 1995; Bonilla-Silva 2001).

**IF THE INDEX DOESN'T FIT, YOU MUST  
ACQUIT: HOW INDICES THAT DON'T MEAN  
MUCH HELP SUPPORT WHITES' RACIAL  
COMMON SENSE**

Another important strategy to produce what Alphonso Pinkney (1984) has labeled as “the myth of black progress” is relying on traditional demographic indices to assess the status of racial minorities. For example, if the goal of researchers is presenting a felicitous image of blacks (or other minority groups) in the post-civil rights era, they can rely on the index of occupational dissimilarity, or present data on life expectancy, or even use traditional indices to measure residential segregation and compare them to those of the 1940s and 1950s (Farley and Frey 1994). Although many of these indices are used as if they were sophisticated measures, the reality is otherwise, as they essentially rely on “simple numerical and percentage comparisons of the numbers and proportions of persons in each race/ethnicity group in a population” (Murdock and Ellis, 1991:152). Relying on these indices as the last word is very problematic because the issues they presumably grasp have changed substantially, making them less useful and valid, in the sociological sense (Carmines and Zeller 1979).

One example is the index of occupational dissimilarity. After occupations are transformed into values using Duncan’s socioeconomic index (SEI), the dissimilarity index is computed based on the following formula:

$$D = 100 \times S^{1/2} w_i - b_i^{1/2} / 2$$

“where  $i$  denotes the  $i$ ’th category of [an occupational] distribution, and  $w_i$  and  $b_i$  denote the proportions of Whites and Blacks, respectively, in the category” (Fossett and Seibert 1997: 202; see also Murdock and Ellis 1991). The numerical value of the index can be interpreted as “the minimum percentage of one group (either one) that must change [occupational] categories to make its relative frequency distributions identical to that for the other group” (Fossett and Seibert 1997: 202). Hence, its interpretation is straightforward: the higher the index, the more occupational status convergence among the groups being compared (see Farley 1984: 47).

---

<sup>19</sup> Social scientists have very little systematic data on what whites believe and say about minorities in private, though anecdotal and ethnographic research suggests many whites have a double racial life (Cose 1993; Otis-Graham 1995).



The problems with this index are multiple, and many of them have been discussed by social demographers (see Fossett and Seibert 1997). For example, because *D* is not “symmetrically distributed around the point of equality,” it is possible for *D* to distort totally a situation (*Ibid.*: 203). This means that it is possible to produce false negatives (i.e., positive) outlooks on occupational status differences between compared groups if one relies on this index. Another problem with this index is that it is usually computed using few census job categories (12 to 13 categories), which has been shown to underestimate occupational inequality—as compared to when one uses broad occupational categories (513 categories)—by as much as 28 percent (*Ibid.*: 236). Lastly, this index has been used to indicate large changes in relative values while ignoring huge differences in absolute ones. This was clearly explained by Blalock (1979: 116),

[If blacks have been excluded from a profession such as actuaries forever and increase their representation from] 2 to 12, there is a sixfold increase! Suppose this is compared with a white increase of, say, 3,000 to 4,000, a one-third increase. The blacks are obviously gaining ground through this increase of ten actuaries as compared with a thousand whites!

For example, Featherman and Hauser (1978) argued that blacks had a higher “relative upward shifts in current occupational status than did whites” and used that finding to suggest structural arguments were inaccurate. Hence, they concluded, “stratification has grown more universalistic” and “more rational” (225–226). In truth, whites’ status improved from a score of 39.5 to 42.59 while blacks improved from 17.7 to 25.76, with blacks clearly remaining significantly behind whites. Unfortunately, the reliance of sociologists on this index blinds them from truly looking at occupational differences as they materialize in real jobs. The index becomes a fetish and little analysis is done on how black and whites fare in similar occupations; on why is it that if this index has shown tremendous progress, the income differential between blacks and whites has not decreased accordingly.

Some early works in the discipline, interestingly enough, avoided these problems. In his 1927 *The American Race Problem: A Study of the Negro*, Reuter analyzed the job structure of blacks and whites using traditional indicators (labor force participation, occupational representation, etc.) but also included data on how inequality operated in various jobs such as those in the agricultural sector. In Harris’ 1926 study of the black population in Minneapolis, he analyzed the macro and micro determinants of blacks’ depressed economic conditions in a manner that is seldom surpassed even by today’s standards (see Darity 1989; Cherry 2001). Drake and Cayton’s *Black Metropolis* (1993 [1945]) makes use of statistical indicators in interesting ways. While they did make use of some demographic techniques, they warned us of the importance of the interconnection between physical segregation and related processes that made up “the color line.” The book contains significant descriptions and ethnographic examination of these processes, including the informal networks that maintained physical segregation, and the types of substantive segregation that took place even when there was physical proximity between groups. Importantly, Drake and Cayton are critical of positions that equate physical contact with substantive integration, calling it “doubtful, however, whether [such contact can] play a dominant part in shifting the line of color” (1993:126). They also call for attention to the context of these racial contacts, warning that in reality, “[s]uch contacts do little to create goodwill among white people, but they do leave a residue of resentment among Negroes” (1993:126).

With the advent of computing power since the 1950s, and principally in the 1970s and 1980s, studies of segregation have relied on ever more sophisticated models based on various indices and statistical techniques (Duncan and Duncan 1955; Farley 1977; Massey and

Denton 1985). Many students of urban segregation, however, have ignored the insights of Drake and St. Clair and have simplistically relied on, and even fetishized, indices of physical separation, that is, regard physical proximity as a proxy of substantive integration.<sup>20</sup>

Here we propose something different and quite heretical from the point of view of mainstream sociology, namely that such indices may not mean much by themselves and need to be complemented with other types of studies and indicators for them to acquire significant meaning. Dissimilarity indices are derived from Duncan and Duncan (1955) and are permutations of the formula offered above. The index measuring evenness, which is the one usually discussed in analyses of residential segregation, is

$$D = 1/2 (\sum [b_i/b - w_i/w]),$$

where  $b_i$  and  $w_i$  are the number of black and white persons living in an area, and  $b$  and  $w$  are the total number of blacks and whites in the city, respectively.

Scholars have pointed to the problem of unmeasured segregation because of the scale of census tracts (James and Taeuber 1985). In recent times, urban theorists have also pointed to types of physical segregation that are not visible through this metric, such as gated communities, which have been becoming more common in recent years with the economic restructuring of cities (Graham and Marvin 2001). More fundamentally, however, we suggest that “racial contacts” do not mean substantive integration, since there are significant forms of racism compatible with “physical closeness.” The apparent “integration” some scholars have noted in some settings (Farley and Frey 1994) may have to do with poverty and falling incomes of poor whites, or simply the restructuring of urban space.

This index belies a weak theorization of racism as it reduces it to a phenomenon of physical separation. A stronger theorization of racism—one that understands its structural features—necessarily calls into question racial practices, such as those that deny access to resources, in different types of separateness (physical and social). This would require more comprehensive approaches that include ethnographic and systematic within-tract studies of socio-spatial interaction between racial groups. The studies carried out by DeSena (1990; 1994a; 1994b) highlighting the role of informal networks in maintaining residential segregation are examples of what needs to be done. Statistical approaches can be useful too. Alba, Logan, and Sults (2000b), for instance, in studying the types of “more integrated” neighborhoods that middle-class blacks live in found that they tended to be lower middle-class neighborhoods, with the class standing of whites in the neighborhood being significantly lower than that of blacks in it. While some of these neighborhoods may appear to be integrating according to various segregation indices, a closer look shows that blacks still pay a significant “penalty,” a fact obscured by aggregate indices.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> A clear example is the patterns of segregation in Brazil. Brazilian blacks on the whole have many more apparent racial contacts than United States blacks (Telles 1992, 1995a, 1995b), but are much worse off in terms of income differences and labor market position, child mortality, and life expectancy, among other indicators (Lovell 1999).

<sup>21</sup> Similar cases could be made about how indices of residential segregation or health (life expectancy) do not tell the full story (index of residential dissimilarity) or flat out distort the racial picture (life expectancy). We explore these in the book manuscript.

## THE CHILDREN OF SÁNCHEZ IN THE INNER CITY: ECHOES OF THE CULTURE OF POVERTY

Another way of minimizing the effects of racial stratification is by portraying the effects of poverty as the causes of poverty; specifically, by focusing on the “culture of the natives” as the problem. While it is Oscar Lewis (1968) who is credited with making the “culture of poverty” argument, and Patrick Moynihan with making it part of the broader discourse on the poor, the argument dates farther back. The notion that the cultural inadequacy of “natives” is what holds them back in America is already present in the functionalism of the Chicago School that decried the lack of work values and cooperation within the city’s slums (Zorbaugh 1934). The “culture of poverty” refers to the values and behaviors of the poor that keep them poor from generation to generation. The culture of poverty had a number of components: lack of participation by the poor in major institutions; awareness of, but not living by, middle-class values such as stable marriages; low levels of community organization; absence of childhood as an extended period; and feelings of marginality, helplessness, lack of ambition, and inferiority (Lewis 1968: 189–192). While these arguments were originally developed in the context of the urban poor in the “third world” and were vigorously contested (Eckstein 1977), culture of poverty arguments became particularly influential in the 1960s and 1970s.

While the culture of poverty thesis has fallen out of fashion and most scholars today distance themselves from explicitly supporting it, the crux of the thesis still exerts significant influence: the culture of the poor (and generally non-white poor) is inadequate for modern society and is the primary reason responsible for their social pathology. A historical analysis of studies of black family life in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, for instance, showed that culture of poverty arguments were the single dominant analytic lens through which it was seen (Vasilikie and Demos 1990). In addition, some of the classic studies of poor underachievement and ghetto life relied on explicit notions of the culture of poverty. The explicit use of the term has fallen into disuse, probably because it rings as “politically incorrect.” Nonetheless, the understanding of underclass ways of life as pathological and causing the reproduction of poverty itself continues to be a central idea in social policy circles and among scholars and has deviated little from the original culture of poverty language in some quarters (Murray 1999).

But in addition to providing fodder for neoconservatives, the culture of poverty argument remains in its basic form an influential idea in the social sciences, as scholars still decry the lack of proper values of the underclass. Myriad studies in the areas of education, health, and social welfare implicitly hold up “pathological” minorities to the yardstick of mythical middle-class values: ambition, trust, and “believing in the system.” The idea that inner-city minorities perpetuate their own situation through self-defeating cultural values and practices—such as crime, lack of trust, lack of family values and role models, remains starkly influential. It is implicit in Wilson’s description of the “tangle of pathology” that besets the underclass; for Wilson, the departure of middle-class blacks from the inner city contributes to a lack of role models and proper values and contributes to the deviant behaviors that perpetuate poverty (Wilson 1987). It is denied in the first chapter, but is nonetheless present in Philippe Bourgois’ ethnography of Puerto Ricans of the barrio (Bourgois 1996), and forms an implicit argument in Conley’s (2000) autobiography of his life as a white boy in the inner city.

The argument is also present in ethnographic work of Anderson (1990; 1999) in a more explicit fashion. In *Code of the Street*, Anderson (1999) differentiates between “decent” and “street” families that negotiate the unpredictability, violence, and poverty of the inner city. “Decent” and “street” are differing responses, based on whether they have

regard for middle-class values, societal institutions, and the law. The “code of the street” is depicted as a deep pathology that emerges from experiencing exclusion from the wider social world; it is a culture of alienation, disrespect for the law, selfishness and mistrust, pathological family structures, and lack of self-respect (1999: 32).

The culture of poverty argument is deeply ideological, because as it faults the “culture of the natives” for much of the natives’ lot. It implicitly posits that there is, somewhere, an unspoken “culture of prosperity” that the natives in question lack or should have.<sup>22</sup> And what would the “culture of prosperity” be? It is the opposite of the culture of poverty: rooted in an Americanist ideology of meritocracy and individual merit, it is a culture that promotes ambition, trust, community, and respect for the law. We do not here deny that there are behaviors by the very victims of racial and economic structures that are detrimental. But we reject that these behaviors are products of a “culture” in the sense that Anderson and others utilize it: as an abstracted set of relatively fixed values and norms that determine action. Rather, we understand culture to be constantly in relationship to structures, and behaviors as both situated and improvised. To abstract culture from its context, and then to assign it causal value, is akin to blaming the victim of these structures.

### **KNOWING THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE GOOD COMMUNITY: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE DENIAL OF INEQUALITY**

The intellectual legacy of the culture of poverty thesis can be seen in the recent boom in social capital studies. Whereas the culture of poverty focused on the failings of the pathological culture of the poor, social capital focuses on the other side of the coin: it idealizes a kind of community life in which virtuous citizens take care of each other and enforce community norms. In the view currently in vogue, social capital refers to collective stocks of “trust, norms, and networks” in certain communities (Putnam 2001). Communities that have such stocks of “social capital” are ones in which people work together and buffer the effects of inequality or social need through community action. Social capital in this view has been used to explain a number of outcomes, such as health outcomes (Hawe and Shiell 2000), violence prevention (Kennedy, Kawachi, and Prothrow-Stith 1998), school achievement (Valenzuela and Dornbusch 1994), adolescent behavior and juvenile delinquency, and others. This perspective, which minimizes the insights of network analysts who have studied social networks as something to which individuals have differential access (Portes 1995b; Smith 1998a, 1998b; Stanton-Salazar and Dornbush 1995; Waldinger 1995), also minimizes structural inequalities. As a weak theory of racism, the social capital approach does much of the same as the culture of poverty argument by confusing causes and effects; by abstracting the features of a community (such as the lack of participation) from the social structure in which it is embedded; and by assigning those features causal status, these approaches obscure racial structures. In recent times social capital has become the inspiration for dozens of articles and research projects every year, supplanting culture of poverty arguments as the newest meta-explanation for the ills associated with economic inequality and racism. Whereas culture of poverty arguments implied certain kinds of interventions in the inner city, however, social capital implies a scaling back of government intervention at all (Muntaner, Lynch, and Smith 2000).

---

<sup>22</sup> For a critique full of irony, see Robin G. Kelley (1997).

Portes (Portes 1995a, b, 2000; Portes and Landolt 1996) has pointed to the lack of precision in social capital arguments and the slippage between its use as an individual attribute and as a collective attribute. Others have pointed out the circular nature of social capital arguments when referring to communities—communities that have “good social capital” are successful communities because they have “good social capital.” Well-functioning communities, the argument goes, possess this collective good that is equally available to all. In these communities, concerned citizens become involved in solving collective problems and enforcing norms. In the context of economic inequality and the rollback of the welfare state, communities that possess social capital are believed to be able to buffer negative impacts. Therefore, much of the current discussion on public policy and poverty has now turned to the question of how to generate bonds of trust in these deficient communities, because it is the lack of social capital—and not structured inequalities—that accounts for undesirable outcomes.

The community image that social capital studies evoke, however, is that of a homogeneous small town deep in the era of Jim Crow, if not before. And their definition of the lack of social capital in some communities is practically word for word the definition of the culture of poverty (mistrust, lack of participation, cynicism). Hence, from our vantage viewpoint, the missing link in social capital theory is the following: in societies in which resources are distributed partly along racial lines, social networks (social capital) will also be racialized. This means that social networks may be mobilized to further or defend racial projects, and this also means that social networks may not always be a “public good” whose benefits are equally available to all. In a racialized society, the benefits of collective associations and friendship ties will be deeply structured by racial rules. This insight helps make sense of some of the confounding conclusions scholars have come to regarding “social capital.”

First, social networks and norms of social behavior are often mobilized to defend racial exclusion in a racialized society. Blee’s (2001) study of women in white supremacist movements found the women to be involved in the life of their community, and found them to be recruited through social networks. Similarly, DeSena (1990) discusses the role of community women in gate-keeping and maintaining the homogeneity of certain white neighborhoods, while Waldinger (1995) discusses how social capital in ethnically based job networks help exclude other ethnic groups.

Second, individuals in a racialized society do not have equal access to networks, and networks themselves are racialized. Disadvantaged youths, for example, experience differential access to networks along racial lines, and African Americans suffer labor market disadvantages by virtue of segregated networks (Smith 1998a). The literature on ethnic niches in the economy points to this as well (Portes and Landolt 1996; Waldinger 1995). The ethnic networks of Cuban-Americans in Miami, for instance, may have definite negative exclusionary impacts on Haitian immigrants (Stepick 1992).

Third, the assumption that social capital leads to certain virtuous norms of behavior is both untenable and confusing of causes and effects. The vision that a community in which there is civic involvement is one in which crime and deviant behaviors are inhibited and it is possible to “walk outside at night” (Portes 1998: 3) commits the same error that culture of poverty arguments make: it is not possible to abstract norms or cultural values from the context in which they exist and assign them causal status without seriously confounding causes and effects. Social networks may indeed perform functions of surveillance, but there is little to believe that such surveillance would necessarily enforce norms of respect for the law or middle-class “normalcy.” More importantly, it is not possible to explain deviance or crime as a result of lack of participation or trust in a community that then spiral to perpetuate a community’s poor standing. Rather, such behaviors take place in definite social contexts marked

by inequality and structured along racial lines. To think otherwise and attempt to explain these outcomes by lack of social capital, culture of poverty, or another mechanism that obfuscates structural inequalities is to seriously minimize the impact of racism.

### WHEN REPORTING FINDINGS REPRODUCE RACIALIZED READINGS OF REALITY

The way most sociologists report results and structure their statistical analyses reproduces racialized readings of the world. Sociologists routinely fail to explain that the “race effect” presented in their findings is the outcome of “racism” or “racial stratification.” This leads their audiences to interpret “race effect” findings as embodying truly racial effects (“There must be something wrong with blacks if they are three times as likely to participate in crime!”). Therefore, reporting results on crime (Wilson and Hernstein 1985), marriage arrangements (Murray 1995; Wilson 2001), or a host of other matters without properly informing the public of the myriad ways in which racial stratification is at the core of these findings helps support racist readings of black-white inequality (Dumm 1993).

One example of this problematic way of reporting findings is Christopher Jencks’ work on the black-white test-score gap. Christopher Jencks has made a career out of saying that this gap is fixed (Jencks 1972). Based on his early work as well as his “meritocratic” thinking, Jencks has been an opponent of affirmative action in college admissions (Jencks 1992). Recently, however, Jencks changed his view and now claims social policy may help alleviate and even close the test-score gap. However, he and his colleagues still claim that “Neither differences between the schools that blacks and whites attend nor differences in their socio-economic status suffice to explain why blacks learn less than whites with similar initial skills” (1998: 257). Furthermore, the same authors claim they controlled for “fixed effects” (1998: 255) (racial/socioeconomic mix, per pupil expenditure, and curriculum) and thus suggest the net gap may be a pure “race effect.”

After the work of Jonathan Kozol (1995) and the massive work on differential treatment of children within schools (for a review, see Green 1999), it is just preposterous to make this claim. What is lacking in Jencks’ analysis and data is “controlling for” within school’s differential impact on its black and white students (e.g., school tracking, school differential treatment by teachers and school administrators, etc.). Failing to acknowledge that children in “integrated” schools have radically different experiences helps Jencks and his audience to believe the black-white test-score gap is a “race effect” rather than a “racial stratification effect.”

An example of this strategy appeared recently in the pages of the *American Sociological Review*. In a paper entitled, “The Significance of Socioeconomic Status in Explaining the Racial Gap in Chronic Health Conditions” (Hayward et al. 2000), the authors seek to disentangle the “race” from the “class” effect in chronic health conditions between blacks and whites. After showing that the “race effect” remains, net of education and health behaviors, the authors introduce the magic bullet of “class” (socioeconomic status) and find that, “Of the 10 health conditions for which blacks and whites differ significantly in terms of incidence, the race effect is reduced to nonsignificance for 7 conditions after measures of socioeconomic circumstances are included” (*Ibid.*: 925). Hence, they are dismissive of work that suggests racism is central to explain black-white health differences (Williams 1996, 1997) and point out that “these differences are rooted in the fundamental social conditions of life” (Hayward et al.: 927).

The problem with their argument—and the statistical strategy that it entails—is that class is not independent of race (these authors did not even bother to check for multicollinearity). Even Erik O. Wright, probably the most renowned American academic Marxist, acknowledges in his *Class Counts* that blacks are exceedingly overrepresented in the working and underclass categories and states, “By a large margin, the America working class now predominantly consists of women and racial minorities” (1997: 69; see also Horton et al. 2000). Hence, Wright points out that “race therefore seems to have a bigger overall effect on access to privileged class locations than does gender” (69).<sup>23</sup> Even the authors of the article in question admit “blacks and whites are differentially channeled into socioeconomic circumstances over the life cycle in a way that deprives blacks of good health relative to whites” (Hayward 2000: 927).

Our argument here on the thorny race versus class debate is not that race is more important than class. What we want to point out is that if race—and racial stratification—shapes everything in the social system, the debate should not be over whether it is race or class that affect blacks’ (or whites’) life chances. Instead, we believe the debate should be about specifying the independent and combined effects of these two forms of social stratification on social actors.

Researchers of segregation sometimes also separate racially structured patterns from racial structures, in effect “controlling for” supposed non-racial factors and diminishing the impact of racism. For instance, a group of scholars has defended the position that it is the presence of economic factors that solely explains segregation, a position largely discredited by counter evidence (Clark 1988; Galster 1988; Massey and Fischer 1999). Other scholars have argued that whites’ neighborhood preferences that seem like “racial” choices are not so. Specifically, Harris (1999, 2001) has argued that race is a “proxy” used by whites to choose neighborhoods that are better served by the state and have better schools, lower crime rates, higher property value, and so on. The implicit theory that informs Harris’ approach is that racial factors are independent from non-racial factors and, therefore, that it is possible to assume non-racial factors account for segregation. Most research on contemporary racial matters, however, has documented that discussions on crime, schools, government, etc. are highly racialized (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Bonilla-Silva 2001; Emerson, Yancey, and Chai 2001).

## CONCLUSIONS

We are not the first ones to challenge the sociological project regarding race (Lardner 1972; Mckee 1993; Lyman 1994) or even the methods sociologists use to investigate racial matters (Stanfield 1993; Stanfield and Dennis 1993). What we hoped to have shown in this paper is that (1) mainstream sociology is fundamentally connected to whites’ common sense on racial matters and (2) that the theory, methodologies, research strategies, and even writing style used by mainstream sociologists in the post-civil rights era bolster whites’ “declining significance of race” thesis.

To make our case we examined six ways in which sociology contributes to the reproduction of whites’ contemporary racial common sense. First, we documented that sociologists have relied on either a weak racial theory—or no theory at all. Such a weak theory has guaranteed

---

<sup>23</sup> The position we take here is distinct than Wright’s, however. See his perspective on race in *Classes* (1985), particularly pp. 96–98.

weak analyses and even weaker policy suggestions. Second, since the mainstream theory of racism conceives of it as irrational “ideas” that individuals hold, attitudinal research has been at the core of the “race relations research agenda.” We argue this is misguided because it fails to understand how racial ideologies work in the post civil rights era. Third, we examined two widely used demographic indices (index of occupational and residential dissimilarity) and pointed out their limitations. Overall, we suggested these indices are less appropriate to study how racism affects the United States’ racial polity today. Fourth, we argued that ethnographic work is still bounded by “culture of poverty” concerns and shades the way mainstream sociologists interpret the plight of poor, minority communities. Fifth, we suggested the new work on social capital is a more stylized version of the culture of poverty thesis. Finally, we argued that the way analysts report their findings and their reliance on the statistical technique of “controlling for” helps reproduce racialized readings of reality.

If this is the state of affairs, what can be done? We have been careful not to throw the sociological baby out with the bath water. We believe demographers, ethnographers, and social psychologists need to continue trying to measure inequality, observing social life, and surveying Americans on their “racial attitudes.” But we urge sociologists to undertake a number of steps to correct the dominant biases of our discipline.

First and foremost, sociology must engage in a serious debate on its dominant theories of race and racism. Continuing endorsing weak theories—or paying lip service to, for example, the social constructionist approach—will no longer do the trick. Although one of the authors has proposed a particular theorization (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2001), we believe the discipline at large would be much better off if any serious structural or institutional theorization replaced the dominant theorization.

Second, we urge demographers to incorporate historical and ethnographic concerns in their attempts at gauging how race affects the social landscape. This will lead to mixed research designs and new methodologies, such as the ethno-survey developed by Massey to measure immigration, implementing the insight of ethnographers on the manifestation of “everyday racism” (Eliasoph 1999; DeSena 1994a), or developing novel methodologies like the study of the racist event as conceived by Feagin and Vera. In our quest for these research methodologies, as we have shown, we are fortunate in our discipline to have pioneering models that provide us with rich insight: the works of Drake and Cayton, DuBois, and others. For instance, a typical summary table in *Black Metropolis*, in addition to providing some statistical measures, compares segregation in Chicago with that of the American South along 30 different dimensions including the social definition of children of mixed marriages, patterns of office-holding, access to professional associations, and ability to enter theaters and restaurants (Drake and Cayton 1993: 331).

Third, we challenge sociologists not to reify methods, indices, or strategies as if “racism” and its manifestations can be studied “one way.” Rather than struggling to be “methodologically correct,” we ought to struggle to accurately report how racial stratification affects those at the “bottom of the well” as well as those drinking the clean water at the top of the well. This will force social analysts to seriously think about how to examine racial matters rather than jumping into research with prefabricated formulations and data sets.

Finally, the myth of objectivity and neutrality espoused by mainstream sociologists needs to be exposed. For this, the methodological observations of analysts as different as Mills (1954), Myrdal (1944), and Gouldner (1961) ought to suffice. One needs not be a post-modern scholar to accept the premise that all knowledge has a political foundation. That is as true today as in the days of overt white supremacy. The task for us at this historical juncture is deciding on what side of the historical fence we wish to be. We hope sociologists increasingly



decide to move on the side of the people even if it involves some short-term losses in prestige, research funds, publications in prestigious journals, and even salary. It is better to go hungry to bed than to be in bed with those who make the people go hungry.

## REFERENCES

- Adorno, Theodore W. 1950. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Ainsworth-Darnell, William James. 2000. "Does It Take A Village? How Neighborhood Contexts Affects School Performance Across Racial Groups." PhD Dissertation, Sociology, Ohio State University.
- Alba Richard, John Logan, and Brian Stults. 2000. "The Changing Neighborhood Contexts of Immigrant Metropolitan." *Social Forces* 79: 587–621.
- Alba Richard, John Logan, and Brian Stults. 2000. "How Segregated Are Middle-Class African Americans?" *Social Problems* 47: 543–558.
- Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *The Code of the Street*. New York: Norton.
- Becker, Gary S. 1957. *The Economics of Discrimination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bhaskar, Roy. 1986. *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*. London: Verso.
- Bianchi, M.E. Matute. 1991. "Situational Ethnicity and Patterns of School Performance Among Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Mexican-Descent Students." Pages 205–247 in *Minority Status and Schooling: A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities*, edited by M.A. Gibson. New York: Garland.
- Blalock, Hubert M. 1979. *Black-White Relations in the 1980's: Toward a Long Term Policy*. New York: Praeger.
- Blauner, Bob. 1989. *Black Lives, White Lives: Three Decades of Race Relations in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Blee, Kathy. 2001. *Inside Organized Racism: Women and Men in the Hate Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bobo, Lawrence. 1999. "Prejudice as Group Position: Microfoundations of a Sociological Approach to Racism and Race Relations." *Journal of Social Issues* 55: 445–472.
- Bobo, Lawrence and Camille Zubrinsky. 1996. "Attitudes on Residential Integration: Perceived Status Differences, Mere In-Group Preference or Racial Prejudice?" *Social Forces* 74: 883–909.
- Bond, Michael Harris. 1998. "Unity in Diversity: Orientations and Strategies for Building a Harmonious, Multi-cultural Society." *Trames* 2: 234–263.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1997. "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation." *American Sociological Review* 62(3): 465–480.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1999. "The Essential Social Fact of Race: Reply to Loveman." *American Sociological Review* 61(6): 899–906.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2001. *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Brink, W. and Harris L. 1963. *The Negro Revolution in America*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Brooks, Roy. 1990. *Rethinking the American Race Problem*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press.
- Burgois, Phillip. 1996. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in the Barrio*. Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Caditz, Judith. 1976. *White Liberals in Transition: Current Dilemmas of Ethnic Integration*. New York: Spectrum Publications.
- Campbell, Angus and Howard Schuman. 1968. *Racial Attitudes in Fifteen American Cities*. Ann Arbor, MI: Survey Research Center.
- Carmines, Edward G. and Richard A. Zeller. 1979. *Reliability and Validity Assessment*. Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications.
- Cattell, Vicky. 2001. "Poor People, Poor Places, and Poor Health: The Mediating Role of Social Networks and Social Capital." *Social Science and Medicine* 52: 1501–1516.
- Cherry, Robert. 2001. *Who Gets the Good Jobs? Combating Race and Gender Disparities*. New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Clark, W.A.V. 1988. "Understanding Residential Segregation in American Cities: Interpreting the Evidence, a Reply to Galster." *Population Research and Policy Review* 7: 113–121.
- Clark, W.A.V. 1992. "Residential Preferences and Residential Choices in a Multiethnic Context." *Demography* 29: 451–466.

- Conley, Dalton. 2000. *Honky*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cose, E. 1993. *The Rage of a Privileged Class*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Crowder, Kyle. 2000. "The Racial Context of White Mobility: An Individual-Level Assessment of the White Flight Hypothesis." *Social Science Research* 29: 223–257.
- Daniels, A.K. 1988. *Invisible Careers: Women Civic Leaders from the Volunteer World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Darden, Joe and Sameh Kamel. 2000. "Black Residential Segregation in the City and Suburbs of Detroit: Does Socioeconomic Status Matter?" *Journal of Urban Affairs* 22: 1–13.
- Delgado, Richard. 1999. *When Equality Ends: Stories about Race and Resistance*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- DeSena, Judith. 1994a. "Local Gatekeeping Practices and Residential Segregation." *Sociological Inquiry*. 64: 307–321.
- DeSena, Judith. 1994b. "Women: The Gatekeepers of Urban Neighborhoods." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 16: 271–283.
- DeSena, Judith. 1990. *Protecting One's Turf: Social Strategies for Maintaining Urban Neighborhoods*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Dollard, John. 1957 [1949]. *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*. (3rd Edition). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Drake, St. Clair and Horace Cayton. 1993 [1945]. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dumm, Thomas L. 1993. "The New Enclosures: Racism in the Normalized Community." Pages 178–195 in *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Duncan, Otis and Beverly Duncan. 1955. "A Methodological Analysis of Segregation." *American Journal of Sociology* 96: 1226–1259.
- Eckstein, Susan. 1977. *The Poverty of Revolution: The State and the Urban Poor in Mexico*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Eliasoph, Nina. 1999. "Everyday Racism in a Culture of Political Avoidance: Civil Society, Speech, and Taboo." *Social Problems* 46: 479–502.
- Emerson, Michael, George Yancey, and Karen J. Chai. 2001. "Does Race Matter in Residential Segregation? Exploring the Preferences of White Americans." *American Sociological Review* 66: 922–935.
- Farley, Reynold. 1977. "Residential Segregation in Urbanized Areas of the United States." *Demography* 14: 497–518.
- Farley, Reynolds. 1996. *The New American Reality: Who We Are, How We Got Here, Where We Are Going*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Farley, Reynolds. 1984. *Blacks and Whites, Narrowing the Gap?* Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.
- Feagin, J.R. 1994. "A House Is Not a Home: White Racism and the U.S. Housing Practices." Pages 17–48, in *Residential Apartheid: The American Legacy*. Edited by R.D. Bullard, J.E. Grigsby, and C. Lee. Los Angeles, CA: CAAS.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Hernán Vera. 1995. *White Racism: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Firebaugh, Glenn and Kenneth E. Davis. 1988. "Trends in Antiblack Prejudice, 1972–1984: Region and Cohort Effects." *American Sociological Review* 94: 251–272.
- Fosset, Mark A. and Theodore Seibert. 1997. *Long Time Coming: Racial Inequality in the Nonmetropolitan South, 1940–1990*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Foucault, Michael. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse or Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Galster, George. 1988. "Residential Segregation in American Cities: A Contrary Review." *Population Research and Policy Review* 7: 93–112.
- Gans, Herbert. 1999. "The Possibility of a New Racial Hierarchy in the Twenty-First Century United States." Pages 371–390 in *The Cultural Territories of Race: Black and White Boundaries*. Edited by Michael Lamont. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press and Russell Sage Foundation.
- Gouldner, Alvin. 1961. "Ati-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology." *Social Problems* 9: 199–213.
- Graham, Stephen and Simon Marvin. 2001. *Splintering Urbanism*. London: Routledge.
- Green, Paul E. 1999. "Separate and Still Unequal: Legal Challenges to School Tracking and Ability Grouping in America's Public Schools." Pages 231–250 in *Race is . . . Race Isn't: Critical Race Theory and Qualitative Studies in Education*. Edited by Laurence Parker, Donna Deyhle, and Sofia Villenas. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Harris, David. 1999. "Property Values Drop When Blacks Move in Because . . . : Racial and Socioeconomic Determinants of Neighborhood Desirability." *American Sociological Review* 64: 461–479.

- Harris, David. 2001. "Why Are Whites and Blacks Averse to Black Neighborhoods?" *Social Science Research* 30: 100–116.
- Hawe, Penelope and Alan Shiell. 2000. "Social Capital and Health Promotion: A Review." *Social Science and Medicine* 51: 871–885.
- Hayward, Mark D., Eileen Crimmins, Toni P. Miles, and Yu Yang. 2000. "The Significance of Socioeconomic Status in Explaining the Racial Gap in Chronic Health Conditions." *American Sociological Review* 65: 910–930.
- Horton, Hayward Derrick et al. 2000. "Lost in the Storm: The Sociology of the Black Working Class." *American Sociological Review* 65(1): 128–137.
- Hyman, H.H. and P.B. Sheatsley. 1964. "Attitudes Toward Desegregation." *Scientific American* 211: 16–23.
- Jackman, Mary. *The Velvet Glove*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- James, David R. and Karl E. Taeuber. 1985. "Measures of Segregation." *Sociological Methodology* 15: 1–32.
- Jargowsky, Paul. 1997. *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Jargowsky, Paul. 1998. "Urban Poverty, Race, and the Inner City: The Bitter Fruit of Thirty Years of Neglect." Pages 79–94 in *Locked in the Poorhouse: Cities, Race, and Poverty in the United States*. Edited by Fred Harris and Lynn Curtis. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jencks, Christopher and Meredith Philips. 1998. *The Black-White Test Score Gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Jencks, Christopher. 1992. *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty, and the Underclass*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Jencks, Christopher. 1972. *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*. New York: Basic Books.
- John, Craig St. and Robert Clyner. 2000. "Racial Residential Segregation by Level of Socioeconomic Status." *Social Science Quarterly* 81: 701–715.
- Kelley, Robin G. 1997. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kennedy, Bruce, Ichiro Kawachi, and Deborah Prothrow-Stith. 1998. "Social Capital, Income Inequality, and Firearm Violent Crime." *Social Science and Medicine* 47: 7–17.
- Kindler, D., and L. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Race*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kozol, Jonathan. 1995. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Lardner, Joyce. 1973. *The Death of White Sociology*. New York: Random House.
- Lewis, O. 1968. "The Culture of Poverty." Pages 187–200 in *On Understanding Poverty*. Edited by D.P. Moynihan. New York: Basic Books.
- Lipset, Seymore Martin. 1996. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. New York and London: W.W. Norton.
- Lochner, Kimberly, Ichiro Kawachi, and Bruce Kennedy. 1999. "Social Capital: A Guide to Its Measurement." *Health & Place* 5: 259–270.
- Lovell, Peggy. 1999. "Development and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in Brazil." *Journal of Developing Areas* 33: 395–418.
- Lyman, Stanford M. 1994. *Color, Culture, Civilization: Race and Minority Issues in American Society*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1985. "Spatial Assimilation as Socioeconomic Outcome." *American Sociological Review* 50: 94–106.
- Massey, Douglas and Mary Fischer. 1999. "Does Rising Income Bring Integration? New Results for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians." *Social Science Research* 28: 316–326.
- McKee, James B. 1993. *Sociology and the Race Problem: The Failure of a Perspective*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Muntaner, Charles, John Lynch, and George Smith. 2000. "Social Capital and the Third Way in Public Health." *Critical Public Health* 10: 107–124.
- Murdock, Steve H. and David R. Ellis. 1991. *Applied Demography: An Introduction to Basic Concepts, Methods, and Data*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Murray, Charles. 1999. *The Underclass Revisited*. Washington, DC: AEI Press.
- Musick, Marc, John Wilson, and William Bynum. 2000. "Race and Formal Volunteering: The Differential Effects of Class and Religion." *Social Forces* 78: 1539–1570.
- Myrdal, Gunnar. 1944. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York and London: Harper and Brothers.
- Odum, Howard W. 1939. *American Social Problems*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant, 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (second edition). New York: Routledge.
- Otis-Graham, L. 1995. *Member of the Club*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Park, Robert E. 1950. *Race and Culture*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Patillo, Mary. 1998. "Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers: Managing Crime in a Black Middle-Class Neighborhood." *Social Forces* 76: 747-774.
- Pinkey, Alphonso. 1984. *The Myth of Black Progress*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Portes, Alejandro. 2000. "The Two Meanings of Social Capital." *Sociological Forum*. 15: 1-12
- Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital: 24:1-24." *Annual Review of Sociology* Its Origins and Application in Modern Sociology.
- Portes, Alejandro. 1995. "Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A Conceptual Overview." Pages 1-41 in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship*. Edited by Alejandro Portes. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Portes, Alejandro and P. Landolt. 1996. "The Downside of Social Capital." *American Prospect* 26: 18-22.
- Putnam, Robert. 2001. "Civic Disengagement in Contemporary America." *Government and Opposition* 36: 135-156.
- Schuman, Howard. 2000. "The Perils of Correlation, the Lure of Labels, and the Beauty of Negative Results." Pages 302-322 in *Racialized Politics*, edited by David Sears, J. Sidanius, and L. Bobo. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sharpe, Cicely. 2001. "The Interaction between Place and Power: An Analysis of the Impact of Residential Segregation on African American Status Attainment." PhD Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Ohio State University.
- Shermer, Michael. 1997. *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions*. New York: W.H. Freeman.
- Short, James. 1997. *Poverty, Ethnicity, and Violent Crime*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Silverman, Robert. 2001. "CDCs and Charitable Organizations in the Urban South." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30: 240-268.
- Smith, Mark. 1994. *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Smith, Robert C. 1995. *Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era: Now You See It, You Don't*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 1998a. "Mobilizing Social Resources: Race, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Social Capital and Persisting Wage Inequalities." *Sociological Quarterly* 41: 509-537.
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 1998b. "Employment Status and Outcomes as a Function of Social Capital: The Case of Whites, Blacks, and Latinos in the Greater Boston Area." PhD Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago.
- Sniderman, Paul M. and Thomas Piazza. 1993. *The Scar of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- South, Scott and Kyle Crowder. 1998. "Leaving the 'Hood': Residential Mobility Between Black, White, and Integrated Neighborhoods." *American Sociological Review* 63: 17-26.
- Stack, C. 1974. *All Our Kin*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Stanfield, John (ed). 1993. *A History of Race Relations Research: First-Generation Recollections*. Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage.
- Stanfield, John and Rutledge M. Dennis. 1993. *Race and Ethnicity in Research and Methods*. Newbury Park, London, and New Delhi: Sage.
- Stanton-Salazar, Ricardo and Sanford M. Dornbush. 1995. "Social Capital and the Reproduction of Inequality: Information Networks Among Mexican-Origin High School Students." *Sociology of Education* 68: 116-135.
- Stepick, A. 1992. "The Refugees Nobody Wants: Hatians in Miami." Pages 57-82 in *Miami Now*. Edited by G.J. Grenier and A. Stepick. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press.
- Sullivan, M.L. 1989. *Getting Paid: Youth Crime and Work in the Inner City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tanur, Judith (ed.). 1994. *Questions about Questions*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Telles, Edward E. 1992. "Residential Segregation by Skin Color in Brazil." *American Sociological Review* 57: 186-197.
- Telles, Edward E. 1995a. "Race, Class, and Space in Brazilian Cities." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19: 395-406.
- Telles, Edward E. 1995b. "Structural Sources of Socioeconomic Segregation in Brazilian Metropolitan Areas." *American Journal of Sociology* 100: 1199-1223.
- Thurnstrom, S. and A. Thurnstrom. 1997. *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Valenzuela, A. and S. M. Dornbusch. 1994. "Familism and Social Capital in the Academic Achievement of Mexican Origin and Anglo Adolescents." *Social Science Quarterly* 75: 18-36.

- Vasilikie Demos. 1990. "Black Family Studies in the Journal of Marriage and the Family and the Analysis Issue of Distortion: A Trend Analysis." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 52: 603–612.
- Waldinger, Roger. 1995. "The 'Other Side' of Embeddedness: A Case-Study of the Interplay of Economy and Ethnicity." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18: 555–580.
- Wetherell, M. and J. Potter. 1992. *Mapping the Language of Racism: Discourse and the Legitimation of Exploitation*. London: Harvester/Weatsheaf.
- Williams, David R. 1996. "Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status: Measurement and Methodological Issues." *International Journal of Health Services* 26: 483–505.
- Williams, David R. Yan Yu, James S. Jackson, Norman B. Anderson. 1997. "Racial Differences in Physical and Mental Health: Socio-Economic Status, Stress and Discrimination." *Journal of Health Psychology* 2: 3, 335–351.
- Willie, Charles W. 1983. *Race, Ethnicity, and Socioeconomic Status*. New York: General Hall, Inc.
- Wilson, John Q., and Richard Herrnstein, 1985. *Crime and Human Nature: The Definitive Study of the Causes of Crime*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Wilson, William Julius. 2001. *The Bridge over the Racial Divide*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1978. *The Declining Significance of Race*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Zuberi, Tukufu. 2001. *Thicker Than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Zubrinisky Camille. 2000a. "Residential Segregation in Los Angeles." Pages 167–219 in *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*. Edited by Lawrence Bobo, Melvin Oliver, James Johnson, and Abel Valenzuela. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Zubrinisky, Camille. 2000b. "Neighborhood Racial Composition Preferences: Evidence From a Multiethnic Metropolis." *Social Problems* 47: 379–407.

## CHAPTER 7

# The Not-So-Harmless Social Function of a Word that Wounds

DEBRA WALKER KING

*Nigger* hurts. Always. Whether spoken or written, the word has the power to assault racial dignity, silence voices, compromise social parity, and threaten freedom of speech. Because of its relationship to a history of overt racism, it has been labeled “the filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language.” It is a dangerous word, a violent word, which “hits in the gut, catches the eye, knots the stomach, jerks the knee, [and] grabs the arm.” No matter how diligently individuals or groups of individuals try to challenge it, co-opt it, or revise it, this word remains “the nuclear bomb of racial epithets,” a word that trumps other racial epithets in its fearsomeness, danger and noxious historical associations. Although most black scholars, activists, and public intellectuals understand the reasons behind these assessments of the word, not everyone agrees. Law Professor Randal Kennedy, for instance, contends such claims are flawed, primarily because they necessitate comparisons of oppressions that prioritize victimization, something he finds even more repulsive than the word.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of arguing degrees of violation, Kennedy suggests discussions about the word should investigate the depth and variety of its potential to “mean.” *Nigger*, he advises, must be taken in context for its meaning to be clear and germane to any discussion. According to him, context can transform this hurtful word into a more benign one.<sup>2</sup> Kennedy explains that *nigger* “can mean many different things, depending upon, among other variables, intonation, the location of the interaction, and the relationship between the speaker and those to whom he [or she] is speaking.”<sup>3</sup> Having heard this theory frequently, I felt it was worth testing. Below,

---

DEBRA WALKER KING • University of Florida

<sup>1</sup> Chris Darden, prosecutor in the infamous OJ Simpson trial, quoted in Margaret M. Russell. 1997. “Representing Race: Beyond ‘Sellouts’ and ‘Race Cards’: Black Attorneys and the Straightjacket of Legal Practice,” *Michigan Law Review* 95 (p. 765). Williams, Patricia J. 2002. “Diary of a Mad Law Professor: ‘Sensation.’” *The Nation*, 274.17: May 6, 2002 (p. 9). Farai Chideya, 1999. *The Color of Our Future: Race for the 21st Century*, New York: William Morrow and Company, p. 9. Kennedy, Randal. 2002. *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*. New York: Pantheon Books, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy. *Nigger*, pp. 174–176.

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy. *Nigger*, p. 54.

I offer four context-specific and, seemingly, innocent examples of the word's current use in hopes of doing just that.

## 1997

Aboriginal Australian Stephen Hagan attends a rugby game at an Australian sports stadium—the Toowoomba Sports Ground. There he finds his seat and prepares his family for an afternoon of pleasure, watching a game he's loved his entire life. That is, until he discovers the name of the section in which his family sits. Above his head, written in large letters, are the words "E.S. 'Nigger' Brown Stand." Although the word *nigger* is meant to recall the childhood nickname of a blond, blue-eyed rugby hero and Toowoomba politician, Hagan finds the word offensive and begins a legal campaign to remove it from the stadium. Even in the light of the word's "harmless" revival among a few Australian white and Aborigine teenagers, which Hagan claims is due to American hip-hop popularity in Australia, most black Australians find the word "extremely offensive" and humiliating. For Hagan and others like him, its presence and continued use, no matter how void of disparaging intent, are a painful reminder of the "increasing incidence of racist violence against black Australians."<sup>4</sup>

## January 2004

Philadelphia fitness expert, David Sylvester, joins 39 other professional and amateur bikers for Tour d'Afrique, a 100-day cycling event beginning in Cairo, Egypt, and ending in Cape Town, South Africa. Sylvester rides to raise money for a scholarship honoring his dear friend and fellow African American Kevin Bowser, who died in the 9/11 tragedy. Near the end of the trip he arrives in Lilongwe, Malawi, where he discovers a hip-hop clothing store called "Niggers." Thinking at first "this is a very bad joke," Sylvester investigates further. After talking with the two attending salesmen, Sylvester concludes, "This is no joke. . . . The bottom line is this: I rode over 12,000 miles on two continents through 15 states and 13 countries and broke two bikes in the process, to get to a store in Africa called *Niggers*." He feels guilty for his role in the vulgar ritual grammar that has grown to *infect* the continent he calls *the motherland*. "I am willing to step [up] and admit my part in the havoc that we have wrought on our mindset," he writes in an email now posted on his website, "but I think that we all are to blame."<sup>5</sup>

## September 13, 2005

During a live NBC broadcast of a Hurricane Katrina disaster relief concert, three-time Grammy winner rapper Kanye West comments that the federal government's response to the hurricane was slower than desired because "Bush doesn't care about Black People." Eleven

<sup>4</sup> Monaghan, Peter. 2005. "Taking a Stand: An Aboriginal Australian Researcher Battles to Strip a Stadium of a Derogatory Word." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 29 (pp. A16–A18).

<sup>5</sup> Sylvester, David. 2005. "The Nigger Email" [pdf], Kevin Bowser Scholarship. Accessed October 16, 2005. <http://www.contribute2.org/>.

days later his image and the phrase “Nigga, please!” become the focus of a major controversy at the University of Florida. That day *The Independent Florida Alligator*, a student-run newspaper, publishes Andy Marlette’s political cartoon rejecting the value of West’s statement. In a full-color cartoon, he depicts West standing silently, as if in shock, with beads of sweat springing from his forehead, holding a joker face card identified as “the race card.” U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stands across from him with her arms folded. A bubble above her head reads “Nigga Please!”<sup>6</sup>

#### 4:45 p.m., October 21, 2005

An email circulates in Gainesville, Florida (and perhaps beyond), titled “Why Is It Always Black Folks?” It reads:

There were a total of 15 passengers boarding a small plane on their way to Florida. One black mother and her child were on their way to visit relatives while the other passengers consisted of the KKK on their way to a convention. The plane took off and after flying for approximately 12 minutes an announcement came over the intercom from the pilot saying: “We have overloaded this flight. We are going to have to start throwing luggage out the window so the plane won’t go down.” Two minutes later you could see luggage being thrown out the window. Five minutes after that, the pilot made a second announcement. “We are still experiencing problems. We’re sorry, but the plane is still overloaded and we’re going to have to get rid of some of the weight so the plane won’t go down. We’re going to have to ask some passengers to jump out of the window when we call you by your name. To make it fair, we’ll go alphabetically. We’ll start with A. Will all the African Americans please jump now?” The black woman and her child continued to sit. The pilot came over the intercom system. “Next is B. Will all the Black people please jump now?” The Black woman and child continued to sit. The pilot came over the intercom system again. “Next is C. Will all the colored people please jump now?” All the KKK were now staring at the mother and child. The black woman and child continued to sit. The child then looked up at her Mom and said: “Mom, aren’t we all of those?” The mother then replied to her daughter, “Baby, we niggers tonight and the K’s come before the N’s.”—Unknown

Did presenting the word “in context” soften the impact of seeing it on the page or reading about reactions to it? Did it seem harmless? Perhaps not. In fact, each story begs the question of whether *nigger* can ever be harmless. The last example is especially poignant in this regard. It demands reconsideration of how (and whether) self-naming practices undermine or transform the meaning potential of the word, particularly when the cultural, national, and social contexts, or environments, surrounding those it names remain racially hostile and

---

<sup>6</sup> Marlette, Andy. 2005. Cartoon. *Independent Alligator*. 99.14: September 13 (p. 6). The cartoon spurred protest rallies and forums at the university and beyond. UF administrators, including President Bernard Machen and Vice President of Student Affairs Patricia Telles-Irvin, denounced its inflammatory and disrespectful content. Tremendous national responses of anti-cartoon support followed, and the editor of the newspaper received death threats. Debate about the word’s use increased dramatically as news that Kanye West, who uses the word frequently in his music, was scheduled to perform in the University’s O’Connell Center in exactly one month. References to his visit once again raised questions of who can and cannot use the “N” word outside a culturally “acceptable” community of discourse production. One month later, after Kanye West performed at the University of Florida, *The Independent Alligator* featured a cartoon depicting the rapper alongside University of Florida President Bernard Machen. This time West is speaking (rapping actually) the lyrics of his Billboard hit “Gold Digger”: “NOW I AIN’T SAYIN’ SHE A GOLD DIGGA BUT SHE AIN’T MESSIN’ WIT NO BROKE. . . .” President Machen, microphone in hand, eyes crossed and feet dancing, responds, “AFRICAN AMERICAN.” In this instance, even the absence of the word does not soften its impact of verbal assault. Marlette, Andy. 2005. Cartoon. *The Independent Alligator*. 99.36: October 13 (p. 6).



potentially injurious. Much like the comedy routines of Richard Pryor, Chris Rock, and others who use *nigger* as a comedic hook and intercultural bonding tool, the word's inclusion in the emailed joke brings an element of shock and defiant pleasure to the laughter that follows it. But, when we look closer, we discover the joke suggests something more ominous than we might have first thought.

The black woman and child at its center are situated within a space of potential violation and harm; yet they sit confident of their survival. Why? Because they choose to be *niggers*. The joke suggests that when black people are faced with situations of racist hostility and danger, the decision to identify oneself as a "nigger" can save not only one's own life but also the life of one's children. A verbal assault and a death threat are present subliminally within the joke even though it is meant to be funny. We might even laugh, especially if a member of what we consider a permissible in-group forwards the joke to us. Regardless of race, most readers of the joke admit experiencing an uneasiness that compromises their blind appreciation of its comedy.<sup>7</sup>

Neither the email nor the laughter it promotes diminishes the impact of verbal abuse and vulgarity the word *nigger* brings into the story. The history and the crimes of murder, disfranchisement, disempowerment, and human injury remain part of the word's historical content even when the context of its use is comical. Considering these observations, the following pages contend that whether *nigger* is the name of a section in an Australian rugby stadium, a store in Africa, or the punch line in a cartoon or joke, it remains, as always, a racist insult—a word that wounds.

History distinguishes *nigger* as a racial insult from other words of "mere insult" and ultimately renders it a word that wounds. According to Richard Delgado, who first framed the word's effects this way, "[r]acial insults are different qualitatively because they conjure up the entire history of racial discrimination in this country."<sup>8</sup> Like other racial insults, *nigger* has a social history it can never escape. The derogatory influence and power of this word arrived with its 17th-century invention by people who were just beginning to identify themselves as "white." The connotation of inhuman and barbarian inferiority built into that invention provided white racism with an onomastic tool primed to injure those it names as well as to justify slavery and the inhumane treatment of African Americans.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the word is *always already* a racial and dehumanizing insult. Its conjurational force and social violence as a racially specific or racially associated affront call forth and make present a history of hatred, murder, and fear each time it is mentioned regardless of context. In other words, *Nigger* not only names an entity and calls forth a presence, it embodies the presence called forth.

---

<sup>7</sup> Readers asked about their response to the email reported noticing a slight discomfort with their own reaction to the joke, but admitted they quickly overcame the feeling by ignoring it.

<sup>8</sup> Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2004. *Understanding Words that Wound*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> In a personal communication with the editors of the present text, Joe Feagin and Hernan Vera pointed out that "the N word is a U.S. invention that it is very hard to translate. We have seen it translated as 'negro apestoso' but this term is not included in the *Dictionary of Latin American Racial and Ethnic Terminology* (UF Press 1989), which suggests that it is a translator's invention. In Portuguese, the expressions 'negro ruim' and 'negro sujo' are nowhere near the N word in negative valence. Mexicans use the term 'chango,' that designates a monkey, but this is a regional usage; in other regions it is a term of endearment. 'Changó' and 'chango prieto' have negative connotations in some regions of Latin America, but it is also used to refer to whites and to Indians, both as a racial insult and as term of endearment" (email communication, December 25, 2005).

During the 1960s black scholars referred to this conjurational power as a “nommo force,” the spiritual-physical energy of words that enables them to call forth being. According to Paul Carter Harrison and others, nommo, the seed of word, water, and life, brings to the body its vital human force—its nyama or essential self.<sup>10</sup> Through nyama we become (in spirit if not always in action) what we claim through our names, nicknames, and our participation in ritualistic or ceremonial events. Under these terms, one might ask: what does *nigger* call forth? What do black people become when we claim it or align ourselves with it in ritualistic, verbal play? What violence do we claim and thereby validate?

In John Singleton’s *Rosewood*, the character Sara declares: “Nigga, just another word for guilty.” And, indeed, for the residents of Black-owned towns and districts from Rosewood, Florida to Greenwood (also known as Black Wall Street) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during the 20th century “nigga” did indeed conjure guilt. In each of these cases, guilt associated with a charge of rape gave entire communities of racists the “right” to condemn and destroy neighbors whose skin color marked them as *nigger*. Rosewood was burned and Black Wall Street was bombed from the air. Today, we have not moved far beyond defining *nigger* as another word for guilty. In fact, we have not moved beyond it at all. We have just added a new twist to the destructive potential of the word by redirecting its ability to condemn. Our society’s desperate need for blinding itself to the possibility that racism continues to structure our sense of justice shifts the possessor of guilt from the subject of name calling to the name caller—especially if that name caller is not black.

The most notorious example of this inversion and its consequences occurred in 1995 during the OJ Simpson Trial when Mark Fuhrman’s use of the word marked him as not only a racist but also a liar. In the midst of a trial many Americans thought would end in the conviction of Simpson for murder, the cry of “Nigger!” condemned a white man of deception while playing a major role in the legal exoneration of a black man. Perhaps, for the first time in history, *nigger* was “just another word for white men’s guilt.”

The events occurring in Judge Ito’s courtroom involving this word produced the politically correct use of a ridiculous acronym, a description of a horror, and a defeat. Suddenly, few beyond the boundaries of the black race dared speak the word without concern for repercussions. Instead, everyone speaks freely about “the N-word.” This name fragmentation does little to erase the bloody history of racism the original word conjures. In fact, it illustrates that history by drawing a tortured picture of the word itself. Through abbreviations, dashes, and, sometimes, quotation marks, the word *nigger* is castrated but not rendered impotent. Because of this linguistic castration, however, even the most racist player on the field can be washed clean, while his or her use of the euphemism slashes the souls of black folk just as violently, just as successfully, as the word it signifies.

Appropriation and structural revisions, such as “*the N-word*,” cannot erase *nigger*’s historical content; neither can it situate the word beyond the onomastic desires (or history of intentions) fueling its pejorative meanings. Instead, historical content is always there keeping hurtful meanings and memories alive, empowering signification, and building conjurational force beyond the site of current or “harmless” semantic intent. Joe Feagin and Karyn McKinney make note of this in *The Many Costs of Racism*. They asked respondents:

Why [is this word] and other common racist epithets often an irritating and painful experience for African Americans? . . . One experienced African American psychologist . . . explained to Joe Feagin that, when he hears the epithet “nigger,” in the back of his mind he often sees a black man hanging

<sup>10</sup> Harrison, Paul C. 1972. *The Drama of Nommo*. New York: Grove Press.

from a tree. This is not surprising, because he grew up in the segregation era when lynchings of black men were more common than it is today. In this way, past experience informs and contextualizes present events. Indeed, the impact of racist epithets is often underestimated by outside, especially white, observers. Some whites have the audacity to counsel African Americans as to how they can or should ignore such comments. The psychologist indicated in his further comment that his liberal white friends will sometimes tell him to “let go” of such racist comments from white bigots and quickly “move on.” Thus, it appears that many whites believe that as long as one has a strong sense of self, or as long as one does not exemplify whatever racist remarks seem to signify, such insults are “only words” and thus should not hurt or cause psychological damage. Such a white perspective suggests that its advocates have not been the recipients of regular put-downs and routine questioning of one’s worth. Most whites also do not realize that it is not just the attacks on one’s own person that a black person must face and process, but also the harmful attacks by whites that are held in the collective memories of one’s family and community.<sup>11</sup>

What Feagin and McKinney identify here as collective memory is the historical content of the word—a nommo force that does not transform nor diminish in impact in spite of attempts to re-appropriate or reinscribe the word. Regardless of how it is spelled or spoken, n-i-g-g-a-h, n-i-g, n-i-g-g-a, n-i-g-g-u-h, or n-i-g-g-a-z, historical recall and social injury are always threatening to erupt beyond the boundaries of suppressed connotative value. This occurs because, in each case, meaning can only occur if the word’s relationship with a history of subordination and murder is disguised, maintained, and monitored—kept just beneath the surface, but kept just the same. The violence inherent to the word’s revision is evident when its function as an acceptable marker of black identity crosses racial boundaries as it does in the following example.

[I]n San Jose, California, a judge allowed a white high school student to escape punishment after the student, angry at an African-American teacher who had suspended his best friend, scrawled “Thanks, Nigga” on a school wall. The judge was swayed by an argument that “nigga” is not the same as “nigger” but rather an inoffensive rap music term of endearment common among soul brothers.<sup>12</sup>

Although the judge buys this argument, not many blacks would consider general public use of the word acceptable in this or any other context. The assaultive nature of the word is highlighted, but ignored, in this example—particularly because it brings to light a judge’s choice to align his legal decision with the word’s assumed popular use without regard for its history of offense. Had he considered the full story of the term’s function as a so-called term of endearment, he might have recognized its violent history and become aware of its cultural censorship.

Musicians, comedians, writers, and other artists have for decades tried to transform *nigger* into a sign of cultural “cool,” a bonding tool used by members of racially exclusive in-groups. The attempt, however, has yielded little more than the global marketing of self-naming practices grounded in acts of ritualistic vulgarity. The use of the word in popular culture, as indicated in the example above, has led many to believe the word is harmless and, therefore, acceptable for general cross-racial and cross-cultural use. But, as Eric Dyson claims, this word has “never been cool when spit from white lips.”<sup>13</sup> In fact, it is so “not-cool” that the

<sup>11</sup> Feagin, Joe R and Karyn D. McKinney. 2003. *The Many Costs of Racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> Williams, Patricia J. “Sensation,” p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Dyson, Michael Eric, “Nigga Gotta Stop,” 1999. *The Source*. Quoted in Randal Kennedy. 2002. *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*. New York: Pantheon Books, p. 51.

very popular and outspoken white rapper Eminem doesn't use the word. "That word," he claims, "is not even in [my] vocabulary."<sup>14</sup> James Weldon Johnson summarizes the rules of cultural censorship Eminem honors in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912). His protagonist observes, while visiting a poor black community, that "among this class of colored man the word 'nigger' was freely used in about the same sense as the word 'fellow,' and sometimes as a term of endearment: but I soon learned that its use was positively and absolutely prohibited to white men."<sup>15</sup>

African Americans use the term to remain mindful of social realities or (in other words) "to keep it real." Some use it to "rope off turf" for profit in the music industry and in comedy. Others recognize it as a means of gaining empowerment and defying racial subordination while distinguishing themselves from (the culturally self-ostracized) assimilated "Negro."<sup>16</sup> In a small way, black intercultural uses of the word *nigger* clear a space for linguistic empowerment and communal privilege in a world where socio-economic power and black racial privilege do not exist. But in order to do this, the pain, insult, and defensive outrage that result from the word's ability to wound must be acknowledged internally. In other words, the word must be allowed to hurt, if only briefly. It must be allowed leverage to recoup its historical meanings; otherwise, why would white Americans be barred from using it?

Class and racial (and, sometimes, educational) distinctions make all the difference in terms of permissibility and linguistic "turf." But even when shared between streetwise associates within restricted racial boundaries, *nigger* has the power to wound, scar, denigrate, and silence those it names. The word is so potent as an instrument of harm it has only to be written, to appear in print, to contribute in a big way to the physical injury and "little murders" black people experience daily.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most powerful influences of *nigger* as a word that wounds is its ability to suppress meaningful discourse whenever and wherever it is used. Legal scholar Charles Lawrence claims words like it (including *bitch*, *whore*, *spic*, and *kike*, among others) can "temporarily disable the victim, and the perpetrators often use these words with the intention of producing this effect."<sup>18</sup> Clearly the phrase "Nigga Please!" in *The Independent Alligator* is used to silence arguments that President Bush devalued the lives of those affected by Hurricane Katrina's devastation, most prominently black people. As mentioned earlier, West is depicted in the cartoon as dumbfounded by Condoleezza Rice's use of the word.

Using this phrase as leverage for silencing an opponent or adversary is an old trick. Throughout the 20th century, the phrase was used to question the integrity, sincerity, and worth of words spoken and ideas shared amongst black friends or associates. It was used to silence but in a friendly, so-called, endearing way. "Nigga, Please," someone would say, dismissively. Laughter, a chuckle maybe, but never more than this, usually followed. It was suitable for both parties to offer a laugh just bold enough to signal a successful moment of bonding and brief enough to choke the subtle pain of a signifier game played against a backdrop of horror and

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Kennedy, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, James Weldon. 1912. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. New York: Penguin Books (1990): p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> Kennedy. *Nigger*, pp. 47–49.

<sup>17</sup> Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle Class Experience*. Boston: Beacon Press, p. 54.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence, Charles R., III. 1993. "If He Hollers Let Him Go: Regulating Racist Speech on Campus," in *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*, eds. Mari J. Matsuda, Charles R. Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Kimberle Crenshaw. Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 53–88.

shame, a haunting milieu of collective memory. Even amidst in-group laughter, the poison of the phrase's dismissive discourse, hidden yet coolly brandished amongst peers, had the power to silence the addressee while giving power and control to the name caller. And, although no one wanted to admit it, the words pinched like poorly fitting shoes.

The pain of subjecting oneself to such violence is rarely acknowledged among black peers who understand its function within a code of honorability. Within the code, *nigger* delivers cultural capital to those who are named by it. Within that social space, it not only controls and silences but also offers prestige to members of the in-group. If acknowledgement of the word's violence does occur, it is quickly and explicitly dismissed. Better to keep the wounds such name calling carves in the soul, private and out of view. It wouldn't be honorable or prestigious for someone accepted into social comradeship as a fellow "nigga" to cry or resist such social branding. To remain safe from group alienation and suspicion of betrayal, the person so-named must accept the capital of honorability offered to him. Pain must be swallowed whole in order for social allegiance to be framed and confirmed.

This in-group silencing operates without regard to who is being named. If, for instance, a member of the black in-group calls a white teenager *nigger*, the teenager raises in status among members of that in-group. As an outsider-within, he must be careful of using the term himself, however. And, most importantly, he must not reject the labeling or the brotherhood (or culture) of pain into which he is called by name. If he does, he shows disrespect and will be rejected—perhaps with overt violence and physical force. In this way, the destructive operations of silence and submission merge with a ritual grammar of domination and control to form a very precarious social bond.

The ritual grammar in which *nigger* offers those it names cultural capital and prestige is useful as a mechanism for adversarial or combative silencing—even when black-to-black interlocutory exchanges exist outside the sphere of communal play and "street talk." Note, for instance, how Malcolm X solved a potentially explosive situation during a public encounter with an African American who insisted on being an intellectual heckler. In a moment of certain frustration, if not also anger, Malcolm X called upon the word's inherent duplicity to provide him with the ability to silence his opponent while also claiming a pain-laden fraternity with him. He tells the story in his autobiography as follows:

[A] "token-integrated" black Ph. D associate professor . . . was ranting about what a "divisive demagogue" and what a "reverse racist" I was. I was racking my head, to spear that fool; finally I held up my hand, he stopped. "Do you know what white racists call black Ph.D's?" He said something like, "I believe that I happen not to be aware of that"—you know, one of these ultra-proper-talking Negroes. And I laid the word down on him, loud: "NIGGER!" (Haley 284).<sup>19</sup>

The epithet used in Malcolm X's staged interrogation stands at a crossroad of meaning. There the professor may choose to yield to a coded message of bonding and "common history" or experience the word's ability to deflate, wound, and quiet all who resist as an outsider. The question and its answer suggest that in the eyes of a racist all blacks are inferior, no matter how educated or distinguished by class, rank, training, or pretense. Literary scholar and critic Kimberly Benston comments that through the word's use Malcolm X "remind[s] the professor of a shared origin, returning him to the debasing ground of middle passage and slavery." In other words, beneath the intellectual fray and animosity of Malcolm X's name

<sup>19</sup> Haley, Alex. 1964. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Random House, Ballantine Books, p. 284.

calling, an entire history of “a nation dispossessed” speaks and claims the professor as one of its own, the denigrated and denied of a racist society.<sup>20</sup>

*Nigger*, in this case, disrupts, but does not deny, the horror at its core. With racism hovering boldly over the audience, occupying its attention, a more subtle ritual grammar, a grammar of vulgarity and harm, speaks from the worldview of the dispossessed, the angry, the humiliated, the sullen, and the banished. This subtle discourse conjures the familiarity assumed by a bonded fate that at once shames while it silences and unifies. Although Malcolm X resorts to a ritual grammar of humor and sarcasm to communicate what his earnest elocution does not, his use of a name that wounds is a serious affair the “brother” who hears it understands.<sup>21</sup>

The ritual grammar Malcolm employs oscillates between a horrible history of racist social, legal, and political corruption and black pain as a source of empowered black identity and voice. As a ritual, this linguistic practice gains meaning and influence through repetition. And, as a grammar, it follows certain rules of permissibility, syntax, and usage, outlined above. Considering the word’s meaning potential within black interlocutory exchanges, it is easy to consider the situation facing Malcolm X an ideal example of when one might effectively employ the word. Malcolm’s impressive use of the word (as a tool for silencing a “brother” who appears to have forgotten his past and his connection to a people’s struggle) doesn’t make the name any less painful, however. This is why the online and forum discussions about the appearance of “Nigga, Please” in *The Independent Alligator* were necessary and why the UF black students’ demand for an apology should be applauded.

Unfortunately, the discussion caused an immediate disruption of energies and meaningful discourse focused on the welfare of the powerless, poor, and black victims of Hurricane Katrina. Those whose survival depended upon a federal response to a natural disaster (that, for many, never came) were suddenly second place to a fight against a white cartoonist’s use of a word. In this way “action” became reaction and dialogue about the crisis at hand was consumed by the word’s function as a silencing agent—if only for a few days. The point of West’s original comment, whether truthful or a racially provoked misperception, was deflected as long as the central focus of discourse and outrage was the violence and violating presence of a word that wounds.

Patricia Hill Collins delves into questions concerning the utility of struggling with words like *nigger* in her 1998 book *Fighting Words*. She admits this word is considered one of several “insults of such dimension that they either urge people to violence or inflict harm” but cautions her readers that fighting about words does not solve problems.<sup>22</sup> However, if *nigger* is not silenced, it will continue to do injury to social parity and justice. *Nigger* is a fighting word in the both the street and legal senses. It is an instrument of “assaultive speech” degrading to those it labels—especially when presented in clearly racist contexts. What appears to be less accepted is that it functions outside a racist context in similar degrading and hurtful ways. Context does not matter when the subject of discussion is the word *nigger*. The violence and the threat of violence at its core can never be diminished or successfully minimized—regardless of cultural, social, or national context.

<sup>20</sup> Benson, Kimberly W. 1884. “I Yam What I Am: Topos of (Un) naming in Afro-American Literature.” in *Black Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. New York: Methuen, pp. 151–172 (pp. 151–152).

<sup>21</sup> King, Debra Walker. 1998. *Deep Talk: Reading African-American Literary Names*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, pp. 114–115.

<sup>22</sup> Collins, Patricia Hill. 1998. “On Fighting Words with ‘Fighting Words’,” *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 79–94 (p. 84).

Theories suggesting the repetition of the word in racially neutral contexts can somehow cleanse it are flawed mainly because the word itself is not neutral. I was utterly perplexed when I discovered the central objective of an “interactive” session I attended at the 2004 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity was to move people, black and white, beyond their discomfort with this word by saying it repeatedly.<sup>23</sup> The room was filled to capacity and no one objected to what was certainly a raising dis-ease with the format. Instead, the facilitator controlled the group, clearly identified as his temporary “in-group,” by making their fear of this word and their sense of guilt-by-association with it the cornerstone of what he called a “Message of Madness.” Perhaps the point was to encourage the audience’s experience of the word’s awful violence and thereby assist recognition that its continual in-group social use is madness.

No matter how much those who use the word *nigger* in social games of verbal play claim an unproblematic transition from hurtful to healthy (and often ritualistic) nominative possession, the pain of derogatory name calling endures. By denying this pain, black people, who self-identify using the word, become complicit with it. Pierre Bourdieu calls this type of self-inflicted social and communal harm and domination *symbolic violence*: “the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognized as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen.”<sup>24</sup> It is “violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity.”<sup>25</sup> It is not the same as the brutal exploitation and overt violence of lynching or murder; yet it yields similar regulatory and disciplinary effects.

While overt violence is often bloody and unquestionably offensive, symbolic violence manifests itself as domination through individual or communal acceptance of naturalized racial markings, social hierarchies, and codes of honorability. Acceptance of symbolic violence, through which relations of dominance are concealed, works to legitimize strategies of exclusion and build the political, economic, cultural, and social capital of the status quo. Within this lexicon, for instance, *nigga* is a “misrecognizable, socially recognized domination” through which black bodies become, once again, property under surveillance and containment.<sup>26</sup> This function of the word is most clear in the endearing phrase “my nigga,” which cloaks while communicating its hidden relationship to a history of ownership and racially prescribed containment.

Symbolic violence acts as a mechanism to encourage containment of anything or anyone, group or individual, that the established social order deems unsavory, unwanted, or unnecessary. This type of violence exists as long as the social injury and wounding history the words contain are euphemized or censored. When we accept appropriation as an act that changes, instead of one that fails to change, the impact and meaning content of a violent word, we censor social injury and history, but we do not eliminate them. The boundary crossing poison of the word is always present and claims supreme influence in all situations.

Maintaining misinterpretation (or what Bourdieu calls misrecognition) requires anyone who uses the word to qualify intent either through an assumed racial alliance or through argument and justifications that posture innocence. Unfortunately, such justifications must always contend

<sup>23</sup> Eddie Moore, Jr. 2004. “The Nigger Word: A Message of Madness” presented at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity. Miami Beach, Florida. June 1–5.

<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. 1972. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translation 1977. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 192.

<sup>25</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J.D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 167.

<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu. *Outline*, 192.

with race and in so doing expose the work of racist injury and historical violence existing within the word. In the Australian context sample opening this chapter, Stephen Hagan discovered the injurious word labeling the “E.S. ‘Nigger’ Brown Stand” was intended as a “term of endearment” honoring a white man “who was so blond and blue-eyed that when he was just a few years old, his brothers gave him the nickname as a joke.”<sup>27</sup> According to the stadium owners, the name had nothing to do with dark-skinned Australian Aborigines. Still, only the word’s symbolic violence was evident to Hagan upon first seeing it:

I’m 45 years of age now, and all my life I’ve only heard [*nigger*] used in the derogatory sense. . . . In primary school, in secondary school, people called Aboriginal people niggers if they wanted to make fun of them or belittle them, or try to put them off their game, be it on the football field or in life. Later, socially, as young teenagers, at discos, if they wanted to pick a fight with you they’d call you a boong or a coon or an abo or a nigger. Those were just demeaning terms that were used throughout my life. I certainly haven’t heard *nigger* used as a term of endearment.<sup>28</sup>

Present with the word is the memory of a violent past in which dark-skinned Aboriginal people were lynched and physically abused. This presence, called forth through the word *nigger*, is what builds the irony of the white man’s nickname. It is so strong in its appearance that it outweighs the signifying intent of those who named the stand in 1960. That intent does not resound as loudly as the hidden truths of the word’s inherent violence. Hagan rejects that violence and his potential complicity with it by rejecting the word.

The idea implicit in the contextual defense used by the stadium owners, that the word identifies a white man, implies that one does not have to be black to be called a nigger. Sociologist John Hartigan cites a similar claim made by a participant in his study of white identity politics in Detroit. The respondent he quotes felt the need to justify his white on white use of the word *nigger* by claiming “[y]ou don’t have to be black to be a nigger. Niggers come in all colors. . . . We are all colored.”<sup>29</sup> For Randal Kennedy, who also cites Hartigan’s study, this justification is enough to remedy any racially specific “misinterpretation” that might ensue from this white man’s use of the term. Although these defining elements influence meaning, we cannot dismiss the historical content that gives the word its linguistic power and social determination.

The argument that “[w]e are all colored” does not minimize the figure of blackness or its influence in terms of how meaning is accrued—the analogy merely qualifies and refines meaning. Without black history and its relationship to racist name calling, murder, and hate, the word is meaningless. Whether the context and intent of the speaker are innocent, inflammatory, or “friendly,” when blackness, as a racial signifier, and the history of shame surrounding it inform meaning in any way—which it does in every case I can imagine—*nigger* can do little more than act as a censored social compress.

This leads me back to my original question: who do black people become when we claim as a sign of identity a word linked to a history of pain and racist animosity? What do our children become when they hear their idols in song, poetry, prose, and on the streets call themselves (and those who wish to be like them) names that wound? What do we conjure when we fill our verbal play with a ritualistic grammar calling out to black pain and the sting of historical rejection and dehumanization—mocking it while also depending upon it to

<sup>27</sup> Monahan. “Taking a Stand,” p. A16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Hartigan, John. 1999. *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 116.



solidify moments of racialized, experiential bonding? Some would say we become “bad,” but only in the “non-insulting” way. And they would be right.

Aside from Kennedy’s support of the word’s not-so-hostile use by whites when distinguishing “good” from “bad” niggers is another history, one more layered and culturally distinct. It is a history of symbolic violence cloaked in myth and folklore. For two centuries, black folk heroes like Stackolee and John Henry stood on opposite ends of a spectrum characterizing the “bad nigger”—the former acting with profound rage and amorality in disregard to African American communal values and the latter moving through moments of anger and hopelessness in order to survive racism within acceptable moral limits. Contemporary images of the “bad nigger” follow suit. Through it black people become justified brutes living outside morality and community, unconventional men surviving the world’s hostility through unconventional means, counter-culture intellectuals fighting battles for the black underclass, self-proclaimed whores intent on “getting paid,” or, according to Maya Angelou’s softer take on black women’s struggle, “phenomenal” women living phenomenally. All are *baddd* niggers.

Both the nice (or good) and the ugly find their reflections in the oral culture of today’s black youth. We hear Queen Pen, for instance, rap (with pride) using words like: “I got mad bitches just wantin’ me and I got mad niggaz just checkin’ for me.”<sup>30</sup> Today “bad niggaz” are “mad niggaz” and Stackolee’s moral wisdom (or the lack thereof) and rebellious flavor comb the airwaves like thunder. Young boys (and, in some cases, girls too) who claim the name “nigga” pride themselves on being pseudo-gangsters, pimps and thugs—“mad niggaz” in pants they can barely keep on their hips and with a glide perfectly harmonized to the tune of a ghetto fabulous, cool only they can hear. While their clothes glorify prison life (and the prisoner’s lack of belts), their walk and reputation hark back to past characterizations of the “bad nigger.”

James Earl Hardy, author of the hip-hop love story *B-Boy Blues* (1994), describes the male figure in this coupling this way:

Here are “men” who throw their masculinity around for the entire world to not only see but swallow . . . of course, it is a rather grotesquely exaggerated take on manhood. But, when you are on your way to growing into a man (at least in years) and nobody has told you how to be one and almost all the “men” you see around you walk, talk, dress, and act like this, how else do you prove that you are a man but by joining them? Yes, you too have to be one bad mothafucka, the one they’ll fear the most . . . only the roughest survive.<sup>31</sup>

Yes, the “bad nigga” survives, but will the child who claims this persona find prosperity, education, political power, and upward mobility beyond the field of containment prescribed for his self-proclaimed “badness” by the status quo: the world of drugs, violence, and jail? Without breaking with an identity under constant surveillance by a non-black, non-accepting majority, can the “nigga” cross the bar of class and race to survive whole? Can black children move beyond the culture of grotesque masculinity promoted by “mad niggaz” without code switching in dress, manner, and, most importantly, in self-naming practices? History’s record suggests not. Furthermore, black activists and political leaders have insisted historically that only a full and eternal break with this word will suffice. In 1920, for instance, blacks attending a convention in New York rejected the painful reality and insulting power of the word *nigger* by saying so in the “Declaration of

<sup>30</sup> Queen Pen, 1997. “Girl Friend,” in *My Melody*. Interscope Records.

<sup>31</sup> Hardy, James Earl. 1994. *B-Boy Blues*. Boston: Alyson, p. 27.

the Rights of Negro People of the World.” In cooperation with other convention participants, Marcus Garvey wrote:

[t]hat the Negro people of the world, through their chosen representatives in convention assembled in Liberty Hall, in the City of New York and United States of America, from August 1 to August 31, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty protest against the wrongs and injustices they are suffering at the hands of their white brethren, and state what they deem their fair and just rights, as well as the treatment they propose to demand of all men in the future.<sup>32</sup>

“The Declaration of Rights” is intended to encourage black people globally to higher standards and higher social expectations than the word *nigger* can provide. Of special note here are the following two entries on the list of rights:

11. We believe all men entitled to common human respect, and that our race should in no way tolerate any insults that may be interpreted to mean disrespect to our color.
12. We deprecate the use of the term “nigger” as applied to Negroes.<sup>33</sup>

This word’s continued use in an Australian rugby stadium, as the name of a hip-hop clothing store in Africa, and in 21st-century cartoons and jokes defies both the spirit and the law of this declaration. These occurrences and others like them insult and assault black history, black people, and black pride globally. But what hurts most about the contemporary use of this word is that some African Americans choose to act with complicity by using it in self-naming practices. When black people allow this word to enter ritual grammars that define moments of social bonding, a nommo force of evil and hate follows; reminding us all that there is no way to escape the past cleanly—no way to banish horror from the core of words that wound.

So, how do we empty a word like this of its assaultive effects when its relationship to a history of pain, struggle, and victories won at great cost, great sacrifice are what give it life and meaning? We do not. Every time we laugh at this word’s lighthearted use, we drive a hole into everything decades of black pain and black struggles to gain respect and equity have purchased. Sanctioning the right of African Americans to call each other *niggers* does not soften the blow of hearing the word spoken or weaken the silencing shock of its appearance, unexpectedly, in print. Nothing makes the word less painful or insulting and nothing ever will. Beneath the rhetoric of in-group appropriation, bonding, and comic liberation is a sword pressed against the neck of social and political progress. Each time black people use this word, each time we forget or ignore its relationship to suffering, discrimination and disenfranchisement, we dig the edge of that sword into our own flesh until we can no longer deny: *NIGGER* hurts!

## REFERENCES

- Benson, Kimberly W., 1984. “I Yam What I Am: Topos of (Un) naming in Afro-American Literature.” in *Black Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. New York: Methuen, pp. 151–172.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1972. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translation 1977. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J.D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>32</sup> UNIA-ACL. 1920. “Declaration of Rights of the Negro People of the World.” Oct. 21, 2005. <http://www.unia-acl.org/archive/declare.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1998. *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2004. *Understanding Words That Wound*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Dyson, Michael Eric. 1999. "Nigga Gotta Stop," *The Source*.
- Eddie Moore, Jr. 2004. "The Nigger Word: A Message of Madness" presented at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity. Miami Beach, Florida. June 1–5.
- Farai Chideya. 1999. *The Color of Our Future: Race for the 21st Century*, New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Karyn D. McKinney. 2003. *The Many Costs of Racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle Class Experience*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Haley, Alex. 1964. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Random House, Ballantine Books.
- Hardy, James Earl. 1994. *B-Boy Blues*. Boston: Alyson.
- Hartigan, John. 1999. *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Harrison, Paul C. 1972. *The Drama of Nommo*. New York: Grove Press.
- Johnson, James Weldon. 1912. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. New York: Penguin Books (1990).
- Kennedy, Randal. 2002. *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- King, Debra Walker. 1998. *Deep Talk: Reading African-American Literary Names*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Lawrence, Charles R., III. 1993. "If He Hollers Let Him Go: Regulating Racist Speech on Campus," in *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*, eds. Mari J. Matsuda, Charles R. Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Kimberley Crenshaw. Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 53–88.
- Margaret M. Russell. 1997. "Representing Race: Beyond 'Sellouts' and 'Race Cards': Black Attorneys and the Straightjacket of Legal Practice," *Michigan Law Review* 95 (p. 765).
- Marlette, Andy. 2005. Cartoon. *Independent Alligator*. 99.14: September 13 (p. 6).
- Marlette, Andy. 2005. Cartoon. *The Independent Alligator*. 99.36: October 13 (p. 6).
- Matsuda, Mari J., Charles R. Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Kimberle Crenshaw, eds. 1993. *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Monaghan, Peter. 2005. "Taking a Stand: An Aboriginal Austrian Researcher Battles to Strip a Stadium of a Derogatory Word." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 29 (pp. A16–A18).
- Queen Pen, 1997. "Girl Friend," in *My Melody*. Interscope Records.
- Smith, Stephanie A. 2006. "Nigger," in *Household Words*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 123–148.
- Sylvester, David. 2005. "The Nigger Email" [pdf], Kevin Bowser Scholarship. Accessed October 16, 2005. <http://www.contribute2.org/>.
- UNIA-ACL. 1920. "Declaration of Rights of the Negro People of the World." Accessed October 21, 2005. <http://www.unia-acl.org/archive/declare.htm>.
- Williams, Patricia J. 2002. "Diary of a Mad Law Professor: 'Sensation'." *The Nation*, 274.17: May 6, 2002 (p. 9).

## CHAPTER 8

# Racism and Popular Culture

DANIELLE DIRKS AND JENNIFER C. MUELLER<sup>1</sup>

*Exemplifying the ill will, oppression, and domination of blacks by whites, the merchants of popular culture have used these icons to shackle our psyches as deftly as enslavers once used real chains to shackle our bodies.*

(Turner, 1994, xv)

*To pretend (as we all do from time to time) that film or television, for example, is a neutral vessel, or contentless, mindless, or unpersuasive, is sheer denial. It is, for better and frequently for worse, one of the major forces in the shaping of our national vision, a chief architect of the modern American sense of identity.*

(Williams, 1996, 194).

In 2002, the board game Ghettopoly was released, promising “playas” the amusement of “buying stolen properties, pimpin’ hoes, building crack houses and projects, paying protection fees, and getting car jacked” (Ghettopoly, 2002). Invoking stereotypical images that implicitly implicate the cultural deficiency of African Americans, the game pieces included a pimp, a hoe, a machine gun, a 40-ounce malt liquor beverage, a marijuana leaf, a basketball, and a piece of crack rock. The game garnered significant positive attention, advertised as a great way to entertain and introduce “homies,” coworkers, and children to “ghetto life.” Yet, this game must be grasped beyond simple considerations of entertainment or play. Ghettopoly must be added to the wide array of popular culture productions that exist as contemporary reflections of the continual distortion and misappropriation of so-called blackness by dominant groups in the United States. In this paper, we seek to illustrate the many ways in which racist popular culture images persist today, and how their continued existence reflects a white thirst for blackness that seems unquenchable. We adopt the view that marks popular culture as pedagogical and, against the backdrop of this assumption, consider what the racial lessons are that we learn from popular culture.

The concept of race in American social life is a concept under constant contestation, giving it no single fixed meaning in defining racial boundaries, hierarchies, and images

---

DANIELLE DIRKS • University of Texas at Austin  
JENNIFER C. MUELLER • Texas A&M University

<sup>1</sup> The authors are grateful to Glenn Bracey, Katisha Greer, and Kristen Lavelle for their helpful and insightful comments.

(Guerrero, 1993). Despite this fluidity, both historically and today, ideas about race have dictated notions about white superiority as much as they have about black inferiority. Although ideas about race are in their rawest forms fictions of our collective imagination, they have real and meaningful consequences—economic, psychological, and otherwise. Popular culture has had a centuries-old history of communicating racist representations of blackness in Western societies, giving it the power to distort, shape, and create reality, often blurring the lines between reality and fiction (Baudrillard, 1981, 1989; Pieterse, 1992). We argue that these productions do not exist without consequences—they permeate every aspect of our daily lives.

Popular culture has served as part of the ideological and material apparatus of social life for as long as it has existed. Most cultural theorists today disavow the polarities of popular culture as merely pure and innocent entertainment or as an uncontested instrument for executing top-down domination, adopting instead, as Kellner (1995) does, the model of media cultural texts as complex artifacts that embody social and political discourses. The power of popular culture lies in its ability to distort, shape, and produce reality, dictating the ways in which we think, feel, and operate in the social world (Kellner). And while popular culture certainly exists in many ways as a contested terrain in the sense that Kellner asserts, it has been frequently used hegemonically, as an effective pedagogical tool of dominant classes in Western culture, supporting the lessons that keep structural inequalities safely in place (hooks, 1996).

As theorists like Kellner (1995) and Guerrero (1993) have asserted, this is the promise and predicament of popular culture. Contemporary media culture certainly provides a form for the reproduction of power relations based in racism (and classism and sexism), yet its very fluidity and contestation provide some space and resource for struggle and resistance. This is the sole reason why challenging racist representations—in their various recycled and newer transformations—is crucial if we are truly, vigorously devoted to making social change a reality.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the United States, popular culture has assisted in the maintenance of a white supremacist racial hierarchy since its American inception. We provide a brief history of American popular culture's racist past to show that there is nothing creative about present-day images, ideas, or material goods manufactured by today's merchants of culture. Antiblack images are central to our historical analysis because, as Guerrero (1993) has contended, "Blacks have been subordinated, marginalized, positioned, and devalued in every possible manner to glorify and relentlessly hold in place the white-dominated order and racial hierarchy of American society" (p. 2). This is certainly not to deny a long history of exploitation and domination for other groups in the United States, particularly among popular culture ideas and images; yet we see antiblack ideology and iconography as structurally embedded in every aspect of American social life—historically and today. In many respects, this ideology contains the racial "yardstick" by which other groups have been and continue to be measured, and elevated or devalued. We hope to show that contemporary popular cultural ideas and images are recycled products and remnants of dominant ideologies past—ideologies that exploited, distorted, and oppressed people of color historically and continue to do so today. As popular culture is constantly reinventing itself under the guise of innovation, a historical understanding of these ideas and images is crucial to deconstructing their continued existence today as simply reformations of such deeply rooted ideologies, rather than truly novel inventions.

## Contemptible Collectibles

Although the sale of actual African Americans ended in 1865 with the official demise of the state-supported U.S. slavery system, the consumption of blackness through popular culture ideas, images, and material goods marked an easy, if figurative, transition in the postbellum South. From black-faced caricatures found on postcards, children's toys, and household items to 19th-century minstrelsy, these examples provide only a smattering of the racist iconography and ideology found throughout Western culture. As such, images of coons, pickaninnies, mammies, bucks, and Uncle Toms were born, to live out lives distorting the image of black Americans for centuries to come.

In the United States, popular racist stereotypes of the Jim Crow era easily became the faces of mass-produced lawn ornaments, kitchen items, postcards, and children's toys such as noisemakers, dolls, and costumes. Many of the material goods depicting black personas from this time, such as the mammy or pickaninny, have been mistakenly called "Black Americana," suggesting that these items come from the creative endeavors of black Americans themselves. However, this description is as incorrect as it is insulting, leading one author to more accurately describe them as "contemptible collectibles" (Turner, 1994). Perversely, these items have become immensely popular among collectors, with some originals of the era fetching several thousands of dollars apiece.

Manufacturers of everything from coffee, hair products, and detergents plastered the insidious iconography on virtually every type of household product available. Particularly prevalent was the image of the "coon," who, in addition to being depicted as unreliable, lazy, stupid, and child-like, was known for his "quaking," superstitious nature, making him an ideal target. Similar characterizations included the wide-eyed pickaninny and the image of the mammy (Skal, 2002). Mammy—the rotund, smiling, benevolent, uniformed black woman—is by far the most popularly disseminated contemptible collectible of all. Today she continues to happily oversee our pancakes and waffles as Aunt Jemima. For all of her popularity, no other image has been so historically identified as a fiction of white imagination than she. Social historians have pointed out that the existence of any "real" mammies in the antebellum South would have been very few and far between; her being overweight would be equally implausible given the severe rationing of food for slaves (Clinton, 1982; Turner, 1994). Yet the image of this obsequious and docile black woman has survived only to become immortalized through the mass production (and reproduction) of thousands of household and kitchen items made for "sufficiently demented homemakers" (Turner, 42).

Postcards depicting black Americans in various states of childishness and need have provided some of the most interesting snapshots of white thinking and imagination of the time. As if it were an aesthetic rule, adults and children were regularly depicted in print media coupled with watermelons. Even more disturbing is the vast collection of alligator-themed postcards and "artwork" depicting small black children and infants being chased or ready to be devoured by the toothy creatures. Apparently both alligators and their white American counterparts have an insatiable appetite for distorted images of society's most vulnerable members. Consumption here, in the Freudian and an all-too-literal sense, cannot be understated among this genre of "memorabilia."

Racist artifacts of the time were not limited to the enjoyment of adults, however, as children's toys represent some of the more pernicious forms of transmission of racist thought and belief. Dress-up items for children allowed them to "play at being a 'Negro,'" including wigs, masks, and a "Negro make-up outfit," described in a 1912 Sears display as "the funniest and most laughable outfit ever sold" (Wilkinson, 1974, 105). Indeed, blackface

Halloween masks and costumes are among the numerous racist artifacts created and marketed during the 19th-century Jim Crow era, and popularly collected as Americana memorabilia today (Pilgrim, 2001).

### **The Only True American Drama**

Many 19th-century Americans proudly boasted of minstrelsy as the first distinct form of American entertainment, laying claim to it as “our only original American Institution” (Pilgrim, 2000; Toll, 1974, v). In many respects, it might be considered the earliest form of American popular culture. Despite the romantic sound of such historicized ideas, to most people such entertainment was more simply referred to as “nigger minstrelsy” or “coon shows.” The typical minstrel show was put on by a troupe of white men in burnt cork black-face makeup, performing song, dance, and comedy claiming to be authentically “Negro.” Such minstrels created extreme caricatures through heavy mocking dialect, bulging eyes, and gaping lips, easily reinforcing and popularizing beliefs that blacks were inherently lazy, dim-witted, subhuman, inferior, and unworthy of integration, to their almost exclusively white audiences (Feagin, 2000; Pilgrim, 2000; Toll, 1974). Minstrel shows swept the nation in the 1840s, even performing for the “Especial Amusement of the President of the United States” (including Abraham Lincoln and John Tyler’s inauguration), making them one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the country for over half a century (Roediger, 1991; Toll, 1974).

Toward the later half of the 19th century, black Americans began replacing white minstrels in order to make a living on the stage, blackening their own faces and engaging in similarly exaggerated performances. This tragic and ironic twist greatly enhanced the credibility of minstrel images of black Americans, as white audiences perceived black minstrels as “genuine Negroes” displaying what were simply “natural impulses” (Toll, 1974, 202). Clearly, the degrading and dehumanizing minstrel portrayals set up ideas that were as much about whiteness as blackness, highlighting white virtue against the clear contrast of the inferior black (Feagin, 2000). As Toll explains, characterizations of blacks as indolent, improvident, immature, and unintelligent were “the very antithesis of what white men liked to believe about themselves,” and as such served not only as “ego-boasting scapegoats for whites” but also as confirmation that blacks could not play a constructive role in society and should remain segregated (p. 71).

### **Historical Images Today**

In 1987, independent filmmaker Marlon Riggs completed *Ethnic Notions*, an award-winning documentary on contemptible collectible objects and other minstrelsy media with the premise that: “Contained in these cultural images is the history of our national conscience: a conscience striving to reconcile the paradox of racism in a nation founded on human equality—a conscience coping with this profound contradiction through caricature” (*Ethnic Notions*, 1987). It begs an answer to the questions, why did such images exist in the first place? Who made them and why they have enjoyed such immense popularity both historically and continuing into contemporary society? And, what does their continued popularity say about racial relations in the United States today?

During early American history, popular culture reflected and supported an ideology that sought to romanticize conditions of slavery—particularly when its eradication came into focus. As people worked to dismantle the U.S. slavery system, the rise of dehumanizing images such as the contented Sambo and coon served to whitewash the depravity of plantation life and ease white consciences. These caricatures mirrored the prevailing belief that slaves were not human, therefore not deserving of full and free citizenship. Over time researchers have assigned additional functions to the continually expanding dehumanizing characterizations, suggesting, for instance, that they assuaged white male economic insecurity or created solidarity for the KKK by asserting the image of black male rapist (Gayle, 1976; Guerrero, 1993).

In probing the historical rationales underlying the creation and maintenance of such racist iconography, it is highly significant to consider the continued popularity of their original forms during an age where blacks are no longer slaves or non-citizens. These images continue to be manufactured, and the reproduction and sale of contemptible collectibles are in full swing. Our own eBay search using the terms “nigger” and “mammy” in the early weeks of 2006 found thousands of items—original and reproduction—of jolly nigger banks, mammy salt and pepper shakers, and postcards with watermelons and pickaninnies in every shape and style imaginable. Apparently, as Turner (1994) writes, “We still live in a world eager to develop new reasons and rationales for commodifying African Americans—past and present” (p. 30).

Indeed, other authors have turned to identifying what they consider contemporary examples of recycled racial themes. For instance, Grindstaff (2004) points to day-time talk shows, and Lhamon (1998), hip hop, as examples of modern-day minstrelsy. Similarly, Bogle (2000 [1973]) in tracing black representations in movies from 1903’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* through the end of the 20th century, notes the regular resurfacing of the old racial stereotypes among contemporary characters, even in the face of seeming progress.

## PRESENT-DAY REALITIES

Despite the advances made during the Civil Rights movement, we live in a post-Civil Rights era where social progress has been co-opted to help deny the existence of racism today. We view contemporary forms of racist popular culture as dangerous not only for the same reasons they were in the past, but also because we live in a slippery, self-congratulatory era where we can easily look back at popular images of the past with such disdain, that it temporarily blinds most from its subtle, yet equally egregious, forms today. Delgado and Stephancic (1992) suggest that “We acquiesce in today’s version with little realization that it is wrong, that a later generation will ‘How could they?’ about us. . . . [Racism] of our own time strikes us, if at all, as unexceptionable, trivial, or well within literary license” (p. 1278).

Yet racism in popular culture has not gone uncontested, and in recent years well-organized and successful protests have risen up in various forms against corporations, athletic organizations, and other purveyors of racialized popular media. However, for as many successful protests, decades-long battles continue today to end the dehumanizing portrayals of marginalized groups in the United States. We begin by focusing on some recent successes gained in fighting against distorted and dangerous images as exemplary of the context of contestation that has and can exist in contemporary media culture. As others have asked, if future generations are to look back on the images and iconography current today, what will they have to say? And what we will say about our own roles in rallying against them?



## Contested Images

Corporate entities, in their push for profits, have misappropriated images of the racialized Other for as long as they have existed. Yet these images have not gone uncontested, and social organizing around these movements has been swift and well-organized, despite severe corporate foot dragging in recent decades. One example comes from Frito-Lay's 1967 introduction of the Frito Bandito—a greasy, pudgy character who would steal Anglos' Frito corn chips at gunpoint (Noriega, 2000). The company launched several commercials depicting the corporate mascot singing: "Ayiee, yie-yie-yieeee/I am dee Frito Bandito/I love Frito's Corn Chips/I love dem I do/I love Frito's Corn Chips/I take dem from you."

Chicano groups such as the National Mexican-American Anti-Defamation Committee and Involvement of Mexican-Americans in Gainful Endeavors organized and appealed to Frito-Lay on moral grounds to remove the negative image and replace it with a more positive one. In response, Frito-Lay "sanitized" the *bandito*, deciding to remove his gun and his gold tooth, making him less grimacing—an utter disregard for the moral pleas that the image was damaging to Mexican Americans. It was only after the threat of a class action anti-defamation lawsuit on behalf of the 6.1 million Mexican Americans in the United States at the time that Frito-Lay dropped the corporate mascot, after four years of immense profiteering (Carrillo, 2003; Noriega, 2000).

More recently in 2003 retail giant Abercrombie and Fitch launched a line of t-shirts featuring screen printed images of slant-eyed, smiling caricatures donning rice hats. Shirts with slogans such as "Wong Brothers Laundry Service: Two Wongs Make It White" led to swift online activism and organizing among Asian American and student groups across the United States. In response to the massive protests—both online letter and petition campaigns and on-site protesting across American shopping malls—Abercrombie and Fitch finally agreed to pull the shirts from stores. However, this reluctant action was taken with a weak non-apology by the company spokes-person: "We personally thought Asians would love this T-shirt. We are truly and deeply sorry we've offended people. . . . We never single out any one group to poke fun at. We poke fun at everybody, from women to flight attendants to baggage handlers, to football coaches, to Irish Americans to snow skiers. There's really no group we haven't teased" (Strasburg, 2002). An explanation such as this reveals an utter disregard for persons of Asian descent by attempting to level the racial playing field, effectively dismissing the exploited and often tragic existence of Asian Americans in the United States. By providing a list of groups also allegedly targeted (openly revealing sexist and classist notions), it suggests that any group who takes offense simply cannot take a joke, deflecting any wrongdoing away from the company itself. Yet this attempt at racial innocence became even more thinly veiled in 2005, when the company was ordered to pay \$40 million in a class action settlement for the company's widespread racial, ethnic, and gender hiring discrimination (Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann, & Bernstein, 2005).

Some of the most widely contested and long-standing controversies over dehumanizing and degrading images are those surrounding athletic team mascots. American Indians have been widely targeted with the naming of teams, such as the Washington Redskins, Cleveland Indians, and Atlanta Braves. Images of so-called Indianness are inaccurate and inappropriate cultural fictions of the white imagination that are disturbing on several levels. First, these images continue today despite decades-long fights over their use. Second, like blackface, they perpetuate a perverse means by which whites can "play Indian" during halftime spectacles (Deloria, 1998). Third, these images relegate Native Americans to the "mascot slot," denying them a meaningful sociopolitical identity in American public life (Strong, 2005; Trouillot, 1991). Overall, the continued existence of these racist representations—despite other images that have been resisted

and retired—indicate that white America is so deeply invested in these cultural inventions, that they are unconcerned if the images bear any resemblance to reality as long as they can still “participate” in the mythologized dances, rituals, and movements they have come to love so dearly. Whites’ resistance reflects an unjust sense of entitlement to “owning” these images, as well as their devotion to profit from the continued use of these racist representations.

Social movements against Native American mascot images remain some of the most visible and arguably most successful examples of American Indian activism and sociocultural resurgence, and over 1,000 mascot images have been retired as a result (King & Springwood, 2001). Much of this protest has invoked comparison among other marginalized groups, stating that groups such as the “Pittsburgh Negroes, the Kansas City Jews, and the San Diego Caucasians” would cause outrage, asking why these logos continue to exist for Native Americans (Strong, 2005, 81). Using this logic, a University of Northern Colorado intramural basketball team called themselves “The Fighting Whities,” in protest of a local high school team, The Fighting Reds. In one year, they raised over \$100,000 for scholarships for American Indians, selling clothing items with their name and mascot, a 1950s-style caricature of a middle-aged white man in a suit, bearing the phrase “Every thang’s gonna be all white!” (Rosenberg, 2002).

Despite these successes, there is clear evidence that the critical evaluation and challenge of racist representations is more often the exception than the rule—both in real life as well as on screen. In the next section, we trace the twisted fate depicted in Spike Lee’s film *Bamboozled* (2000) and the tumultuous, real-life events leading to the demise of black comedian Dave Chappelle’s wildly successful Comedy Central sketch show. We offer this examination because their deep connection provides an excellent example of the boundaries of reality colliding and blurring with fiction.

### Satire Appropriated: “Bamboozled” and “Chappelle’s Show”

Released in 2000, Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled* satirically restages minstrelsy to show that contemporary white America has no interest in seeing black Americans portrayed on television as anything more than buffoons.<sup>2</sup> Lee’s film challenges modern racial ideology that encourages the belief that we have progressed far beyond the days of black-faced minstrel shows. The film is posthumously narrated by the main character, Pierre Delacroix, an African American television network executive “buppie” recklessly determined to get fired from his job at a major network where they are looking to improve a ratings slump by creating something “dope, sexy, and funny.” Seeking to be laid off, he pitches what he thinks is an outrageously offensive and racist pilot, *Mantan: The New Millennium Minstrel Show*, to his white boss, Thomas Dunwitty. To his surprise, Dunwitty jumps on the idea, quickly turning the pilot into a show about “two real coons” who are “keepin’ it real.”

Dunwitty, who boasts being blacker than Delacroix because he has an African American wife and two biracial children, sets *Mantan: The New Millennium Minstrel Show* in a watermelon (or “nigger apple”) patch with a house band, The Alabama Porch Monkeys. The show, like its historical minstrel predecessors, chronicles the dull-witted and unlucky antics of tap-dancing Mantan and his sidekick, Sleep ‘n Eat. The live-audience sitcom garners a wildly successful following across America, and by the end of the film, audience members of all races don blackface, exclaiming they are “real niggers.” Quickly the satire is lost—if it ever

---

<sup>2</sup> For two longer reviews of *Bamboozled*, see Barlowe (2003) and Epp (2003).

existed—and Delacroix is loved by all for his “creative genius” and the fact that “the show can’t be racist because he’s black.” Finally unshackled to laugh freely at some of the most degrading images of black Americans of all time, America becomes obsessed with *Mantan*, delighting in and restaging a nostalgic era where, “a man could be a man, a woman could be a woman, and a nigger knew his place.”

Interestingly, before *Bamboozled* had been released, *The New York Times* blocked its ad of a watermelon-eating pickaninny, perhaps over concern that the satire would be lost on its readers. Blending real life with fiction, the allure of *Bamboozled* is its seamless juxtaposition of historical reality with a fictional sociopolitical future fantasy. Weaving images of *Ethnic Notions* (1987) throughout, *Bamboozled* reminds its viewers that these racist icons from the not-so-distant past can, and have been, resurrected with relative ease. Ironically, if not surprisingly, *Bamboozled*'s art-imitating-life approach was brought to fruition with the tremendous success of African American comedian Dave Chappelle's Comedy Central Network program, *Chappelle's Show*.

With sketches like “The Racial Draft,” “The Nigger Family,” and “The Life of Clayton Bigsby” (a blind white supremacist unaware that he is a black man), *Chappelle's Show* tackled American racial issues head-on with satire and humor—enjoying two wildly successful seasons of episodes dealing with race, sex, and celebrity. Having signed a \$50-million contract with Comedy Central, fans were shocked when the third season was delayed indefinitely in early 2005 amidst rumors that Chappelle had become drug addicted and mentally unstable. During this time of delay and uncertainty, it became clear how much white America had come to “love”—and need—*Chappelle's Show*. To be sure, *Chappelle's Show* enjoyed a multiracial audience, and white fans were not the only ones bemoaning its absence. Chappelle's smart satire provided black Americans an outlet for expressing common racial frustration. White audiences had an arguably different attraction to the material, however, as the program not only provided white America with the license to play out their black alter egos while exclaiming, “I’m Rick James, bitch!” but also finally created a space where white Americans could safely—and openly—laugh at some of their most inner thoughts on race and racism.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps, then, it is unsurprising to learn that these were the precise reasons Chappelle had come to question his role in bringing sharp-witted satire into millions of white American homes only to have the message destroyed upon delivery. In a revealing interview done to dismiss rumors of his disappearance, Chappelle described one of his last tapings, where he played the role of a black-faced pixie trying to get other black pixies to act in stereotypical ways. Discussing his reaction to one spectator, a white man laughing too loudly, Chappelle revealed, “When he laughed, it made me uncomfortable. As a matter of fact, that was the last thing I shot . . . because my head almost exploded” (Farley, 2005).

Comedy Central and Chappelle's long-time, white writing partner, Neal Brennan, failed to understand the underlying reasons for concern over how the show was being received. Brennan said, “We’d write it. He’d love it, say, ‘I can’t wait to do it’. We’d shoot it, and then at some point he’d start saying, ‘This sketch is racist, and I don’t want this on the air’.

---

<sup>3</sup> This quote is taken from the sketch, *Charlie Murphy's True Hollywood Stories*. “In the first (and easily the most popular sketch in the show so far—one that catapulted Chappelle to the level of phenomenon within days after airing), Charlie Murphy (Eddie Murphy's real-life brother) recounts supposed altercations between himself and the late funk musician Rick James, which took place during the height of his popularity in the early 1980s. Chappelle intersperses Murphy's retelling of his story with reenacted excerpts in which Chappelle plays the young Rick James and Murphy plays his younger self” (Wikipedia, 2005).

And I was like, ‘You like this sketch. What do you mean?’ There was this confusing contradictory thing: he was calling his own writing racist.” Similar to the fate of *Bamboozled’s* Delacroix, white America renders black artists incapable of determining the artistic or problematic merits of their own work. White America takes on a paternalistic role in deciding what is racist and not and are least likely to make these types of judgments fairly and without their own best interests—psychological or economic—at heart. The fictional Delacroix and the real Dave Chappelle both clearly came to understand the difficult lesson pinpointed by critical film analyst, Armond White (1995): “A Black filmmaker can take nothing for granted” (p. 62).

To be sure, this lesson extends to people of color in most if not all genres of popular media production. And ultimately, as Chappelle himself noted, in the multinational media outlet, those not willing to tow the line are replaceable when it is the message, and perhaps more importantly, the dollar hanging in the balance. Reflecting on the end of the second season, the actor portended his own fate, “I was replaceable. I’m still replaceable now. That’s what’s so crazy about show business” (Chaney, 2005). In *Bamboozled*, when Mantan and Sleep n’ Eat finally decide to walk away from the degrading show, their characters are quickly replaced by another desperate actor waiting in the wings, Honey Cut. Comedy Central, too, has attempted to fill the gap left by Chappelle with a new show, *Mind of Mencia*. This program features Latino comic Carlos Mencia, who shares his own brand of racial humor with the Comedy Central audience. As the show’s Web page promises, consumers can “enter Carlos Mencia’s mind and immerse themselves in his unique, unflinching take on the world.” While *Mind of Mencia* attempts to work within the racial satire formula that made Chappelle famous, its execution is much less analytical and nuanced, relying on blatant stereotypes to make fun of everyone from Mexican immigrants to the disabled. And, indeed, this show appeals to the fans of *Chappelle* who missed the point of his smart satire.

Beyond *Mencia*, at the time of this writing, Comedy Central had promised its viewers a third season of *Chappelle’s Show*—with or without Chappelle (who traditionally introduced each show to a live audience following a monologue), highlighting yet again the economic interests at stake. Literally scrapping together pieces from unused filming from the previous two seasons, the network is giving the show a life of its own to feed the Chappelle-hungry white audiences. Here, we see the fates of *Mantan* and *Chappelle’s Show* end the same: the show taking on a life of its own, supported only by a white thirst for the laughter and the expense at which it tolls black Americans in real life, even in the absence of its creators. With or without Chappelle, it appears as if he will be just fine, reflecting, “I want to make sure I’m *dancing and not shuffling*. . . .Your soul is priceless” (Farley, 2005).

## Addressing Race in Film

Analysts like Bogle (2000 [1973]), Kellner (1995), Vera and Gordon (2003), White (1995), and others have each taken on the important task of critically addressing the varied ways in which race is portrayed, often problematically, in the popular media of film. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to recite their important contributions here, we wish to consider two very recent examples of race in film that present arguably new formats for conveying recycled ideas. For many years following the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, a politically correct discourse pushed frank talk about race into the corners of popular culture. This was precisely what made the classic *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?* (1967) such a seemingly groundbreaking work for its time. In many respects, and as *Chappelle’s Show*

demonstrated for TV media, it appears that we have moved into a new post–Civil Rights era where it has become fashionable to talk about race, as a more “genuine” proof that we are a progressive society. In this way, 2005’s feature film *Crash* is for movies what *Chappelle’s Show* is for television.

The oscar award-winning motion picture drama *Crash* (2005) was hailed by critics and audiences alike for its seemingly forthright treatment of race in America. It marked itself unafraid to take on the explicit bigotry of whites, from the heinous abuses of a racist white cop to the purse-clutching prejudices of a wealthy white woman. Perhaps more importantly, however, was *Crash’s* seeming equal-opportunity-racism message—not only were the white characters regular espousers of racist dialogue, but the many characters of color were as well. Nearly all characters in this movie, including African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, and Arab Americans, participated in interpersonal interactions that are traditionally labeled racist. The net effect is a leveling of the racial playing field. White moviegoers certainly made uncomfortable by the white characters’ forthrightness with their prejudices can be comforted in the notion that racism is not a white problem, but rather a human problem. We all must fight against our tendencies to stereotype—whites are no longer the lonely oppressors, but rather engaged in a common struggle against the detached evil of racism.

While *Crash* undoubtedly addresses race in a more candid way than is traditionally done in Hollywood, it is precisely its claim of being progressive that marks it dangerous. What appears to be an enlightened take is in many respects a new form of whitewashing. Liberal whites, in particular, will feel validated by their brave willingness to face the uncomfortable. In another 2005 film, we see the same ideas offered through humor. The remake of *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967), offers a racial role reversal in *Guess Who*. Similar to its predecessor, *Guess Who* portrays a middle-class black family unwilling to accept their daughter’s white boyfriend.

Laughter is the vehicle that makes this film—and its messages about race—appear innocuous at best, hardly as controversial as its predecessor. Yet, with the portrayal of a black father unwittingly prejudiced against a white boyfriend, it levels the racial playing field—teaching us that black people are just as racist and prejudiced as white people, a problematic message that resonates well among those who believe that “reverse discrimination” and “reverse racism” are alive and well. Here, historical issues regarding racism are shallowly presented and go unchallenged (Vera & Gordon, 2005). Films like *Crash* and *Guess Who* that focus on interpersonal interactions, and present equal-opportunity-racism themes, effectively dismiss the long, structured, systemic legacy of white supremacy in the United States. These new forms of erasure make certain histories—and people—invisible, and this is particularly problematic for the future of racial relations not only in the United States, but globally as well.

### **Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something . . .**

Under critical historical examination, images of “blackness” found in popular culture today have shifted very little from their historical counterparts. Yet, as Patricia Hill Collins (2004) explains, “In modern America, where community institutions of all sorts have eroded, popular culture has increased in importance as a source of information and ideas” (p. 121). This is particularly problematic for black American youth, as popular culture has come to authoritatively fill the void where other institutions that could “help them navigate the challenges of social inequality” are beginning to disappear (p. 121).

Although whites have appropriated black popular culture throughout history, in recent decades it has reached new heights of global commodification—circulating problematic ideas about race, class, gender, and sexuality domestically and globally. Black women's roles in popular culture have been limited to mummies, matriarchs, jezebels, or welfare queens, yet we have seen these images being repackaged for contemporary consumption and global exportation (Collins, 2001). Contemporary hip hop portrays black women—lyrically and visually—as goldiggers and sexualized bitches who like to “get a freak on,” an updated form of the jezebel (Collins, 2004).

Sexualized images of black men have also been repackaged for contemporary popular consumption as well, being touted as a way of life for many black American young men. bell hooks (2004) writes that, “Gangsta culture is the essence of patriarchal masculinity. Popular culture tells young black males that only the predator will survive” (p. 27). Today's *criminal-blackman* is not much different from the historical stereotype of bucks who are “always big, baadddd niggers, oversexed and savage, violent and frenzied as they lust for white flesh” (Bogle, 2000 [1973], 13; Russell, 2001). Currently, sexualized images of black femininity and black masculinity have become highly marketable yet remain historically rooted in an intersectional racialized sexism. “These controlling images are designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life” (Collins, 2001, 69). Such lessons are not only learned all too well domestically, but globally as well, with their continued popularity and exportation.

### THE FUTURE OF RACISM AND POPULAR CULTURE

Pieterse (1992) tells us, “The racism that [has] developed is not an American or European one, but a Western one” (p. 9). With the global exportation of Western popular culture, it is no surprise that racist Western iconography and ideology have enjoyed immense popularity as well. The Hollywood film industry is a prime example of this problematic globalization of images, with U.S. studios controlling three-quarters of the distribution market outside the United States (Movie Revenues, 2006). When Disney's Uncle Remus tale, *Song of the South* (1946), was highly contested for its “this is how the niggers sing” jubilant portrayal of plantation life, its distribution was blocked in the United States after serious protest (Bernstein, 1996; Neupert, 2001; Schaffer, 1996; Vera & Gordon, 2003). However, the film was quickly made available for global distribution, making it the highest-grossing film in 1946 with \$56.4 million in worldwide sales (World Wide Box Office, 2006).

Not to let the fantastic lore of Uncle Remus' tales be forgotten, in 1992 Walt Disney World resurrected Critter Country to create the animated roller coaster ride Splash Mountain (Schaffer, 1996). Children and adults 40 inches and taller from all over the world can “hop a hollowed-out log to follow Brer Rabbit's mischievous escapades as he tries to flee the clutches of Brer Fox and Brer Bear until you plunge five stories off Chick-a-pin Hill! ‘It's the truth. It's actual. Everything is satisfactual. It's a zip a dee doo dah day!’ ” (Walt Disney World, 2006). Like other stories manufactured under the Disneyfication project, *Song of the South* and Splash Mountain serve to disguise the horrors of American slavery from visitors to Disney World and Disneyland in the United States, but also from visitors to Tokyo Disneyland and, in 2006, Hong Kong Disneyland (Walt Disney World, 2006; Wasko, 2001). While the antebellum American South may be far off the radars of visitors to such spectacles, *Song of*

*the South* and Splash Mountain represent the height of Baudrillard's (1992) sense of white-washed and sanitized American simulacra, to be sure.

Global recycling of contested antiblack images and ideas has been found in numerous other examples. In 2003, the Bubble Sisters, an all-female quartet in Korea, made headlines when they used a "blackface gimmick" to gain popularity among pop music fans. Performing in black-face makeup, afros, grotesquely caricatured rubber lips, and dancing in pajamas, the group received airtime from several sources, including MTV Korea, leading to swift protests against the Bubble Sisters and their producers (Hodges, 2003). In response, Bubble Sister Seo Seung-hee explained the group "loved music by black people," and "we happened to have black makeup. With the makeup we felt good, natural, free and energized. In taking the real album cover photos, we finally decided to go for it" (KOCCA, 2003). Similar to other contemporary examples of people who have reported "accidentally" donning blackface, black-face appears to just spontaneously happen to people.<sup>4</sup> After severe backlash, their manager reported, "To the 1 percent of people who were offended by this, we're really sorry . . . we won't be performing with black faces" (Hodges, 2003).

In Japan, *Chikibura Sambo* (or "Little Black Sambo" in English), a children's book with a long history of controversy over its racial caricatures and stereotypes, was re-released in 2005, 17 years after Japanese booksellers agreed to pull it from shelves following a U.S.-led campaign against its racist imagery and language. Its contemporary re-release sold over 100,000 copies, making it a national bestseller in Japan. The book publisher's president, Tomio Inoue, announced that, "Times have changed since the book was removed. Black people are more prominent in politics and entertainment, so I don't think this book can be blamed for supporting racial stereotypes. We certainly had no intention of insulting black people" (McCurry, 2005). Like other corporate apologies, this one invokes a colorblind racial story of progress to try to minimize their actions in the name of profits. And this apology does not appear to address whether this racial progress has occurred in the United States or Japan (a country with an even smaller population of black persons), and still delineates black people's roles to entertainers, a stereotypical post invoked to cite progress among the entire population of black people.

With new technologies and the continued globalization of American popular culture, we can only imagine that these images will find their ways into more and more spaces—problematically defining blackness across the globe. As one study found with interviews of rural Taiwanese who had never traveled to the United States, they "knew" about race and black Americans in the United States from watching U.S. movies (Hsia, 1994). Like other immigrants who come to the United States, their exposure to U.S. movies undoubtedly shaped their stereotypical views and acceptance of racist ideas about black Americans. As popular culture's global audience grows, so do the lessons it provides about race and racism in the United States today. Without a critical resistance against these images, we can have no hope for racial equality in the United States or globally.

---

<sup>4</sup> There have been numerous incidents of blackface parties at colleges across the United States (Mueller, Dirks, and Picca, forthcoming). One Swarthmore student stated, "I figured (obviously jokingly), that if I painted my face black, I would thus gain some super powers that would enable me to dance," explaining that dressing in blackface was a "spur of the moment thing." A Swarthmore history professor responded, "You don't inadvertently put on blackface, you inadvertently bang your shoulder on the way out the door" (Nelson, 2002).

## CONCLUSION

*On any typical day, one could feasibly rise and dress in their Abercrombie and Fitch “Wok n Bowl” t-shirt, eat breakfast with Aunt Jemima. Get ready for lunch with, “Yo quiero Taco Bell!” Have dinner with Uncle Ben, before retiring to the television to watch the Indians, Redskins, or Braves (and don’t forget to throw down your “tomahawk chop” in an important moment of collective consciousness); After a leisurely game of “Ghettopoly” before heading to bed, you finally watch the late night news to get a daily dose of Arab and Muslim terrorists and criminalblackmen bedtime stories.*

As Noriega (2001) has argued, race in popular culture is in many ways a paradox—its representation has become regular in our media culture, while the profound ways it affects the real-life chances of individuals and groups remain hidden. And indeed, as Noriega notes, while popular media cannot be implicated as the “cause” of racism, neither does it offer a value-free medium for the exchange of ideas and information. The problem with the stranglehold popular culture has over dictating the way that the populace “knows” people of color is that for people who have very little real, interpersonal experience with individuals from these groups, they can believe in an essentialist vision composed of every stereotype and myth promoted. In today’s world of mass information, it is easy to see how the very ubiquity of such images makes keeping pace with them nearly impossible. As addressed above, this is the promise and predicament of popular culture. The deep need for a critical cultural studies is clear, one that seeks to understand the tools available, how they have been used in support of the dominant ideology, and how they might challenge such ideologies and offer counter-cultural solutions.

## REFERENCES

- Barlowe, J. (2003). “You must never be a misrepresented people”: Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled*. *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 33, 1–16.
- Baudrillard, J. (1989). *America*. Translated by C. Turner. London: Verso.
- Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Bernstein, M. (1996). Nostalgia, ambivalence, irony: *Song of the South* and race relations in 1946 Atlanta. *Film History*, 8, 219–236.
- Bogle, D. (2005 [1973]). *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*. New York: Continuum.
- Carrillo, K. J. (2003). Highly offensive: Karen Juanita Carrillo examines the ongoing currency of racist curios. Retrieved November 6, 2005 from: <http://www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/links/newslst/offensive.htm>.
- Clinton, C. (1982). *The Plantation Mistress: Woman’s World in the Old South*. New York: Pantheon.
- Collins, P. H. (2004). *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (2001). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Comedy Central (Producer). (2003). *Chappelle’s Show* [Television series]. United States: Comedy Central.
- Deloria, P. J. (1998). *Playing Indian*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Delgado, R. & Stephancic, J. (1992). Images of the outsider in American law and culture: Can free expression remedy systemic social ills? *Cornell Law Review*, 77, 1258–1297.
- Ebay, Inc. (2006). Offensive material. Retrieved January 7, 2006 from: <http://pages.ebay.com/help/policies/offensive.html>.
- Epp, M. H. (2003). Raising minstrelsy: Humour, satire and the stereotype in *The Birth of a Nation* and *Bamboozled*. *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 33, 17–35.
- Farley, C. J. (2005, May 15). On the beach with Dave Chappelle. *Time Online Edition*. Retrieved October 19, 2005 from: <http://www.time.com/time/arts/printout/0,8816,1061415,00.html>.
- Feagin, J. R. (2000). *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge.



- Gayle, A., Jr. (1976). *The Way of the New World, the Black Novel in America*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- Ghettopoly. (2002). *Ghettopoly*. Retrieved October 7, 2005 from: <http://www.ghettopoly.com>.
- Grindstaff, L. (2004). *Reviving blackface: Talk shows as modern-day minstrelsy*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association meeting, May 27–31, New Orleans, LA.
- Guerrero, E. (1993). *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Haggis, P. (Director). (2005). *Crash* [Motion picture]. United States: Lions Gate Films.
- Hodges, M. (2003, February 27). Bubble rap: How not to package a band. *Digital Korea Herald*. Retrieved November 6, 2005 from: [http://wk.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html\\_dir/2003/02/27/200302270007.asp](http://wk.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2003/02/27/200302270007.asp).
- hooks, b. (2004). *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. New York: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1996). *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies*. New York: Routledge.
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- King, C. R. & Springwood, C. F. (2001). *Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- KOCCA (Korea Culture and Content Agency). (2003, February 25). Trouble bubbles up around pop group's look. Retrieved November 6, 2005 from: [http://www.kocca.or.kr/ctnews/eng/SITE/data/html\\_dir/2003/02/25/200302250128.html](http://www.kocca.or.kr/ctnews/eng/SITE/data/html_dir/2003/02/25/200302250128.html).
- Kramer, S. (Director). (1967). *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* [Motion picture]. United States: Stanley Kramer Productions.
- Lee, S. (Director). (2000). *Bamboozled* [Motion picture]. United States: 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks.
- Lhamon, W. T., Jr. (1998). *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP. (2005). *\$40 million paid to class members in December 2005 in Abercrombie & Fitch discrimination lawsuit settlement*. Retrieved January 10, 2006 from: <http://www.afjustice.com/>.
- McCurry, J. (2005, June 15). Japanese publisher defies Little Black Sambo protest. *The Guardian*. Retrieved January 7, 2006 from: <http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,1506576,00.html>.
- Movie Revenues. (2006). Global film industry. Retrieved January 7, 2006 from: [http://www.factbook.net/wbglobal\\_rev.htm](http://www.factbook.net/wbglobal_rev.htm).
- Mueller, J.C., Dirks D. & Picca, L. H. (forth coming). Unmarking racism: Hallaveen costuming and engagement of the racial other. *Qualitative Sociology*.
- Nelson, G. (2002, November 14). Collection on blackface raises larger race issues. *The Phoenix Online*. Retrieved June 1, 2004, from: <http://www.sccs.swarthmore.edu/org/phoenix/2002/2002-11-07/news/12410.php>.
- Neupert, R. (2001). Trouble in watermelon land: George Pal and the Little Jasper cartoons. *Film Quarterly*, 55, 14–26.
- Noriega, C. (2000). *Shot in America: Television, the State and the Rise of Chicano Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Noriega, C. (2001). *Race matters, media matters*. Viewing Race Project. Retrieved January 11, 2006 from: <http://www.viewingrace.org/content.php?sec=essay&sub=1>.
- Pieterse, J. N. (1992). *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Pilgrim, D. (2000). Who was Jim Crow? The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Retrieved June 1, 2004, from: <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/who.htm>.
- Pilgrim, D. (2001). New racist forms: Jim Crow in the 21st century. The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Retrieved August 28, 2004 from: <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/newforms/>.
- Riggs, M. (Director). (1987). *Ethnic Notions* [Motion picture]. United States: Marlon Riggs.
- Roediger, D. (1991). *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso.
- Rosenberg, M. (2002, June 10). Take that, paleface! *The Nation*. Retrieved online January 6, 2006 from: <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020610/editors2>.
- Russell, K. K. (2001). *The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fear, Black Protectionism, Police Harassment, and Other Macroaggressions*. New York: New York University Press.
- Schaffer, S. (1996). Disney and the imagineering of histories. *Postmodern Culture*, 6, 3. Retrieved January 7, 2006, from the ProjectMUSE database.
- Skal, D. J. (2002). *Death Makes a Holiday: A Cultural History of Halloween*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Strasburg, J. (2002, April 19). Abercrombie recalls T-shirts many found offensive. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved January 6, 2005 from: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2002/04/19/MN102999.DTL>.

- Strong, P. T. (2004). The mascot slot: Cultural citizenship, political correctness, and pseudo-Indian sports symbols. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 28, 79–87.
- Toll, R. C. (1974). *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Trouillot, M. R. (1991). Anthropology and the savage slot: The poetics and politics of otherness. In R. G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Turner, P. A. (1994). *Ceramic Uncles and Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture*. New York: Anchor.
- Walt Disney World. (2006). Splash Mountain. Retrieved January 7, 2006 from:  
<http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/wdw/parks/attractionDetail?id=SplashMountainAttractionPage&bhcp=1>.
- Wasko, J. (2001). Is it a small world, after all? In J. Wasko, M. Phillips & E. R. Meehan (eds.), *Dazzled by Disney?: The Global Disney Audiences Project* (pp. 3–30). London: Leicester University Press.
- White, A. (1995). *The Resistance: Ten Years of Pop Culture That Shook the World*. New York: Overlook Hardcover.
- Wilkinson, D. Y. (1974). Racial socialization through children's toys: A sociohistorical examination. *Journal of Black Studies*, 5, 96–109.
- Williams, P. J. (1996). Metro Broadcasting, Inc. v. FCC: Regrouping in singular times. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller & K. Thomas (eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. New York: New Press.
- World Wide Box Office. (2006). *Song of the South* worldwide sales. Retrieved January 6, 2006, from:  
<http://worldwideboxoffice.com>.
- Vera, H. & Gordon, A. M. (2005). On how to dissolve racial taboos. [Review of the motion picture *Guess Who?*] *Contexts*, 4, 68–69.
- Vera, H. & Gordon, A. M. (2003). *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

## CHAPTER 9

# Asian Americans' Experiences of "Race" and Racism

NADIA KIM

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the full exclusion of Asian Americans by 1924; the incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II despite little evidence of anti-U.S. activity among them; the brutal murder of Vincent Chin in 1982 by two white<sup>1</sup> men armed with anti-Japanese views and a baseball bat; the racist epithets hurled at Judge Lance Ito during the 1995 OJ Simpson trial; the Senate's suspicion of all Asian American Democratic contributors for the allegedly illegal actions of one in 1997, John Hwang; MSNBC's 1998 headline declaring Tara Lipinski's defeat of Michelle Kwan as "American Beats Out Kwan"; in 1999, the FBI imprisonment of nuclear scientist Wen Ho Lee for supposed espionage despite no evidence of it. All of these events are bound by one theme, that of the Asian American foreigner.

No matter how long Asian Americans have been in the United States or how "assimilated" into mainstream society they have become, they remain "foreigners" in America. Exclusion and foreignness are at the core of the racial subordination of Asian Americans despite white Americans' sweeping valorization of them as model minorities. Although Asian Americans have been positioned above black Americans along the traditional color line (superior-inferior), Asian groups have been subordinated along America's citizenship line (insider-foreigner) (Kim 1999). Such historic and ongoing anti-Asian racism is thus partly rooted in white Americans' nativism. John Higham (1970:4) defines nativism as an "intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e., 'un-American') connections." But nativism against Asian Americans is more troubling because this group is not just an *immigrant* minority but a *racially* non-white minority. Asian Americans' experiences are thus determined by the intersection of "race" and nativism. That is, they are distinctively subordinated by what Robert Chang (1993) labels "nativistic racism."

---

NADIA KIM • Brandeis University

<sup>1</sup> All references to whites denote non-Hispanic whites unless otherwise qualified.

## THE ASIAN AMERICAN FOREIGNER

Nativistic racism against Asian Americans has relied on several ideologies and stereotypes: economic competitor, organized criminal, “illegal alien,” unwelcome immigrant (Ancheta 1998:11), and military enemy (“yellow peril”). For instance, white Americans’ resentment of alleged economic competition from the “yellow hordes” led to the exclusion acts against Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, scholars have considered the alarmist “yellow peril” stereotype, often couched in terms of “American patriotism,” to be an especially egregious form of nativistic racism. The “yellow peril” ideology emerged from the U.S. war against the Japanese during World War II, against Koreans and Chinese during the Korean Conflict, against the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War (“gooks”), and against most of these countries during the Cold War. Perhaps the most systematically unjust outcome of yellow peril notions was the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. In fact, Asian Americans remain the only group in U.S. history to have been incarcerated *en masse* during wartime because of their racialized status. Moreover, the vast majority of the Japanese were law-abiding Americans at the time President Roosevelt ordered the mass incarceration. As a formal governmental policy, then, Executive Order 9066 equaled U.S. nativistic racism at its worst (Ancheta 1998:11–12). In fact, Asian Americans still suffer intimidation, violence, and other hate crimes on December 7, the anniversary of Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor. Similarly, the two unemployed white male auto workers who killed Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, had mistaken him for a “Jap.” Chin embodied the “yellow peril” who was supposedly destroying the American auto industry and these two men.

These forms of nativistic racism reveal that Asian Americans’ racial status is not formed solely in the United States but is shaped by their (ancestral) Asian country’s relationship to the United States. These relationships either have been largely antagonistic, such as in the case of Japan and Vietnam, or they have been based in war such as in the case of the colonized Philippines and occupied South Korea. For instance, some scholars argue that U.S. treatment of Filipino and Korean Americans draws on racist ideologies that emerged from U.S. dominance over the Philippines and South Korea (see Espiritu 2003). Anti-Asian nativistic racism also demonstrates the public’s association of Asian Americans with Asian countries, countries that may not be the actual homelands or have anything to do with the individual. A study by Mia Tuan (1999) found that U.S.-born youth believed that they would face reprisals not only if the United States warred with their ancestral Asian country, but if it warred with *any* Asian country. Many of the respondents in Tuan’s (1999) study claimed that Americans couldn’t tell the difference between Asian-Americans and Asians. A respondent in her study remarked:

When there was all the whoop-to-do about Japan and all the businesses that Japan owns and all the property that Japan owns in this country, (while) England, Canada and the Netherlands own a whole lot more individually than Japan ever did. But it was this thing of the Pacific horde. And of course American car companies screwed up and they had to blame it on someone else. (cited from Tuan 1999:110)

Similarly a Chinese American male stated, “They’d see us as being evil and they’d start, it’s just like what they do with the Middle East and the Soviet Union, they would all look down on us” (cited from Tuan 1999:110). These patterns reveal how Asian Americans who were born and raised in the United States, have been there for five generations, and who are culturally and socioeconomically “assimilated” are still presumed to be foreign (Tuan 1998). In this way, Asian Americans are often linked to an enemy, exotic, or conquered Asian land

and are racially homogenized by the wider public. Such racial homogenization has meant that Asian Americans often become victims of discrimination meant for other Asian ethnics. Again, the murderers' erroneous labeling of Vincent Chin as a "Jap" serves as a good example of the dangers of racial labeling.

Despite the noted struggles with nativistic racism and subordination along citizenship lines, several sociologists still celebrate Asian Americans by focusing on the socioeconomic successes or marital trends of certain Asian ethnics, namely East and South Asian Americans. For instance, some scholars stress that since 1960 these Asian Americans have had higher rates of high school completion and college degree attainment than have whites. On standardized tests Asian American students have consistently scored higher than white students in math, though their English scores fall a bit below those of whites (Xie and Goyette 2004). Asian Americans' educational achievements seem to be the linchpin that has enabled their entry into high-status professional occupations and that explain their relatively high earnings. In recent decades Asian American men have reached parity in earnings with whites (although within the same educational levels, Asian American men earn 5% less than white men). Interestingly, Asian American women consistently earn more than white women in 2000, largely because of Asian American women's high educational attainment and higher representation in fields like science and engineering. In terms of intermarriage, some scholars claim that marriages between Asians and whites have been the most common interracial couplings from 1970 to 2000, especially those between Asian women and white men (Lee and Edmonston 2004 as cited in Min 2006). Outmarriages are most common among Japanese Americans followed by Filipino, Chinese, and Asian Indian Americans (Lee and Fernandez 1998). Moreover, Japanese Americans are said to most closely resemble whites in their marriage and family behaviors such as time at marriage, divorce rates, and fertility rates.

### REEXAMINING ASIAN AMERICANS' SOCIOECONOMIC PICTURE

The fact that Asian Americans are discriminated against as foreigners, however, belies the notion that some socioeconomic successes and high rates of intermarriage signal the end of anti-Asian racism. Indeed Asian Americans suffer from foreigner bias and discrimination both *despite* their socioeconomic success and *because* of it.

In fact, the much-hailed socioeconomic success of Asian American groups, particularly East and South Asians, has been challenged. Upon cursory glance of the Censuses since 1970, including the most recent in 2000, it would appear that Asian Americans have achieved a great deal socioeconomically. In 2000 Asian Americans had the highest education levels, household and median family incomes, and the most expensive homes. Since 1980 they have even out-done whites along all of these dimensions. Yet, these data need to be understood in context and need to be disaggregated. For instance, while some pundits claim that Asians are inherently more intelligent in mathematics and science, such a "biological" conclusion ignores the "social" phenomenon of U.S. policies favoring highly educated, professional Asians.<sup>2</sup> That is, the U.S. government's immigration policy since 1965 has mostly allowed in Asian immigrants with high education and advanced technical backgrounds or other professional skills (Park and Park 2005).

---

<sup>2</sup> Much of the data in this paragraph come from Lai and Arguelles (2003).

In addition, Asian Americans' individual income lags more than 10 percent behind the individual income of whites. If we include Pacific Islanders incomes, theirs alone were 40 percent lower than those of whites. The difference between Asian Americans' household incomes (which are higher than that of whites) and their individual incomes (which are lower than that of whites) is largely explained by the multiple earners in Asian immigrant households. This extended family or multiple immigrant household differs markedly from most white American household structures, hence, the difference in household income. In addition, the higher home values of Asian Americans can be largely explained by the propensity of Asians to live in immigrant-receiving states with high costs of living, namely Hawai'i, California, and New York. In fact, one of the reasons that more and more Asian groups, especially Vietnamese, Korean, and Indian Americans, have been moving to the South is their inability to live in such high-cost states as New York and California.<sup>3</sup>

And despite being glorified as a model minority group that could be "becoming white," Asian Americans' heads have certainly been aching from hitting the infamous glass ceiling. For one, numerous studies point to the lower returns Asian Americans receive for their education, some estimating that their college degrees receive seven times less protection from poverty than do whites' degrees. The clearest indicator that discrimination against Asian Americans exists is that Japanese Americans are not paid nearly as much as they should be given their levels of education (Feagin and Feagin 1993: 354). In addition, Asian Americans' overall higher educational attainment than white Americans, has not ameliorated their underrepresentation in two major high-status occupations: (1) lawyers and judges (only 2.7%) as well as (2) administrators and public officers (only 2.4%). Moreover, the long-standing trend of Asian Americans being underrepresented in skilled trades, i.e., carpentry, construction work, and electrician work, continues. Their absence in these fields is traced to the discrimination Asians faced from dominant trade unions in the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as the American Federation of Labor (AFL)<sup>4</sup>. Such discrimination against Asian American labor was part of the larger history of tense competition between whites and workers of color in skilled trades. Asian Americans are also greatly underrepresented as managers in several occupational sectors: government, private employment, and higher educational institutions (both public and private). In addition, although it was noted earlier that Asian American women currently earn more than white women, studies have found that at universities across the country Asian American women faculty disproportionately suffer from harassment in a hostile environment (Hune 1998).

In the civil service sector Asian Americans have filed many formal complaints about being passed over for those with far less training, education, and years of experience. And in industry where most Asian Americans work they have lodged many glass ceiling complaints. Although Asian Americans were most dissatisfied with the electronics industry 75 percent of them expressed interest in managerial positions as opposed to technical work in this industry (Asian Americans for Community Involvement 1993). The same study also found that the exclusion of Asian Americans from managerial positions could not be attributed to their poor English proficiency, time of arrival, cultural differences, work experience, formal training, or greater job concentration in low-status sectors of the economy.

---

<sup>3</sup> Much of the socioeconomic data reported in this paragraph come from Lai and Arguelles (2003) and from Nishioka (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Much of the data in this paragraph come from Xie and Goyette (2004).

Furthermore we have to consider the social class disparities *within* the Asian American group. In doing so we find that many Asian Americans are, in fact, not middle-class. Census 2000 data reveal that when we look more carefully across multiple variables, many Asians – especially Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians (as well as Pacific Islander Americans)—live in poverty, are unemployed, and are less-educated than the average American. For instance, while other Asian ethnics earn as much as or more than whites, ethnically Vietnamese and Filipino women and men earn considerably less than white women and men. In fact 2000 Census estimates put the Asian American poverty rate at 10–13 percent, considerably higher than that for white Americans. Not only is the poverty rate high among Southeast Asian groups like the Vietnamese, it is high among certain East Asian groups as well, such as Chinese and Korean Americans.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Asian Americans are the group with the biggest gap between rich and poor in the United States (Wong 2003).

### REEXAMINING ASIAN AMERICANS' INTERMARRIAGE TRENDS

Since 1990 we have seen a decrease in Asian-white marriages and a sharp increase in interethnic marriages. Before we further examine this trend it is important to note the larger macro-context that shaped these seemingly personal matches. As noted earlier, U.S. relationships with Asian countries have had profound effects on Asian Americans. Not only did U.S. intervention in Asian nations spark the emigration waves to the United States in the first place, it fostered many of our society's racial stereotypes. The same holds for the social phenomenon of Asian-white intermarriage. In light of U.S. colonization of the Philippines between 1898 and 1944 and its continued pervasive military presence until 1991, the Philippines has sent more immigrants through the preference of wives of U.S. servicemen than any other Asian nation (Min 2006:46). An estimated 343,000 brides of "U.S. citizens" came between 1950 and 2003, most of whom were brides of servicemen. When the United States occupied Japan from the end of World War II until 1952 a sizeable portion of the armed forces remained behind in Japan, thus spurring a large number of Japanese military brides to the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s. Between 1950 and 1979 alone the vast majority of the 71,000 wives of U.S. citizens were Japanese military brides. In South Korea, where an even greater number of U.S. servicemen has been stationed since 1945 (around 37,000), approximately 96,000 Korean women have married servicemen and immigrated to the United States between 1950 and 1989. Again, U.S. (neo)colonial and imperial projects in Asian nations spurred the phenomenon of interracial marriages in the United States, especially between Asian women and white men. In this way, Asian-white intermarriages cannot be understood apart from this larger context of (neo)colonialism and imperialism.

Despite some claims that Asian-white marriages are the most common form of interracial marriage, most studies find a sharp decrease in Asian-white pairings since 1980. Based on the U.S. Census, specifically 5 percent PUMS data, Asian-white marriage declined from 18 percent in 1980 to 15.3 percent in 1990 to 12.7 percent in 2000. The 2000 Census reveals that most Asian Americans are married to members of their own ethnic group. Filipino and Vietnamese Americans in particular have dramatically shifted to marrying people in their own group. The second largest proportion of marriages is interethnic couplings. That is, not only has the proportion

---

<sup>5</sup> Much of the data in this paragraph come from Xie and Goyette (2004).

of Asian-white marriages dropped significantly, rates of interethnic marriage, i.e., marriages among different Asian ethnics, have risen dramatically. Between 1980 and 1990 Asian interethnic marriages doubled from 11 to 21 percent and had eclipsed marriages between Asian and white Americans. Broken down by gender, 18.9 percent of Asian American men and 16.3 percent of women were interethnically married.<sup>6</sup>

In states with high concentrations of Asian Americans such as California the number of interethnic marriages was even higher. While 21.1 percent of Asian American men in California were interethnically married, by 2000, 64 percent were so married. In 1980, 10.8 percent of Asian American women in the state were married to Asian men, while in 1990, 45.5 percent of the women were so married. Given most of the women's consistently higher rates of marriage with whites than their Asian American male counterparts, a figure like 45.5 percent constitutes a dramatic increase.<sup>7</sup> These jumps indicate that interethnic marriages will likely remain a trend for some time, having increased 400 to 500 percent between 1980 and 1990 alone.

What are the reasons for Asian Americans' growing preference for interethnic marriage over marriage with whites? Many speculate that the growing size of the Asian American population has largely contributed to the shift toward intra-Asian marriage. Indeed, the conspicuously high rates of interethnic and intraethnic marriage occur in places with large Asian American populations like California, Hawai'i, and New York. When the population of Asian Americans had been small their rates of marriage with whites was rather high (this trend is also true of Native American). As the Asian population grows the effect of group size alone is expected to depress outmarriage rates. And as this group constitutes one of the fastest growing in the United States, endogamous marriage will likely continue in the future.

Many also believe that Asian Americans' choice of other Asian mates reveals a growing racial (panethnic) consciousness among them. In light of racial homogenization, watershed events that affect one ethnic group often affect all others, such as the murder of Vincent Chin. In light of this panethnic consciousness, Asian Americans have increasingly been marrying one another (Shinagawa and Pang 1996; see Lee and Fernandez 1998). In addition, as the younger generations come of age, the increasing class similarity among them seems to have fostered interethnic and intraethnic marriage. That is, as Asian immigrant families attain middle-class status they tend to move from ethnic enclave areas into mixed Asian suburbs (and white suburbs). In mixed Asian suburbs they have increased chances for contact with Asian Americans who are similar to them (Shinagawa and Pang 1996).

Furthermore, the importance of Asian American populations on college campuses cannot be denied. Not only is college the place where Asian Americans come into contact with various Asian ethnics, it is also the place where most Asian Americans forge and develop a panethnic consciousness. Interestingly, this trend reveals that Asian Americans' ascent into the middle class does not necessarily signal the whitening that assimilationist scholars have predicted. Their ascent into the middle class has also worked in the opposite way by fostering pan-Asian identification, social networks, and marriage. To be sure, class is not the only determinant of interethnic or intraethnic marriages.

Other influential factors could be the shared experiences of being American-born Asians; being treated as foreigners; negotiating Asian immigrant family norms like filial piety and the pressure to please parents who immigrated just for their education; and having Asian

---

<sup>6</sup> Much of the data in this paragraph come from Lee and Fernandez (1998).

<sup>7</sup> Much of the data in this paragraph come from Shinagawa and Pang (1996).



"homelands." In addition, popular cultural expressions of pan-Asianism may contribute to the blurring of ethnic differences. Given that Asian women marry whites at much higher rates than their male counterparts, another reason for interethnic marriages could be the improved image of Asian American men in some segments of popular culture. Finally, recent marital trends may be pointing to a broader "people of color" consciousness. That is, Asian Americans' marriages to Latinos have risen from 3 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 1990. Some attribute this change to the shared immigrant experience of many members of these groups as well as their common residence in states like California (Lee and Fernandez 1998).

### BEYOND THE "ASIAN AMERICANS ARE WHITENING" THESIS

The foregoing socioeconomic and marital trends reveal that white Americans' focus on blacks has hidden from view whites' subordination of other groups like Asian Americans. In order to present the U.S. opportunity structure as meritocratic and to validate "blame the victim" notions whites have celebrated Asian Americans as model minorities who are "whitening" past blacks and some Latinos. These notions of "whitening" are inaccurate insofar as they assume that Asian Americans do not experience racism. Mainstream white America largely does not want to recognize or concede that it has been racially discriminatory toward Asian Americans and others, in large part because whites have visibly been implicated in anti-black racism. But such a refusal to acknowledge all forms of racism against nonwhites denies actual anti-Asian subordination along lines of immigration, citizenship, and larger global inequalities. Such a denial has prevented the identification and redressing of the nativistic racism that has been discussed at length in this piece. In this way, not only do white Americans overlook the way they have racialized Asian groups, they ignore the ways they have *pitted* Asian Americans against blacks and other nonwhites (see Kim 1999 for overview).

Although the racial subordination of Asian Americans is obscured by the model minority myth, national public opinion reveals racial biases. Two national surveys of Americans' racial attitudes by the National Conference for Community and Justice called "Taking America's Pulse" found that whites reported many negative stereotypes of Asian Americans, particularly foreigner-based ones. But as evidence of the way groups of color internalize dominant whites' stereotypes of each other, more Latinos (42%) and blacks (42%) reported that Asian Americans were "unscrupulous, crafty, and devious in business" than did whites (27%).<sup>8</sup> A 2001 national survey study led by a professional Chinese American organization called the Committee of 100 found that of the most prejudiced Americans 18 percent reported that they would be uncomfortable with an Asian American supervisor. Yet only 9 percent of these Americans were uncomfortable with a black supervisor, 5 percent with one who was female, and 7 percent with one who was Jewish. And consistent with foreigner stereotypes 23 percent of the nation stated that they were "uncomfortable" voting for an Asian American to be president of the United States. They were substantially more comfortable voting for an African American candidate (15%), a female candidate (14%), and a Jewish candidate (11%), all of whom are much more prominent in politics than are Asian Americans. The Committee of 100 was also interested in the American public's perceptions of Chinese Americans more specifically. The

---

<sup>8</sup> One limitation of these results, however, is the small sample size for Asian Americans ( $N = 155$ ).

Committee was disturbed to find that anywhere between 68 to 73 percent of the nation believed that Chinese Americans were “taking away too many jobs from Americans,” insinuating that Chinese Americans were not “Americans” themselves. Moreover, 68 to 73 percent of the public also believed that Chinese Americans had “too much power in the business world,” invoking the stereotype of Asian Americans as foreign economic competitors. Another dimension of the foreigner racial ideology is to associate, often conflate, Asian Americans with their ancestral home country. In fact, 46 percent of Americans reported that “Chinese Americans passing on information to the Chinese government [was] a problem.” In addition, 24 percent of Americans would not approve of intermarriage with an Asian American, surprising given the historically high number of Asian-white intermarriages in the United States. Although more Americans were opposed to intermarriage with an African American (34%), a finding that conforms to most studies, they still opposed an Asian American partner more than they did a Hispanic (21%) or a Jewish (16%) one. The substantial decrease in Asian-white intermarriages noted earlier and recent tensions with Asian nations may well be related to increasingly negative attitudes toward such marriage.

As further evidence that model minority stereotypes exist alongside foreigner stereotypes, large numbers of Americans also noted that Chinese Americans “have strong family values” and “place a higher value on education than do most other groups in America.” Yet, as studies like the 2000 installment of the “Taking America’s Pulse” national survey found, it is precisely the success of some Asian Americans that has sparked negative foreigner stereotypes. Indeed, the “positive” stereotypes of Chinese Americans as valuing family and education were popular even among those reporting the most negative attitudes toward Chinese Americans. A 1993 *Los Angeles Times* survey of Southern Californians found that Asian Americans were thought to be too successful and too enamored with material success. This survey asked whether any group “is getting more economic power than is good for Southern California” and whether any group “is working harder than the others to succeed in Southern California.” Asian Americans’ economic prowess was considered to be endangering Southern California. In addition, survey analyses revealed a statistical linkage between the notion that Asian Americans were too economically powerful and the notion that they were the most prejudiced group in California. Counter to classic assimilation theory, then, Asian Americans’ economic mobility often engenders less social acceptance and intensifies racism toward them.<sup>9</sup> This link between model minority and foreigner stereotypes suggests that irrespective of whether stereotypes are “positive” or “negative,” they are stereotypes nonetheless. Judging and homogenizing a group as having particular traits, traits that are often seen as “inherent,” effectively dehumanizes a group.

Beyond the good stereotype–bad stereotype paradox, multiple survey studies have found another paradox. The second paradox reveals that while Asian Americans report experiencing discrimination at levels close to those of black Americans, most Americans see Asian groups as experiencing little to no discrimination at all. In two nation-wide polls of the four largest racial/ethnic groups in the United States—a 1995 *Washington Post*/Kaiser Foundation/Harvard University poll and a 1993 *Los Angeles Times* poll—Asian Americans were just behind African Americans in reporting experiences of discrimination. Polling of only Asian groups conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* yielded similar results: 57 percent of Chinese, 46 percent of Filipinos and Koreans, and 41 percent of Vietnamese reported discrimination. Even a 1998 University of Massachusetts poll which restricted Asian Americans’ reports of

---

<sup>9</sup> The data analyses of the *Los Angeles Times* come from Lee (2000).

discrimination to experiences within the last three months of the survey still found that fully 25 percent of Asian Americans reported bouts with discrimination. Still, only 10 to 15 percent of the American public considered racism to be an obstacle for Asian groups, while the above *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times* national polls revealed that 40 to 60 percent of Asian Americans reported personally experiencing discrimination. Testifying to the importance of question-wording on surveys, however, when a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* poll simply asked whether certain racial groups faced "a lot" of prejudice in Northern California, the public's perception of anti-Asian racism went up noticeably. A large number of Latinos, 27 percent, believed that anti-Asian bias existed. Yet this number is still nowhere near the percentages of Asian Americans who report suffering discrimination. And when the American public does acknowledge racism against Asian Americans it often uses "blame the victim" reasoning, pointing to the group's supposed cultural distinctiveness, clannishness, and language problems. Paradoxically, however, Asian Americans are the only group who attributes the racial discrimination they face to their success in the United States. Moreover, Asian Americans are the only ones who consistently recognize that their lack of political power—their invisibility and unrecognized needs—is a major obstacle for them. It is thus not surprising that among all groups, Asian Americans have most strongly opposed a moratorium on immigration and the deportation of Chinese who seek U.S. asylum. They also most strongly support reparations for Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II and a University of California (UC) admissions policy that is meritocratic (in the 1980s, some UC schools had tried to stem the tide of Asian admissions) (Lee 2000:135).<sup>10</sup>

Why do Asian Americans report so much racial discrimination while non-Asians do not see it? There are three plausible explanations that have been offered for this puzzle. First, Asian Americans themselves have become more aware that the model minority stereotype is indeed a stereotype in light of the heightened influence of Asian American studies and social activism. They have become more aware that the model minority myth was constructed by white American leaders and public opinion makers, exploited during the Reagan era, to counter the civil rights gains of black Americans. Survey data have also shown that Asian Americans who are young, are educated, have personally experienced discrimination, or have close social ties with other Asian groups are more likely to support policy positions that are pro-Asian American (Lee 2000:139). Most importantly, Asian Americans are acutely aware that the model minority stereotype has been used to divide racial groups from each other. The recent attacks on affirmative action policies bear out the divide and conquer strategy. In light of their lived experiences of racism, Asian Americans are much more attuned to the historical and political agendas behind such ideologies, more so than the larger American public.

The second explanation is that those Asian Americans who report discrimination tend to be the more successful, upwardly mobile ones. While the larger American public may simply explain away professional Asian Americans as not facing any barriers the professionals themselves are feeling their heads bang against the invisible glass ceiling above them. Survey studies have indeed found that Asian Americans tend to face much of their racial discrimination in institutional contexts (Bobo and Suh 1995). It is thus not surprising that Asian Americans who are white collar, highly educated, and highly paid are most likely to report discrimination in the workplace. Yet, because these Asian Americans have made it into white collar professions, the American public does not believe that they face any barriers.

---

<sup>10</sup> The information in this paragraph comes from Lee (2000).

The third reason why Asian Americans may report high rates of discrimination while non-Asians believe they experience none may point to the types of questions surveys ask. Given the history of slavery in the United States most understandings of “race” have been centered on the black American experience. Despite the major diversification of the United States since 1965, surveys have not modified or added questions to address the experiences of Asian Americans, Latinos, Arab Americans, and other groups. As such, the unique form of discrimination that Asian Americans experience—specifically along lines of citizenship—is not captured by survey questions on “race” and racism generally. That is, survey researchers continue to assess Asian Americans based on stereotypes mostly associated with black Americans (Lee 2000). These include stereotypes about intelligence, family, criminality, and cultural community patterns. Yet studies of Asian Americans should focus on immigration, citizenship, the glass ceiling, entrepreneurship, U.S. relations with Asian nations, and war. Indeed, survey respondents in the *Los Angeles Times* poll did not stereotype Asian Americans as welfare dependent, but they did stereotype them as inscrutable and as perpetual foreigners. The public also expressed feelings of hostility toward Japan and other Asian nations. Interestingly, whites and Latinos who stereotyped Asian Americans as not properly integrated into “American culture” were more likely to hold anti-Asian attitudes. Furthermore, age and education make a difference. Older and less educated respondents, especially among whites, tended to hold more prejudiced and hostile views of Asian Americans.<sup>11</sup>

### **THE SILENT DILEMMA: ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE**

Beyond surveys, the criminal justice system and the mass media have been inattentive to the specific struggles of Asian Americans, but so. Although anti-Asian violence rose steadily in the 1990s and has been spiking in years like 2001 after 9/11, the American public is largely unaware of the high rates of anti-Asian violence and hate crimes. For instance, the middle to late 1990s witnessed high rates of anti-Asian violence, rates that have since remained steady even considering high rates of underreporting. And despite nationwide declines in some years, anti-Asian hate crimes have increased sharply in various states like Connecticut, Michigan, Nevada, and Wyoming. Murders on the whole have also increased (National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium 2002).

Hate crimes overall are underreported due to a combination of factors. Some states do not comply with federal regulations and thus do not collect any hate crimes data. In addition, most state institutions do not label crimes as racially motivated. Such “race aversion” can be traced to their refusal to consider the victim’s account alone as sufficient evidence, their inability to see racism (especially true in the case of Asian groups who are tagged “model minorities”), and their reluctance to admit to the extent of racism. Indeed, state government’s own police forces have come under fire for their racist practices. In addition, mass media rarely report anti-Asian hate crimes. Another contributing factor is the large immigrant contingent among Asian Americans who are disadvantaged by language barriers, lack of cultural understanding, legal status, mistrust of police, and a multitude of other factors. These forms of underreporting mean that even the disturbing statistics to follow are underestimates.

---

<sup>11</sup> For the information in this paragraph, see Lee (2000).

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium's yearly audits of anti-Asian violence found that between 1995 and 1996 alone hate crimes against Asian Americans jumped up from an already high base. Threats and intimidation more than doubled while harassment increased 161 percent. Between 1994 and 1996 vandalism and destruction increased 177 percent. The dramatic increases in anti-Asian crime are even more disturbing in light of the FBI's reporting of an overall 7 percent decrease in hate crimes between 1995 and 1996. Also troubling is that Asian Americans are increasingly subject to racially motivated crimes in their homes, workplaces, and schools. Those who suffered hate crimes at their homes tended to live in public housing. In Asian Americans' places of employment hate crimes increased 117 percent between 1995 and 1996. In the same year the FBI found a similar increase in school-based hate crimes. K-12 schools experienced a 27 percent increase in anti-Asian crimes.

Asian American students were also more vulnerable on college campuses where they experienced a startling 100 percent increase in hate incidents in recent years. NAPALC's 2000 report found that anti-Asian crimes on college campuses were an increasingly alarming problem, one that had not been adequately addressed by college campuses or by the nation. In 2000 an Asian American interest magazine called *aMagazine* conducted an online survey and found that 33 percent of the 559 respondents either had been called an ethnic slur or had been the target of a racially motivated verbal assault on college campuses. Another 5 percent had been physically attacked because of their "race." In line with stereotypes of Asian Americans as a foreign competitive threat schools like UC Berkeley with large Asian populations have reported high rates of anti-Asian incidents. Another disturbing finding revealed that among the 25 percent of the 260 surveyed Berkeley students who had experienced anti-Asian discrimination, most had not reported the incidents. The students did not think that the crimes were important enough, that reporting would make a difference, and did not know of any campus resources to help them deal with the issue.

Anti-Asian incidents on college campuses are telling for two reasons. First, they problematize and perhaps challenge the notion that higher education fosters individuals' more liberal views on "race." Second, they show the connection between model minority stereotypes and anti-Asian racism that this piece has discussed throughout. That is, Asian American college students are too "model minority," hence, too much competition.

Among the numerous campuses plagued by anti-Asian incidents some examples of hate incidents are worth noting. In a widely publicized incident in 1996 a former University of California-Irvine student Richard Machado had emailed 59 Asian students and staff the message that he would "find and kill every one of [them] personally" and signed it "Asian hater." Machado's statements to witnesses that he wanted to kill Asians because they were such tough academic competition made him the first person in the United States to be convicted of a federal hate crime via computer transmission. In another incident four year later at SUNY-Binghamton, three white students on the school's wrestling team attacked four Korean American students outside their dorm, all the while yelling, "This is what you get for being chinks!" They fractured the skull of student John Lee and caused him to have a cerebral concussion and internal bleeding. The school's response was slow and did not clearly condemn the crime as racially motivated. As New York has no hate crimes laws on the books, the attackers were also not charged with a hate crime. In the same year white men at Cornell University also attacked an Asian American female after shouting racial and gender epithets at her. Similarly, at UC Davis white fraternity brothers beat a group of Korean American males in an opposing fraternity to the point that one had to be rushed to the hospital for emergency

surgery. The scuffle was precipitated by one of the white male fraternity members calling one of the Asian male fraternity members a “f\*\*king chink!”

There have also been many murders of Asian Americans. Since the tragic death of Vincent Chin in 1982 for which the convicted killers never spent a night in jail, there have been a substantial number of murders and attempted murders of Asian Americans. Although most of these murders have received very little media coverage, some of the more publicized murders have been those of Thien Ly, Kuan Chung Kao, Won Joon Yoon, Joseph Iletto, and Balbir Singh Sodhi. In 1996 Thien Ly, a young Vietnamese American who had recently earned a Master’s degree at Georgetown University, was stabbed to death by two young white supremacists while he was exercising. After the killer Gunner Lindberg had bragged in a letter about “kill[ing] a Jap” he became the first person in California to be sentenced to death for a racially motivated murder. In 1997 a 33-year-old Chinese American engineer named Kuan Chung Kao was shot dead by Rohnert Park police. Based upon his racial identity and his carrying a stick, one of the officers believed Kao to be a martial arts expert and killed him within *34 seconds* of arriving at his home. After shooting him, they handcuffed him and prevented his wife, a registered nurse, from administering potentially life-saving CPR. Kao died shortly thereafter. Despite mass organized protests neither of the police officers has been punished or charged with any kind of misconduct. In 1999 a white supremacist named Benjamin Smith went on a shooting spree to kill Jews, blacks, and “mud people,” his derogatory term for Asians. As Indiana University student Won Joon Yoon, a Korean American, was leaving church Smith shot him dead (Smith also killed Ricky Byrdsong, an African American and former Northwestern University basketball coach). A month later in California a white supremacist named Buford Furrow asked Filipino-American postal worker Joseph Iletto to mail a letter for him. When Iletto agreed Furrow shot him twice. Although Iletto tried to run away Furrow gunned him down as a “good target of opportunity” because Iletto was “Hispanic or Asian” and was a federal employee. Finally, the murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi in Mesa, Arizona, is one of the first-known racially motivated murders in the wake of 9/11. Sodhi, a South Asian American, was landscaping the grounds of his Chevron gas station on September 15, four days after 9/11, when Frank Roque shot and killed him because of Sodhi’s supposed likeness to “al-Qaeda” members. After later trying to kill Afghani and Lebanese Americans Roque was finally arrested, at which time he claimed himself “a patriot.” Two years later he was sentenced to death for Sodhi’s killing. The “silent dilemma” of hate crimes against Asian Americans is in dire need of publicity and, more importantly, solutions. Reaching solutions will require a much better understanding of the racial subordination of Asian Americans in the first place.

## CONCLUSION

In brief, Asian Americans’ experiences of “race” and racism center on “nativistic racism.” Even fifth-generation Asian Americans are presumed to be foreigners, that is, outsiders who *really* hailed from an Asian country (one that is sometimes a U.S. enemy), they are also presumed not to be citizens or patriots, and not to speak English or know “American” ways. As noted, the notion of Asian Americans as *both* foreigners and model minorities comes together in the form of the foreign competitor stereotype. In other words, the threat of Asian Americans’ success has often led to anti-Asian violence and hate. An important implication of these anti-Asian trends is that they challenge the idea that Asian Americans do not experience racism or are simply becoming “white.” Not only do Asian Americans suffer

from discrimination *because* of their socioeconomic success, but it is the more successful ones who have been hitting the infamous glass ceiling and reporting the most discrimination. Moreover, many Asian American groups such as those from Southeast Asia suffer high rates of poverty. Another marker of so-called whitening, Asian Americans' intermarriages with whites, have also changed dramatically. Rather than marry white Americans more Asian Americans are marrying other Asian ethnics. In short, one of the main reasons why most Americans do not know about racism against Asian Americans, such as high rates of anti-Asian violence, is white Americans' lack of acknowledgement of historical and ongoing racism against Asian Americans. Scholars and laypeople alike must start understand to the distinct, yet linked, ways in which Asian Americans experience "race." Indeed, we must pay close attention to global inequalities such as U.S. relations with Asian nations, to stereotypic representations, and to the immigrant conditions under which Asian Americans struggle. In the absence of such understanding we will only continue the racialized divisions and vast inequalities that have plagued our society since the beginning.

## REFERENCES

- Asian Americans for Community Involvement. 1993. "Qualified But . . . : A Report on Glass Ceiling Issues Facing Asian Americans in Silicon Valley." San Jose, CA: Asian Americans for Community Involvement of Santa Clara County, Inc.
- Bobo, Larry & Susan Suh. 1995. "Surveying Racial Discrimination: Analyses from a Multiethnic Labor Market." Russell Sage Foundation Working Paper #75.
- Chang, Robert. 1993. "Toward an Asian American Legal Scholarship: Critical Race Theory, Post-Structuralism, and Narrative Space." *California Law Review* 81:1241.
- Espiritu, Yen. 2003. *Homebound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Espiritu, Yen. 1992. *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Higham, John. 1970. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*. New York: Atheneum.
- Hune, Shirley .1998. *Asian Pacific American Women in Higher Education: Claiming Visibility and Voice*. Washington, DC: Assoc of American colleges and Universities.
- Kim, Claire Jean. 1999. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans." *Politics and Society* 27(1):105–138.
- Lai, Eric & Dennis Arguelles. 2003. "Introduction." pages 1–4 in *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity & Change in the 21st Century*, edited by E. Lai & D. Arguelles. San Francisco and Los Angeles: Asia Week and UCLA Asian American Studies Center.
- Lee, S. & B. Edmonston. 2004. "U.S. Racial Intermarriage Trends and Patterns: 1970 to 2000." Paper presented at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August 14–17, San Francisco, CA.
- Lee, Sharon & Marilyn Fernandez. 1998. "Trends in Asian American Racial/Ethnic Intermarriage." *Sociological Perspectives* 41(2):323–342.
- Lee, Taeku. 2000. "Racial Attitudes and the Color Lines at the Close of the Twentieth Century." Pages 103–158 in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Transforming Race Relations, A Public Policy Report*, edited by Paul Ong. Los Angeles: Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute, LEAP and UCLA AASC.
- Min, Pyong Gap. 2006. *Asian Americans: Contemporary Trends and Issues, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium. 1994–2002 *Audits of Violence against Asian Pacific Americans*. Washington, DC: NAPALC.
- Nishioka, Joyce. 2003. "The Model Minority?" Pages 29–34 in *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity & chang in the 21st Century*, edited by E. Lai & D. Arguelles. San Francisco and Los Angeles. Asia Week and UCLA Asian American studies center.
- Park, Edward J.W. & John S.W. Park. 2005. *Probationary Americans: Contemporary Immigration Policies and the Shaping of Asian American Communities*. New York: Routledge.
- Shinagawa, Larry & Gin Yong Pang. 1996. "Asian American Panethnicity and Intermarriage." *Amerasia Journal* 22(2):127–152.

- Tuan, Mia. 1999. Neither *Real* Americans Nor *Real* Asians? Multigeneration Asian Ethnics Navigating the Terrain of Authenticity. *Qualitative Sociology* 22(2):105–125.
- Tuan, Mia. 1998. *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Wong, Kent. 2003. "Labor, Workplace, and the Glass Ceiling." Pages 219–223 in *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity & Change in the 21st Century*, edited by E. Lai & Arguelles. San Francisco and Los Angeles: Asia Week and UCLA Asian American Studies Center.
- Xie, Yu & Kim Goyette. 2004. *A Demographic Portrait of Asian Americans*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Population Reference Bureau.



## CHAPTER 10

# African American Families: Historical and Contemporary Forces Shaping Family Life and Studies

AMANDA MORAS, CONSTANCE SHEHAN,  
AND FELIX M. BERARDO

### INTRODUCTION

Any attempt to examine sociological and historical information regarding African American families is fraught with very broad and controversial literatures. Much of this reflects a perspective that generally stressed the negative impacts of slavery on evolving Black family structures and relationships, often speaking of the alleged “demise” and “pathologies” of Black families. This perspective is largely reflective of culturally biased analyses, and racism endemic to academic study and larger society. The literature emphasized here in turn questions and critiques these analyses, generally stressing the strengths of Black families, the complexities of slavery in the shaping and adaptation of family life, and the continued structural oppressions that shape these experiences. All sides carry with them political and policy implications, which have in the past and continue today to influence the perceptions and well-being of Black American families. This work is not intended to be a definitive statement regarding the experiences of largely diverse groups of families, but instead a critical look at the structural forces that affect the lives of Black families and the systematic racism that informs public discourse about Black families and scholarship.

In crucial respects the experience and the development of African American families in the United States represent a sharp contrast to that of other racial and ethnic groups. The distinct historical circumstances that have impacted this family system have been unusually complicated and in some ways without parallel in comparison to other segments of our

multiethnic, multiracial society. The unique experience of forced migration from Africa into a system of extended slavery, and continued systematic exclusion from major U.S. social institutions, coupled with a large history of institutionalized racism characterized by severe violence and oppression, are just a few of the factors that have significantly influenced the structure and well-being of Black families. Furthermore, the diversity of families has created heterogeneous communities in which histories and experiences vary with time, space, and conditions (Billingsley & Billingsley 1968). The contemporary experiences of Black<sup>1</sup> families are intimately connected with the historical, economic, and social conditions encountered by generations past.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES UNDER SLAVERY

In order to understand the continuing impact of historical factors on contemporary African American families, it is necessary to incorporate not only the impact of slavery but also the lasting effects of African family structure. African families represented largely diverse and complex backgrounds, characterized by “large multigenerational groupings of relatives built around a core group known as lineage” (Sudarkasa 1997). While the conditions of slavery largely restricted families from reestablishing and maintaining this heritage, evidence of large extended kin networks have been documented, reflecting the continued importance of extended households and lasting traditions of African culture in Black families (Sudarkasa 1997; Gutman 1976).

Until the 1970s, much of the existing scholarship assumed that slavery had destroyed African American culture and families. Perhaps more so than other immigrant groups, African Americans faced severe restrictions in efforts to reestablish and maintain the traditions of their heritage by conditions associated with the slave system. This disruptive process had its beginnings in Africa, where slaves were often separated from their families subsequent to being transported to North America.

E. Franklin Frazier asserted that in this new environment slaves were discouraged, if not explicitly forbidden, from practicing traditional customs and forced to adopt the ways of slave owners. He claimed that over generations African heritage had become but a dim memory (Frazier 1966: 15). Since the time of Frazier’s writing, however, scholars have challenged this assumption, highlighting how new forms of families were often developed as a social adaptation to difficult social conditions (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen 2001). Frazier largely underestimated and ignored the adaptability and complexity of Black family life under slavery. Herbert Gutman (1976) points out in his landmark work, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, that to assume that “slave behavior was primarily a function of slave treatment” denies the historically derived values, customs, and cultures in enslaved Black communities.

The continued existence of families under slavery “was a most precarious existence,” one that was constantly dependent on the economic interests of Whites and often supported only by the perseverance of the families themselves (Billingsley & Bilingsley 1968: 65). Many circumstances of slavery made it extremely difficult to develop stable family systems. However, in spite of this, most slave communities were characterized by strong family ties

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper uses both the terms “African American” and “Black” often interchangeably to refer to Black families in the United States. While much of the history we draw upon is specifically African American history, we recognize this is not the history of all Blacks in the United States or all African Americans. The choice in terminology largely reflects the language used in literature cited and a shared experience of racism and institutional inequality based on race.

and extensive kinship networks (Gutman 1976). Many social scientists have ignored first-hand accounts such as slave narratives that point to the primacy of family and kin in everyday life. Evidences of this centrality are reoccurring themes in works such as Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and William Wells Brown, *My Life in the South*. In the autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs repeatedly references her grandmother and other female kin as instrumental forces in her life and remembers her family's repeated attempts to buy her freedom.

Through extensive analysis of plantation and freedman bureau records and letters between families and kin, Gutman's (1976) work illustrated the prevalence of connected families during slavery. Although these families lacked legal protection, many slave families were two-parent households and intimate relationships were often long-lasting unions. "Developing Afro-American culture had at its core common adaptive slave domestic arrangements and kin networks and that enlarged slave communities emerged over time out of these adaptive kin arrangements" (36). While marriage among enslaved people was viewed by many plantation owners as uneconomical and, consequently, was often prohibited, there is evidence to suggest thousands of marriages were performed unofficially by friends, family, and kin, one example of such ceremony being "jumping over the broomstick" (Gutman 1976).

Even when such ties were established husbands and fathers were frequently sold or traded, leaving their wives and children behind. Slave-owners attempted to justify these separations, arguing that "family ties among slaves were either extremely loose or non-existent and that slaves were, therefore, indifferent to separation" (Hope-Franklin 2000: 133). As Gutman has illustrated, this argument was false, evidenced by the great lengths many underwent to find and be reunited with family members, as well as the adaptations of family institutions that sustained families in hostile conditions (Gutman 1976; Hope-Franklin 2000). Furthermore, enslaved African American men who were separated from their families were in some cases permitted to visit them frequently, thus enabling them to maintain family ties (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen 2001).

Of the approximately 60,000 African Americans who were not enslaved in 1798, 45% of them lived in families, almost 85% of which were headed by men and women (Billingsley 1992). Several factors contributed to this "overwhelming existence of stable patterns of family life." Among these are strong commitment to family among African American peoples and a "social, economic and political environment" (i.e., religious beliefs and economic opportunities) that encouraged the development of families (Billingsley 1992: 98).

### **FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Various scholars have attempted to trace the rapid increase of female-headed households among African Americans to the long-lasting system of slavery. Women did, and continue to, occupy foundational roles in families; however, they did so under extremely harsh conditions. They were frequently subjected to sexual violence and had to endure an enormous amount of backbreaking labor that fell upon all enslaved African people (hooks 1981). Slavery was a highly gendered institution and the processes of oppression took significantly different forms for Black men and women. As Hill Collins points out, "Black women's sexuality and reproductive capacity presented opportunities for forms of sexual exploitation and sexual slavery" (55). Images of Black women as sexually promiscuous were created out of and solidified by the institutionalized rape of Black women at the hands of White men. Furthermore, women's

work was largely confined to the boundaries of the plantation keeping them within close proximity of oppressive “masters.” Childbearing and rearing were central responsibilities (Gray White 1999) and often this fertility and sexuality was not under women’s control (Hill Collins 2004).

While the number of female-headed households during slavery was substantial, single-parent families were not the dominant family type (Gutman 1976). Women were much more likely to be married or in long-term relationships than their male counterparts, largely due to the vast sex ratio differences of men and women on plantations (Gray White 1999). Researchers who attributed supposed matriarchal structures in Black families to conditions under slavery failed to account for systematic historical data that pointed to the contrary (Burgess 1995). Moynihan’s controversial work, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, for instance, cited the legacy of slavery as the primary force in the disruption of Black families, creating a system of female-headed households that emasculated men and bred a “tangle of pathology.” Scholars have since pointed out Moynihan’s inaccurate use of historical data and racist assumptions (Gutman 1976; Billingsley 1973), noting that two-parent families were in the majority during slavery and following emancipation.

## EMANCIPATION AND BLACK FAMILIES

Following emancipation, large numbers of ex-slaves sought to solidify their families. Many searched for relations that had been separated either by slavery or the war (Billingsley & Billingsley 1992: 118) and families sought to make their “marriages legal and children legitimate.” In 1866, almost 20,000 African Americans in North Carolina who were formerly enslaved registered their marriages in legal records (Hope-Franklin 1997: 7). During this period many communities also established formal educational systems for their children.

This period was characterized by various challenges for Black families (including the stabilizing of their families, the establishment of independent economic existences and of permanent social institutions that would represent their interests, as well as securing political liberty). Many found their lives under daily threat by the lack of the basic essentials for survival. Indeed: “For tens of thousands of Blacks, emancipation meant the freedom to die of starvation and illness” (Billingsley & Billingsley 1968: 69). Due to conditions that prevailed following emancipation, the mother–child relationship became central in many newly “freed” families (Bernard 1966: 19–23).

The years immediately following emancipation seemed promising. During Reconstruction there were huge strides in political participation and economic security. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments abolished slavery, asserted Black civil rights, and guaranteed Black men the right to vote, respectively. Reconstruction, however, lasted only a short time as “a new reign of terror descended over the south which toppled the newly interracial governments, ended reconstruction, and fastened a system of servitude and subservience on the Africans that would last for nearly a century” (Billingsley 1992: 126). Southern White elites, often with the help of White Northerners and politicians, terrorized local reconstruction governments and African Americans. Many of the rights previously guaranteed were rescinded by state legislatures and congressional and judicial actions, not to be regained until the 1950s (Feagin 2000).

The period to follow was far from the racial equality many had dreamed emancipation would bring. The long-standing racial Apartheid of the United States has meant much more than separate and unequal facilities for Whites and Blacks. The Civil Rights Act of 1875

was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1883, and the later established *Plessey v. Ferguson* statute of “separate but equal” was a decision that would shape the United States, and the well-being of Black families, for years to come. Black Codes, Jim Crow legislation, and legal segregation ensured racial inequality that continues to shape the discourse on and lived experiences of Black families. Poll taxes and grandfather clauses were used to deny Black men their right to vote. Polling stations would often be moved to new locations that were hidden from Black voters in an effort to disenfranchise the possible political power of Black communities (Hope-Franklin 2000). Furthermore, following slavery, many Black families were promised land by the federal government, the famous “forty acres and a mule,” however, few Blacks were given this land, and those that were had it confiscated later. The plantation system was replaced by sharecropping systems, which did little to change the economic situations of many Black families (Feagin 2000).

Racism mandated the separation of Blacks and Whites in various spheres of social interaction. Southern states often accomplished this segregation and systematic exclusion through laws, while northern states enforced it largely through customs and traditions. Segregation placed Black families under extreme economic and social strain. Black schools and job opportunities were far from equal. Extremely dangerous working environments and poor pay exacerbated the racially hostile environment. The economic conditions following slavery locked many Black families into poverty, setting up past and present systematic exclusions from wealth and opportunity (Hill-Collins 2004), demonstrating how the historical and contemporary manifestations of institutionalized racism continue to affect the lives of Black families.

White violence took the place of legal slavery: over 3,000 lynchings were recorded between 1882 and 1964 (U.S. Census 1975). Many rigorous historians place this number much higher, pointing out the number of undocumented cases and overall tendency to ignore and/or condone White violence toward Blacks (Wells-Barnett 1969). Over 200 anti-lynching bills have been shot down by Congress over the past 100 years, reflecting the complicity of the U.S. government in this violence. Rape was also used as a tool of racial violence and control. Whereas under slavery, the rape of African American women was a “property” dispute (if the rapist was not her “master”), “free” Black women did not even have this so-called protection. As Hill-Collins points out, “No longer the property of a *few* White men, African American women became sexually available to *all* White men . . . in a climate of violence that meted out severe consequences for either defending themselves or soliciting Black male protection, Black women could be raped” (Hill-Collins 2004: 65).

### IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND URBANIZATION ON BLACK FAMILIES

At the close of the Civil War, well over 90% of all African Americans were still located in the rural South. Beginning with emancipation, however, a pattern of geographic mobility was set into motion that ultimately was to have profound ramifications for family life as well as society. Up to the turn of the 20th century, the migration of ex-slaves was primarily to the towns and cities of the South. Thereafter this population shifted increasingly toward the North and to a lesser extent to the Midwest. In 1900, about 9 of every 10 African Americans still resided in the southern region. One hundred years after the end of the Civil War, only about 54% of African Americans were located there. Periodic failures in the southern economy, labor shortages and job opportunities in the North, the cataclysmic social changes produced by two world

wars, racial prejudice and discrimination, and a host of other social forces provided the impetus for this massive redistribution of the Black population. However, since 1970, there has been a return of large numbers of African Americans to the South. It appears that this latest trend accelerated throughout the 1990s (Stoll 2004).

Two explanations have been given for the return of African Americans to the South. One emphasizes the role of deteriorating social and economic conditions in the North caused by deindustrialization and persistent discrimination. This was coupled with improvements in the social and economic climate of the South, including increased integration of schools, improved race relations, and increased capital investment and economic opportunities (Johnson and Brunn 1980). The other explanation for return migration emphasizes historically significant ties African Americans have had to the South. Cromartie Stack and (1989) argue that Black Northerners, even those who were not born in the South, maintained strong ties to home communities in the region, sharing their connections with younger generations of their families. These kinship ties have been strong predictors of migration decisions.

It is important to note that the initial migration from the South was essentially a movement of millions of individuals and families from rural to primarily urban environments. Moreover, the steady stream of migration was overwhelmingly directed toward the large industrial and metropolitan centers of the country, particularly in the North. The movement of Black Americans to urban areas has been phenomenal, and they now constitute a majority of the population in several large metropolitan communities in the US (Stoll 2004).

Nearly all of the early migrants had little choice but to settle in the dilapidated housing of the deteriorated slums of the cities. The rapidly increasing numbers eventually overflowed into surrounding neighborhoods, met by both dismay and open antagonism among the White middle-class residents. Racial discrimination and exploitation in housing and employment subsequently produced a pattern of residential segregation that would increasingly lock some Black families into urban ghettos for decades. However, since the 1970s, the residential patterns of blacks within urban areas have changed. The 2000 Census showed that in metropolitan areas with at least half a million residents, the proportion of African Americans who lived in the central cities declined from 66% to 61%. This has been accompanied by an increasing suburbanization prompted by a desire for home ownership and pursuit of economic opportunities (Stoll 2004).

## CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

From the initial adaptation of the African family system under the conditions of slavery to the rapid urbanization of a majority of the Black population, family life has undergone a constant process of change. While a long history of deprivation, segregation, and discrimination has taken its toll, commitment to family has remained strong. African American families have adjusted and shifted with fluctuations in societal conditions and social class (Billingsley 1992). While there have been outstanding professional, educational, and economic gains since the 1960s, institutionalized racism and structural inequality continue to leave many families in severely disadvantaged positions. Fifty-two percent of all Black married couples have incomes of \$50,000 or more; however, 23% of African Americans live under the poverty line (this proportion is 30% for Black children) compared to 8% of Whites (10% of White children). 18% of Black men and 26% of Black women hold managerial or professional specialty positions, but the unemployment rate for Blacks in 2002 was twice that of Whites (Census Bureau 2003).

African American families suffer discrimination on both personal and institutional levels. Access to quality education, healthcare, and housing is repeatedly denied regardless of class. Racial profiling happens not only on our streets, but in our schools, recreating a system of poverty that tracks Black children into the lowest classes and alienates their parents. Hill refers to this mixed portrait as “The best of times and the worst of times,” citing that while many Black families have advanced, many have also “lost ground” (Hill 2003: 52).

A large portion of the existing family research has reflected Pervasive cultural biases. Black families are held to a cultural measuring stick in which White, hegemonic, middle-class, nuclear families are posed as the ideal (Hill 2005). Deviations from this norm are construed as maladjustments, and prescriptive research attempts to determine why some Black families have not assimilated into a two-parent nuclear family form. Over the past three decades, many critical scholars have called for the abandonment of a cultural deficiency model (Billingsley 1992; Stack 1974; Hill 2003). Baca-Zinn and Eitzen (2001) urge us to hold the diversity of families as the norm, and understand families within their larger social and economic contexts. When one family type is identified as normative, those who do not meet that standard, specifically families of color, are labeled as “backwards” and products of their “ethnically flawed lifestyles” (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen 2001). African American families are extremely diverse and do not represent a homogeneous experience. Ignorance of structural, economic, regional, and value differences within families has created inaccurate and overly simplistic images. In addition, the diversity of Black families across the Diaspora is often overlooked, assuming that all Black families share the experience of African Americans, or that all African Americans share the same history (Allen & James 1998).

Over the past 200 years the study of Black families has been “held hostage” by White researchers, consistently reinforcing the notion of inherently problematic families (Nobles 1997; Billingsley 1973). A complete analysis of the diverse and complex lives of African American families must acknowledge the reality of White racism and institutionalized oppression and its historical and contemporary effects on families and communities (Nobles 1997: 84). An analysis of oppression (one that constructs race, class, gender, and nation as intersectional forces) is integral to the understanding of Black families. Treating social class as “a fixed static system of social locations” or as “a passive backdrop for active family processes” neglects the active role social class plays in the formation of families’ experiences. In addition, the gendered nature of families and state policies regarding families reflects intersectional realities not adequately understood by race or gender alone (Hill-Collins 1998). Therefore, the study of Black families requires a holistic perspective encompassing historical and ecological societal factors that guides us toward incorporating the influence of institutionalized racism.

## KINSHIP TIES

The presence of extended families and kinship ties has historically been and continues to be a major foundation of African American families. Formal and informal kinship care has been an adaptive response to familial endangerment (Scannapieco & Jackson 1996). Stack (1974) documented the importance of kinship ties in African American communities, describing the relationships between blood relatives, married kin, and close non-family ties. Billingsley (1992) also documented the presence of these networks as a strong basis for family unity. The diverse structures of African American families are not accidental; they are purposive adaptations to societal challenges. Extended kin networks have been documented for working-class families (McAdoo 1978), families living in poverty (Stack 1974), and middle-class families,

contesting popular assertions that “with adequate income and security, racial and cultural characteristics no longer are salient” (McAdoo 1978: 775).

The primary characteristics of Black extended kin systems include geographical closeness of kin, a strong sense of familial obligation, fluid household boundaries exhibited by the willingness to absorb relatives, high familial interactions, and strong systems of mutual aid (Hatchett & Jackson 1999: 173). The varying types of kinship exchange reflect the diversity of African American families.

Kin networks continue to operate as support systems for Black families; however, recent studies suggest the prevalence of these networks is declining (Roschelle 1997; Jayakody et al. 1993). In her 1974 study, Stack reported high levels of exchange, in the forms of financial help, food, child care, and clothes. Jayakody et al. (1993) found that only one quarter of never-married mothers received financial assistance from kin, and less than one-fifth received child care. However, four out of five mothers received emotional support from their kin networks. Roschelle (1997) also found that support among Black and Latino families may be less prevalent than past social science literature has suggested. While she cites many possible causes for this, among the most persuasive is the continued poverty affecting disadvantaged families, which strains kin networks at times beyond repair. Seemingly contradicting studies have found that 9 out of 10 respondents report their families being very close or fairly close, and more than two thirds contacted their families every week and reported receiving help from their families (Hatchett & Jackson 1999). Kin networks are neither static nor simplistic. As structural and institutional forces shift, the shape and frequency and types of kin interaction may change based on resources and needs (Sarkisan & Gerstel 2004).

The inordinate degree of poverty that afflicts African American families threatens these systems., Public welfare and housing policies in the United States that discourage multigenerational households have directly influenced the rising numbers of isolated households (Sudarkasa 1999). Welfare programs have been based on the assumption of the nuclear family as the ideal functioning unit. Therefore, policies intended to “help” economically disadvantaged Black families have disrupted large extended networks in an effort to force them to conform to White middle-class norms.

Familial networks provide invaluable resources to parents in poor communities. Transportation, housing, food, job contacts, emotional support, and childcare are among the types of support offered (Stack 1974). In an analysis of Meadowview, a small Black suburb in the Midwest, Hicks-Bartlett (2000) observed “loose, family-based networks that minimize risk and center on meeting immediate needs” (29). For many families the only asylum are these networks, often placing stress on relatives who themselves might be poor. As the numbers of families in need increases, it becomes more difficult to meet the needs of everyone. In addition, public housing projects in urban communities have been designed with little regard for the long-term welfare and communal needs of its inhabitants (Barclay-McLaughlin 2000). Living in multigenerational households and maintaining large kinship networks provide protection for poor families. Unlike middle-class families, who can often absorb unexpected economic ebbs and flows, poor households often do not have large savings to pull extra cash from (Stack 1974).

Contemporary forms of kin networks can be traced to structures of African extended families (Sudarkasa 1999). Many distinctive features of those earlier patterns survived the American experience, continually manifesting themselves (Billingsley 1992). Sudarkasa (1999) emphasizes this “earlier structure of African extended families out of which it (kinship networks) evolved” (Sudarkasa 1999: 192). In these communities children were a shared responsibility. There were no illegitimate children (Scannapieco & Jackson 1996).



Other researchers cite the extended kin behavior of African Americans as a response to racial oppression in the United States (Stack 1974; Hill 2003). Slavery, Jim Crow, and the continued existence of personal and institutional racism have forced many families to provide for themselves.

## **BLACK MOTHERHOOD**

Motherhood remains a central institution in African American communities (Hill-Collins 1990; St. Jean & Feagin 1998). Mothers have occupied an integral role in not only caring for families, but also in preserving of cultures and collective memories (St. Jean & Feagin 1998). The glorification of motherhood, however, often requires Black women to repeatedly push their needs behind the needs of all others. "Black motherhood as an institution is both dynamic and dialectical" (Hill-Collins 1990: 176). Women construct motherhood in a myriad of ways, from self-actualization to burdensome worry, often these constructions existing in the same communities or even within the same woman.

In spite of the importance of women in communities, negative imagery of motherhood permeates discussions of Black families. Images of overbearing women and castrated men lead to the false assumption that Black men are being emasculated by powerful Black women, placing the oppression of men onto the shoulders of women, ignoring the White supremacist, capitalist state that actually subordinates Black men and women based on a system of institutionalized racism (hooks, 2004). Therefore, this stereotyping of Black mothers supports patriarchal thinking; the achievement of family harmony could only be achieved by the triumph of men over women in the home. Hill-Collins (1990) also cites "the mammy, the matriarch, and the welfare queen" as oppressive images, tools that control perceptions about Black women's sexuality and fertility. These images subordinate women's roles, falsifying their experiences.

There is little evidence to support Black women's dominance over Black men. While commonly referred to as matriarchal (the female dominance over males), Black families may be more accurately depicted as matrifocal, in which kin are held together through an extended line of women, grandmothers, mothers, and daughters (Dickerson 1995). "Other-mothers" (women who are not necessarily blood kin yet take on mothering roles), grandmothers, and community mothers are indispensable in the rearing of African American children. Women-centered networks based on kin and community have been central to the institution of Black motherhood. These networks have been challenged in recent decades as desegregation and class-stratified neighborhoods drastically changed the composition of Black communities. In addition, the influx of crack cocaine into urban neighborhoods tore apart many family ties, with African American children too often becoming the "casualties" of the drug wars. Despite this adversity, the networks of other-mothers and community mothers continue to remain a force in even the most troubled communities (Hill-Collins 1990).

## **THE "DECLINE" OF MARRIAGE AND THE RISE SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS**

The number of female-headed households for all racial groups has grown at confounding rates. In 1960, only 22% of African American families were headed by single women (U.S. Census Bureau 1991), whereas in 1998 this percentage rose to 47% (U.S. Census Bureau 1998). More recent statistics cite this percentage at 43% by 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003).

For many the rise of single-parent households has been a cause for alarm. Conservatives cite the dwindling numbers of nuclear families as evidence of deficient family values. High rates of divorce, un-wed motherhood, and female-headed households have been identified as the social forces responsible for the supposed decline of the family (Hill-Collins 1990).

Changes in marriage rates have implications for the living arrangements of children. Among both Black and White children, the percentage living in married couple families declined during the 1990s (as it had during the 1980s), but the decline was greater among Whites than Blacks. By 2000, 73% of White children and 36% of Black children lived in married-couple families. On the other hand, the percentage of children living in other types of family households (e.g., grandparents) increased over the 1990s. The 2000 Census revealed that 13% of Black children and 8% of White children lived in this type of household.

Various demographic patterns contribute to the incidence of female-headed families (e.g., separation or divorce, or widowhood), but the greatest contributor is births to unmarried women. Because the out-of-wedlock birth rate among African Americans has been considerably higher than that among Whites since the 1940s, the percentage of African American children living in single-parent homes has also been greater. However, since the 1960s, the fertility rate among unmarried African American women has declined while that rate among Whites has increased. By 1995, the ratio of Black to White unmarried fertility had dropped to 2:6.

As Stoll (2004) notes, these trends in family formation, especially the decline in marriage rates, suggest that there are macro-level forces that are influencing all racial groups. However, the question regarding causes of racial differences in American family formation patterns remains. A number of well-documented explanations for these differences have been advanced. One pertains to the long-lasting impact of slavery on African American families. A number of scholars have argued that slavery forced African Americans to adopt a variety of family forms, including extending the roles of more distant family members (Stevenson 1995; Morgan et al. 1993; McDaniel 1994). This reasoning has been extended to contemporary families by Carol Stack (1974) and others (Blum and Deussen 1996), who argue that some poor and working-class African American women share a notion of community-based independence that emphasizes kin-based support networks and long-term partnerships with men, but not necessarily marriage.

Another explanation for the racial difference in marriage rates focuses on Black male marriageability. This argument holds that Blacks are less likely than Whites to marry because of the increasing economic marginality of Black men. The decline in the manufacturing sector of the economy has resulted in job loss among African American men compounded by the effects of discriminatory hiring processes and hostile working environments. The fact that the marriage rate among Blacks stabilized in the 1990s, a period of relative economic gain, provides some support for this hypothesis. Demographic factors have also been proposed as a contributor to the racial gap in marriage. Sampson (1995) and others (Guttentag and Secord 1983) argue that an imbalanced sex ratio results in a shortage of Black men available for marriage. Higher mortality and incarceration rates among young Black men produce the sex ratio imbalance. Furthermore, Black men in the United States also continue to suffer the effects of extreme and violent racism. Stereotypes and White fear of Black men have created images of them as criminal and dangerous (Feagin 2000). Black men are repeatedly victims of police brutality and White violence. Disproportionate traffic stops, racial profiling, increased police presence in poor and/or Black areas, and the severe over-representation of Black men in the prison industrial complex are only a few of the manifestations of a racist criminal justice system. This extreme marginalization of Black men often forces Black women to assume central roles in Black communities and families.

As Russell-Brown (1998) concludes in her work on race and crime, “Particularly for young Black men, the police represent Public Enemy number one.”

It is important to note how social institutions such as racism, economic deprivation, and social stratification shape families and their adaptive patterns. “Examining structural constraints requires that we have an understanding of how the larger social structure—a racist, patriarchal, capitalist system—affects those individuals and the choices available to them” (Elise 1995: 54). Only 10% of families in the United States currently live in a heterosexual two-parent household, where the male works outside the home for pay and the female cares for children (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen 2001). Family structure alone does not dictate the well-being of families although popular opinion describes single-mother homes—particularly those in African American communities—as detrimental.

As mentioned earlier, Moynihan’s 1965 report is perhaps the most famous assertion of this negative image. In it he referred to Black families as “a tangle of pathology,” citing Black mothers as the transmitters of this “culture of poverty.” “Black mothers were accused of failing to discipline their children, of emasculating their sons, of defeminizing their daughters, and of retarding their children’s academic achievement” (Hill-Collins 1990). Although Moynihan’s data and results have been largely contested, this thinking continues to permeate our public discourse (Dickerson 1995: ix).

This often discredits single mothers, characterizing them as social problems. Scholars and policymakers typically strategize about ways to “deal” with single mothers rather than how to empower them, which could have life-changing generative effects (Billingsley 1992). Those on all sides of the political spectrum, however, are concerned with the situations of children and parents in single-family households. Research has shown that children who grow up in single-parent households are more likely to drop out of school, have lower academic performance, have higher absentee rates, and are more likely to use drugs and alcohol or engage in other delinquent behaviors (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen 2001). While these negative outcomes have been consistently documented, the strategies geared toward bettering the life chances of parents and children differ. Some scholars and political pundits focus on the absence of men (i.e., 80% of all single-parent households are headed by women), others focus on structural stresses and differences in economic resources (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen 2001).

Although single-mother households may be father-absent, often there are other suitable male kin to serve nurturing roles for children. Extensive kin networks are often present in single-mother homes, absorbing part of the responsibilities of these families. African American families have adapted to the presence of single-mother homes, using extended family structures to provide economic and social support (Billingsley 1992). Rates of marriage or non-marriage exaggerate Black-White differences in union formation. When one considers both informal and formal unions, the race differences in the percentages of young women who have entered a union are reduced by about one-half (Seltzer 2000: 1250). Moreover, much of the rise in childbearing outside marriage can be attributed to childbearing in cohabiting unions. Likewise, there are large variations in female-headed households, which may include never-married, divorced, and/or widowed women (Sudarkasa 1999).

Cain and Combs-Orme (2005) found in their research of female-headed households that being a single mother did not predict poor parenting or parenting stress for Black women. Marital status and family structure were not found to be significant predictors of stress. Instead, poverty and the quality of parenting received by the mothers emerged as important variables: “the multigenerational or two-parent family is not necessarily an improvement over single motherhood. . . A true commitment to strong families and healthy children begins with a focus on the debilitating effects of poverty in the African American Community”

(Combs & Orme 2005:34). Thirty-five percent of unmarried, female-headed Black families are living under the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). The urgency of single-mother families, therefore, is not that they are female-headed households; it is the poverty that accompanies being a single mother (Burgess 1995).

Likewise, living in a two-parent family does not safeguard children against poverty. True commitment to families requires critical analysis of the structural forces at work, and gendered racism. Heterosexist, racist, and sexist agendas of “getting” Black women married or molding Black families to fit a two-parent ideal that rarely exists is not a solution for empowering families. Ignorance of economic forces, access to opportunity, and institutionalized racism provide incomplete and inaccurate understandings of the difficulties facing families. For instance, given the median income of Black men in the United States, each two-child household would need to add three Black men to meet the median income of U.S. families, and four to be middle class (Elise 1995:63). This statistic illustrates the true urgency of poor families.

### THE RISING MIDDLE CLASS

In 1910, only 6% of African Americans were employed in census definitions of trade, professional, clerical work, or governmental service. By 1940, this percentage had only risen to 9% who were employed in either White collar or skilled blue collar labor. Following the civil rights laws of the 1960s, this percentage rose to 32%, demonstrating large growth among a once very small Black middle class (Feagin & Sikes 1994:27). There is considerable diversity within this population, both in economic situations, and family structure and well-being. Billingsley & Billingsley (1968), for example, identified three strata within the middle classes: the upper middle class, the solid middle middle class, and the precarious lower middle class.

The majority of the Black middle classes are represented in lower middle-class occupations. In addition, because the appearance of a sizeable middle class is relatively new, they lack accumulated wealth. Patillo-McCoy (2000) documented the experiences and lives of several Black families in the middle-class neighborhood of Groveland. She identifies the many circumstances that make Black middle-class experience a racial and class specific reality, which may not be comparable to their White counterparts. They continue to live in largely segregated communities and retain cross-class kin and social ties. Many Black middle-class communities are in close proximity to poor neighborhoods, contrary to White middle-class neighborhoods that are often far removed from such disadvantaged lifestyles.

The areas where Black middle-class youth reside typically have higher poverty and crime rates and worse schools than White middle-class youth: “Socioeconomic status is complicated by the crosscutting reality of race, and the ways in which racial discrimination shapes neighborhood contexts” (Patillo-McCoy 2000:99).

Black middle-class families are perceived to have achieved the American dream, evidencing the disappearance of racism and possibility of class mobility, creating the false illusion that the United States has achieved racial equality (Feagin & Sikes 1994). This, however, ignores Black middle-class families’ continued confrontations with racism on a daily basis regardless of class status. While their resources could secure quality education and housing, they continue to encounter severe racism when attempting to enter predominately White schools and neighborhoods. Navigating middle-class spaces challenges African American families with daily negotiations of race and racist encounters. Class mobility is usually accompanied by increased contact with large White populations; as a result, White racism is a daily experience for middle-class African Americans (Feagin & Sikes 1994).

In the 1960s, the federal government passed legislation outlawing housing discrimination; however, neighborhoods continue to be very segregated. The racial segregation of neighborhoods is not accidental or voluntary for African Americans. Feagin and Sikes (1994) found in their interviews with 209 middle-class African Americans that many had experienced blatant housing discrimination, ranging from the refusal of real estate agents to return their phone calls, to White homeowners slamming the door in their faces when they showed up to look at a property. Black children in White schools face their own burdens: "life for Black students in mostly White schools often means daily struggle and reoccurring crises . . . when Black students say "whiteness" is an omnipresent problem they are not just talking about color or racial identification. They are reporting being at sea in a hostile environment" (Feagin & Sikes 1994:133). African Americans in White middle-class workplaces are repeatedly reminded of "society's negative evaluation of their blackness" (1994:185). White co-workers claim "reverse discrimination" when Blacks gain valuable positions; when in actuality Black workers continue to be paid less than their White counterparts.

Residing in middle-class neighborhoods also restricts the growth of kin networks for many Black families. "US middle class family life is based on privatization—buying a big house so that one not need to cooperate with one's neighbors, or even see them" (Hill-Collins 1990:182). As Hill-Collins points out, the American middle class participates in "the privatization of everything," from health clubs to education. This challenges the traditional value systems of working-class African Americans, making women-centered networks of other mothers and community mothers structurally arduous. In spite of this, many middle-class Blacks continue to participate in networks of mutual help, often attributing their own mobility to extensive kin support. Extended family patterns are instrumental for the emotional well-being of African Americans across class lines, demonstrating their viability as cultural capital (McAdoo 1978). Daniel Tatum (1999) documented the importance of extended kin for middle-class families: "The family environment is the primary source of support and rejuvenation in the face of daily stress" (117). This support is especially important for Black families in White communities given the constant degradation of Blackness, and racism encountered in these White spaces.

Understanding these experiences requires intricate analysis of the dynamics of race and class that shape communities, families, and lives. While increased resources differentiate this experience from working-class and economically disadvantaged Black experiences, it is not comparable to that of the White middle classes. With some notable exceptions, Black middle classes have remained largely invisible in the study of families, creating a false monolithic picture of African American communities. Furthermore, mainstream portrayals of middle-class African American families, for example, "The Cosby Show," downplay the continued importance of race and experiences of racism in the lives of Black middle-class families.

## CONCLUSION

Nearly four decades ago, Billingsley (1973) surveyed the major social science scholarship in terms of its treatment of Black families in America, including the myths regarding these families present in the literature. It was clear from this survey that the body of lay and empirical knowledge available up to that point "viewed the Black family as a pathological entity, emphasizing its weaknesses instead of its strengths." He contends that "no area of American life (is) more glaringly ignored, distorted, or more systematically devalued than black family life" (431). In subsequent decades, sociological research has moved ever so incrementally

toward correcting this picture. The new revisionist scholarship now generally presents a more realistic and positive assessment of Black families, in terms of both their historical manifestations as well as their contemporary lives, and stresses the stability of the majority of Black families. The diversities within this family system as well as its strengths are now given much more prominence and help explain families' survival in a hostile and racist environment.

There is little question that on a variety of indicators the educational and socioeconomic positions of Black families in society are rising. The expanding middle class is illustrative of this progress. However, on several fronts they still are struggling in the face of poverty and continuing racism, reflected, for instance, in widespread residential segregation. We have noted some of these disparities, such as persistently high unemployment rates and extensive poverty. High infant mortality rates and high death rates continue to be realities for many economically disadvantaged Black families. Recent studies reveal that "African Americans are exposed to more stressful life events and chronic stressors; experience more traumatic events, especially those related to violence; and feel less sense of control and well-being than Whites; they also have a greater sense of alienation and mistrust" (Spalter-Roth, Lowenthal, and Rubio 2005:7). Such conditions clearly pose difficulties for maintaining the health and welfare of today's families. As these authors note: "Reducing poverty, integrating neighborhoods, raising educational levels, and reducing prejudice would improve the likelihood of healthier and longer lives for minority groups" (2005:11).

Furthermore, as discussed here, many family researchers remain largely ignorant of the experiences of families of color. In order to develop truly inclusive family studies, we must entirely reformulate how we think about, research, and teach about families. Black families and other families of color remain largely isolated to special topic weeks on race and are rarely studied for their contributions to families in general. Ignorance of the diversity and complexities of families has various manifestations and consequences for academic disciplines as a whole, and reinforces and recreates a system of racial exclusion. The urgency of this project is clear, and it begins with an honest and critical analysis of how racism and White supremacy continue to inform how we conceptualize families.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, W. R. & A. D. James (1998) Comparative Perspectives on Black Family Life: Uncommon Explorations of a Common Subject. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29.
- Barclay-McLaughlin, G. (2000) Communal Isolation: Narrowing Pathways to Goal Attainment and Work, in Danziger, S. & Chih Lin, A., eds. *Coping with Poverty: The Social Contexts of Neighborhood, Work, and Family Life in the African American Community*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Baca-Zinn, M. & Eitzen, D. S. (2001) *Diversity in Families*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bernard, Jesse (1966) *Marriage and Family among Negroes*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Billingsley, A. (1992) *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African American Families*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Billingsley, A. (1973) Black Families and White Social Science, in Ladner, Joyce, ed., *The Death of White Sociology*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Billingsley, A. & Billingsley, A. T. (1968) *Black Families in White America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Blum, L. M. & Deussen, T. (1996). Negotiating Independent Motherhood: Working-Class African American Women Talk about Marriage and Motherhood. *Gender and Society*, 10.
- Burgess, N.J. (1995) Female-Headed Households in a Socio-Historical Perspective, in Dickerson, B. ed., *African American Single Mothers: Understanding Their Lives and Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cain, Daphne S. & Combs-Orme, Terri (2005) Family Structure Effects on Parenting Stress and Practices in the African American Family. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, XXXII, 2.
- Cromartie, J. & Stack, C. B. (1989) Reinterpretation of Black Return and Nonreturn Migration to the South 1975-1980. *Geographical Review*, 79, 3.

- Daniel Tatum, B. (1999) *Assimilation Blues: Black Families in White Communities, Who Succeeds and Why?* New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Dickerson, B. (1995) *African American Single Mothers: Understanding Their Lives and Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Elise, S. (1995) Teenaged Mothers: A Sense of Self, in Dickerson, B., ed., *African American Single Mothers: Understanding Their Lives and Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Feagin, J. (2000) *Racist America*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Feagin, J. & Sikes, M. P. (1994) *Living with Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Frazier, E. Franklin (1966) *The Negro Family in the United States*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gray White, D. (1999) *Aren't I A Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. New York NY: W.W Norton & Co.
- Gutman, H. G. (1976) *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Guttentag, M. & Secord P.F. (1982) *Too Many Women? The Sex Ratio Question*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1983.
- Hatchett, S. J. & Jackson, J. S. (1999) African American Extended Kin Systems: An Empirical Assessment in the National Survey of Black Americans, in McAdoo, H. P., ed., *Family Ethnicity: Strength in Diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hicks-Bartlett, S. (2000) Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Labyrinth of Working and Parenting in a Poor Community, in Danziger, S. & Chih Lin, A., eds., *Coping with Poverty: The Social Contexts of Neighborhood, Work, and Family Life in the African American Community*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Hill, R. (2003) *The Strengths of Black Families*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Hill, R. (1998) Understanding Black Family Functioning: A Holistic Perspective. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29.
- Hill, S. A. (2005) *Black Intimacies: A Gender Perspective on Families and Relationships*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altmira Press.
- Hill-Collins, P. (2004) *Black Sexual Politics*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hill-Collins, P. (1998) Intersections of Race, Class, Gender and Nation: Some Implications for Black Family Studies. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29.
- Hill-Collins, P. (1990) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, bell (2004) *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, bell (1981) *Ain't I a Woman*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hope Franklin, J. (2000) *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Hope Franklin, J. (1997) African American Families: A Historical Note, in McAdoo, H. P., ed., *Black Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Josephson, Eric (1969) The Matriarchy: Myth and Reality. *The Family Coordinator*, 18.
- Jayakody, R., Chatters, L. M. & Taylor, R. J. (1993) Family Support to Single and Married African American Mothers: The Provision of Financial, Emotional, and Child Care Assistance. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 55, 2.
- Jewell, K. S. (2003) *Survival of the African American Family: The Institutional Impact of U.S. Social Policy*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Johnson, J.H & Brunn, S. D. (1980) Spatial and Behavioral Aspects of the Counterstream Migration of Blacks to the South, in Brunn, S. D. & Wheeler, J. O., eds., *The American metropolitan System: Present and Future*, 59-75. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
- McAdoo, H. P. (1999) *Family Ethnicity: Strength in Diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McAdoo, H. P. (1997) *Black Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McAdoo, H. P. (1978) Factors Related to Stability in Upwardly Mobile Black Families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 40, 4.
- McDaniel, A. (1994) Historical Racial Differences in Living Arrangements of Children. *Journal of Family History*, 19.
- Morgan, S. Philip, McDaniel, Antonio, Miller, Andrew T. & Preston, Samuel H. (1993) Racial Differences in Household and Family Structure at the Turn of the Century. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98, 4.
- Nobles, W. N. (1997) African American Family Life: An Instrument of Culture, in McAdoo, H. P., ed., *Black Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patillo-McCoy, M. (2000) Negotiating Adolescence in a Black Middle Class Neighborhood, in Danziger, S. & Chih Lin, A., eds., *Coping with Poverty: The Social Contexts of Neighborhood, Work, and Family Life in the African American Community*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Roschelle, A. (1997) *No More kin: Exploring Race, Class, and Gender in Family Networks* Thousand Oaks, CA: Stage.

- Russell-Brown, K (1998) *The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fear, Back Protectionism, Police Harassment and other Macro-aggressions*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Sampson, Robert J. (1995) Unemployment and Imbalanced Sex Ratios: Race-Specific Consequences for Family Structure and Crime, in Tucker, M. Belinda & Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia, eds., *The Decline in Marriage Among African Americans: Causes, Consequences and Policy Implications*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Sarkisian, N. & Gerstel, N. (2004) Kin Support among Blacks and Whites: Race and Family Organization. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 6.
- Scannapieco, M. & Jackson, S. (1996) Kinship Care: The African American Response to Family Preservation. *Social Work*, 41, 2.
- Seltzer, J. (2000). Families Formed outside Marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62.
- Spalter-Roth, R., Lowenthal, T. A. & Rubio, M. (2005) Race, Ethnicity and the Health of Americans. *ASA Series on How Race and Ethnicity Matter*.
- Stack, C. (1974) *All Our Kin*. New York, NY: Harrer & Row.
- St. Jean, Yanick & Feagin, Joe (1998) *Double Burden: Black Women and Everyday Racism*. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Stevenson, Brenda E. (1995) Black Family Structure in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia: Amending the Revisionist Perspective, in Tucker, M. Belinda & Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia, eds., *The Decline in Marriage among African Americans Causes, Consequences and Policy Implications*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Stoll, Michael A. (2004) *African Americans and the Color Line*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.
- Sudarkasa, N. (1999) African American Females as Primary Parents, in McAdoo, H. P., ed., *Family Ethnicity: Strength in Diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sudarkasa, N. (1997) African American Families and Family Values, in McAdoo, H. P., ed., *Black Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2003) *The Black Population in the United States: March 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Census Bureau (1991) *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1990*. Current Population Reports. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Census Bureau (1998) *Households by Type and Selected Characteristics: 1998*. Current Population Reports. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Census Bureau (1975) *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Bicentennial Edition, Part 2*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Wells-Barnett, Ida B. (1969) *On Lynching: Southern Horrors, a Red Record, Mob Rule in New Orleans*. New York, NY: Arno Press.



## CHAPTER 11

# A Dialectical Understanding of the Vulnerability of International Migrants

JORGE A. BUSTAMANTE

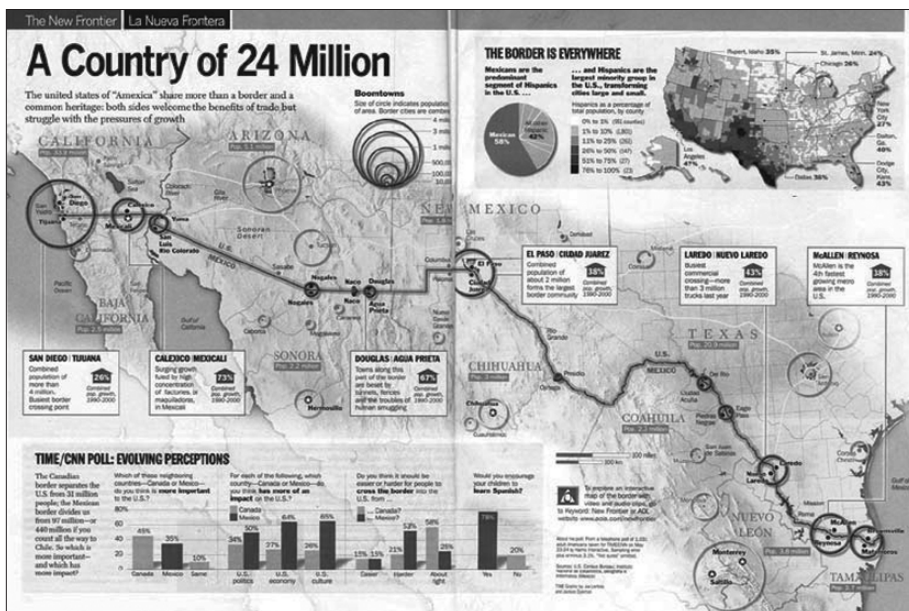
This paper consists of three parts. The first includes a presentation of an analytical model in a diagram, constructed as a tool toward an explanation of the relationship between international migrations and human rights. The second part consists of a historical analysis of the rise and dynamics of a bilaterally shaped phenomenon of labor migration from Mexico to the United States. The third part consists of an analysis of the present conditions of Mexican migrants in the United States with a view of their future in the context of immigrants' human rights and U.S. immigration policies.

### INTRODUCTION (IT ALL BEGAN AT THE BORDER)

If there is a geographical area that has been particularly affected by the events of September 11, 2001, that is the international border between Mexico and the United States. It is understandable that a country that enters a state of war after been attacked in its own territory with enormous losses, for the first time in its history, reacts by closing its international borders. Concomitantly, an immigration phenomenon, basically derived from a geographical vicinity between two countries of contrasting development and cultures, becomes affected by a shift in U.S. immigration perspectives, from one based on labor and economics to one based on national security. The immediate U.S. reaction of closing its doors has been gradually substituted by strict controls over everything that crosses its borders, but a fact remains: border life is not what it used to be before September 11. In the short run, everything that crosses the border has been slowed down by new controls. In the long run, many things will gradually return to what they were before that Tuesday, but for a long while, life at the border will not be the same.

An intense interaction of more than 12 million people from the two sides of the U.S.-Mexico border has made border people live in many instances as if the border does not exist. That has been the case among many at the U.S.-Mexico border in the way their family life is practiced. For the planning of weddings, birthdays, family reunions, and religious ceremonies, the border has been more virtual than real. This was reversed from a virtual border to a real one after that September 11, as border people learned what it meant to cross an international border as they entered into a space where institutions, laws, and governments addressed them with virtual and not so virtual voices, reminding them that there is a line that marks the beginning and the end of two different nations.

One of the effects after that September 11 was that border people were confronted with an increase in the number of instances where they were reminded that the border makes a



*Time* magazine from June 11, 2002 (Vol. 152, no. 23) had lengthy coverage about the border. The main thesis of that unusually broad coverage was how promising the U.S.-Mexico border region was as a place of convergence of the best opportunities for economic growth that the process of globalization and trilateralization had brought to the three NAFTA countries. *Time* magazine writers of that issue portrayed a very optimistic scenario based on the realities of a thriving process of integration of the three NAFTA economies, most particularly that between Mexico and the United States, and even more particularly at the border region we share. That optimistic scenario was one of the many casualties of the terrorist attack. But vital needs at the border have not changed. Border people from the two sides still have to eat, still have to provide for their families, and still have to seek the cooperation of their neighbors on the other side for the common tasks that geography has imposed on them. There are times when this is an opportunity. There are also times when this is a problem. In perpetual abundance, however, is a challenge for good neighboring. Sometimes that is met by acts of solidarity, such as when the bordering river (Rio Bravo in Mexico, Rio Grande in the United States) goes out of its banks to inundate border settlements on both sides. There are other times when legislative projects such as HR4437 proposing border fences and the actions of the "minute men" make Mexicans feel treated like an enemy country. The fact remains that the way border people understand each other and treat each other at the common border will eventually be followed by the other people in both countries, because neither side will ever be able to change geography.

difference. Their own identities were then pressured into acts of consciousness, about which side of the border they really belong to. Border people might continue to have a lot of things in common with those of the other side, but they are more frequently reminded that it is not the same whether they are at the south or at the north side of the border. The border might be changing from being something that unites to something that divides. Perhaps that is the nature of the concomitant relations between sovereignty and the nation's borders. It is understandable that after that September 11 the United States wanted to make sure that its international borders were protected regardless of how good the relations are with its neighboring countries. Taking care of the integrity of the national sovereignty is certainly not something that a country could delegate to a neighboring country. This is similar to saying that there is nothing more internal or domestic than taking care of one's own borders. In this sense, an international border cannot be the same during conditions of war than during conditions of peace. More patience will be required to border people before they see border life restored to what it was before September 11.

### PART I. A DIALECTICAL RELATION BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

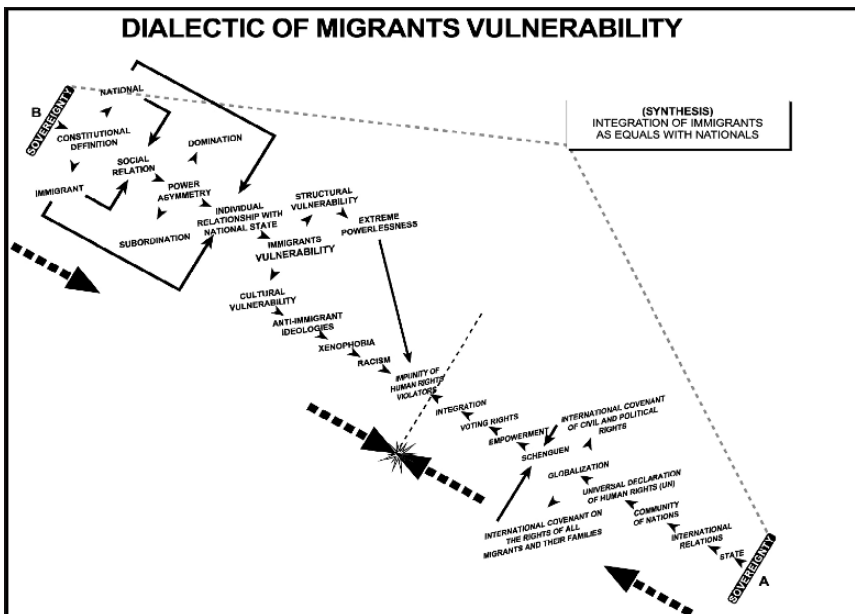
The basic thrust of this analysis is that a social process exists that results in a condition of *vulnerability*<sup>1</sup> of international migrants as subjects of human rights. The following diagram, entitled "Dialectic of Migrants' Vulnerability," depicts this social process, which implies (1) a socio-legal inclusiveness that arises out of a dialectical process between two legal notions of *sovereignty* and (2) the social construction of conditions of vulnerability for international migrants, who are mobilized across international borders by the dynamics of the international relations arising from the *globalization*<sup>2</sup> of international markets.

This diagram conveys a theoretical framework of a socio-legal inclusiveness. It addresses an apparent contradiction between a notion of international migration and a notion of human rights. The first is generally understood as partially corresponding to the sovereign right of a country of destination, as far as it implies the right of a country to determine who can enter its borders and who cannot. On the other hand, a notion of human rights is derived from the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which implies rights for all human beings, regardless of national origin. To the extent that countries of destination of international migration decide to accept as their rule to protect the human rights of all people regardless of their migratory status, the sovereign decision to do just that implies a self-imposed

---

<sup>1</sup> This social construct refers to a condition of powerlessness. It precedes the "labeling" understood as an act of power over *vulnerable* people.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Waters' comments on Giddens' definition, quoted above, help to clarify the meaning of globalization implied in the diagram: "This definition usefully introduces explicit notions of time and space into the argument. It emphasizes locality and thus territoriality and by this means stresses that the process of globalization is not merely or even mainly about such grand, center-stage activities as corporate mega-mergers and world political forums but about the autonomizations of local life worlds. Globalization, then, implies localization, a concept that is connected with Giddens' other notions of relativization and reflexivity. The latter imply that the residents of a local area will increasingly come to want to make conscious decisions about which values and amenities they want to stress in their communities and that these decisions will increasingly be referenced against global scapes. Localization implies a reflexive reconstruction of community in the face of the dehumanizing implications of rationalizing and commodifying" Waters, *Globalization* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 4–5.



limitation, if not an apparent contradiction, between the exercise of a sovereign right in two opposite directions. To analyze this apparent contradiction, a use of dialectics as an analytical tool, as proposed by George Hegel, is suggested, via the preceding diagram. Its understanding is based on the following three assumptions. First, the dialectical relations between the two acts of sovereignty and what it goes in between correspond to a social process. Second, this social process takes place over a long time in which a set of contradictions originating from two opposite acts of sovereignty corresponds to two different times in history. Third, the evolution implied on each side of the diagram is relatively independent from each other, except that both evolutions are moved by the international relations that are implied in the concept of *globalization*. The notion of a clash between the evolutions of the two sides of the diagram implied a growing process of maturity and a dynamism that reaches its maximum force as it is confronted by another force of an opposite sign. That is a clash between the vulnerability of the migrants depicted by one side of the diagram and the *empowerment* of the migrants coming from the opposite side. Behind the notion of a dialectical clash is the assumption that there is a point of maximum vulnerability of the migrants that is characterized by the impunity of those who violate their human rights. There is a point where that impunity is stopped by its encounter with an opposite force. That force comes from the empowerment of the migrants. This empowerment has been evolving as a result of pressures coming from the international community or what it is known as globalization. An illustration of this process and this outcome is the granting of voting rights to legal immigrants in local elections, as has occurred in several nation-states of the European Union.

Following the model proposed by Hegel’s dialectics, the clash between a thesis and its antithesis gives way to a synthesis. Hegel understood this as consisting of elements from the two colliding forces. This is the way *integration* (as explained below) is understood in the diagram as (C), or as the dialectical synthesis of (A) and (B). The diagram tries to convey two ideas; one, directionality of the social process where (A) precedes (B) within a context of

dialectical contradictions. The other idea is one of causality, involving a long time frame, This causality is more an hypothesis than a prediction. The hypothesis is, that the social process implied in the diagram by the contradictions between (A) and (B), would lead to a synthesis indicated by (C), namely, social conditions of integration in the country of destination of international migrations. This is not to suggest that there is no vulnerability in the countries of origin, Indeed there is, but one of a different nature, as it will be discussed later.

The main actors of the social process implied in the diagram are (a) the immigrants—indistinctly understood as foreigners, (b) the nationals of a country of origin, (c) the nationals of a country of destination, and (d) the state, respectively, of both the country of destination and the country of origin of international migration.

This social process begins when a country of destination, exercising its sovereignty, decides to include in its constitution a distinction between nationals and foreigners, by establishing a definition of who is one and who is the other. This act of sovereignty, identified in the diagram as (A), enters into a long-term process that ends up in an apparent contradiction—defined in the diagram as dialectically opposed—to another act of sovereignty. This is when a sovereign decision is made by a country of destination to commit itself to respect and protect an international standard of human rights, regardless of the national origin and migratory status of individuals. Then, constitutionally, remaking that international standard into a *law of the land* means it becomes (B) in the diagram. As such, it is in contradiction with (A), which preceded it.

That decision to make a constitutional distinction between nationals, on the one hand, and immigrants as foreigners, on the other, implies the emergence of a basis for a social relation between those enacting the constitutionally defined role as nationals and those enacting the constitutionally defined (by default) role as foreigners. These two exercises of sovereignty depicted in the extremes of the diagram as dialectically opposed become interrelated in the practice of international relations arising from the phenomenon of globalization.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the “thesis” in this dialectical process *à la Hegel* is (A), and the “antithesis” is (B). More will be said ahead about the synthesis, namely, integration,<sup>4</sup> identified in the diagram as (C).

In the past, as human societies have confronted problems of power and authority, the source or locus of authority has moved from God, to the State, to the people. The definition of sovereignty<sup>5</sup> has been based chronologically on the three sources. At their origin in medieval times under the doctrine of Christian unity, the concepts of “sovereignty” and “sovereign”

---

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper, Anthony Giddens’ definition is the most fitting. “Globalization can . . . be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distant relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections of time and space” Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> There are two contrasting notions of *integration*. One, predominant in the United States, derives from the studies of Robert Ezra Park, whose followers, according to Michael Haas, have argued “that differences between ethnic groups are a function of attitudes of prejudice” (Haas, 1992: p. 61). This thesis assumes that such differences can be removed through intense interethnic interactions, which could lead to a color-blind society. About this assumption, Haas comments: “There are at least four flaws in integrationism. First, it is a theory of assimilation. The closer an ethnic group resembled the dominant culture, the more it would be “tolerated” and ultimately “accepted” and “admitted” to equal status . . .” The other notion of integration, predominant in Western Europe, is more recent. This is epitomized by the Schengen Agreement, binding for member states of the European Union, where integration means equal rights for nationals and foreigners. The latter notion is the one adopted in this article.

<sup>5</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the historical context in which the notion of *sovereignty* has evolved, see Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995).

were one and the same, except for the semantic distinction between an attribute and the subject of its enactment.

The diagram starts from the Hegelian notion of dialectics, which is not to be confused with that of *dialectical materialism*, coined by Hegel's rebellious student Karl Marx, after he had criticized Hegel's dialectic as one that was *standing on its head*, which made it necessary to *turn it right side up again*. He claimed to have done just that by creating his "historical materialism" equated to "dialectical materialism." The present rendering of Hegel's dialectic does not have any thing to do with Marx's "correction" of his mentor's philosophy of history. Here, Hegel's dialectic is viewed as a social process, one that is taking place between two opposite exercises of sovereignty, each with different objectives and opposed to each other as a *thesis* opposes an *antithesis*, out of which a *synthesis* emerges. Implicit in this use of dialectics as a tool of analysis is the inclusiveness of two cognitive domains, namely law and sociology. One is of a legal or normative nature and the other of a social nature. The bridge between the two dimensions is implied in the passage from a norm—an *ideal* construct—into actual human behavior, in the empirical context of social relations. The diagram assumes such inclusiveness in alluding to a social process in which the main actors are those defined constitutionally, as nationals on the one hand, and those defined legally and socially, as foreigners or immigrants. The main feature of this inclusiveness is the dialectical dynamic, energized by the international relations of globalization. In that relational context emerge the conditions under which the vulnerability of international migrants comes into being. This vulnerability, then, is understood here as a condition of powerlessness in which an international migrant is socially placed in the society, the economy, and the culture of a country of destination. The shaping of vulnerability of an international migrant as it is understood here begins with a *par excellence* act of sovereignty, namely the constitution, when it includes a definition of who is a national and who is not. By establishing this dichotomized definition, the constitution of a country of destination is establishing a criterion for a social asymmetry between nationals and foreigners. Regardless of how consciously this is done, the fact of the matter is that when such a constitutional distinction is transferred to the context of a social relation between actors who assume their roles claiming the authority of the constitution, the asymmetry of power implied in the constitutional distinction becomes enacted in the empirical reality of the social relation between a national and an immigrant/foreigner. To the extent that an unequal power is implied in the constitutional distinction for the two of them (nationals and foreigners), respectively, a distinctive access to the social forces of society allows for the rise and development of anti-immigrant ideologies or social constructions, whose functions are to justify, reinforce, and promote the power differentials originally assigned to the constitutional distinction. The rise of anti-immigrant ideologies is a direct result of the power differentials derived from the asymmetry of power established by the constitutional distinction between national and foreigners. A social outcome of such power differentials is a pattern of discrimination against immigrants. This is particularly evident in the labor relations of Mexican immigrants in the United States, where employers tend to be U.S. nationals and workers are Mexican immigrants. The labor relations between them are best illustrated by the case of the California economy, where Mexican immigrants make up more than 90 percent of the total of the labor force employed in the agricultural production of that state, whose agricultural production is equal to one third of the total U.S. agricultural production, according to the NAWS survey conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Labor, the results of which were published in 1994.

In the study of this labor market, one finds empirical evidence to substantiate the existence and operation of a power structure where the basic social relations of nationals (U.S. employers) and immigrants, as depicted in the diagram, have entered into the fabric of a

national system of agricultural production in the United States, as could be inferred from the following paragraph taken from the conclusive remarks of a research report published by the U.S. Secretary of Labor in 1994.

In effect, migrant workers so necessary for the success of the labor-intensive U.S. agricultural system subsidize that very system with their own and their family's indigence. The system functions to transfer costs to workers, who are left with income so marginal that, for the most part, only newcomers and those with no other options are willing to work on our nation's farms. (U.S. Department of Labor, *Migrant Farmworkers: Pursuing Security in an Unstable Market*, Research Report No. 5, Office of Program Economics, May 1994, p. 40)

Not only are these remarks derived from scientific research, giving empirical support to the notion of a power asymmetry between migrant workers and their employers in California, but they illustrate the strength of a U.S. demand for immigrants' labor and the degree of vulnerability as subjects of human and labor rights that is imposed on migrant workers, to whom costs of agricultural production are transferred in order for the U.S. agricultural system to function.

The fact that the above research findings were published before the appearance of Proposition 187 in California (explained below) illustrates the dynamics of social process on its way to a growing impunity for the violators of immigrants' human rights, which the diagram supposes that, at some point, will be stopped by the empowerment of the immigrants. Before that is understood, the apparent contradiction between international migrations and human rights requires a search into and analysis of its historical context.

It is assumed here that there is an evolution of the asymmetry of power derived from the constitutional distinction between nationals and foreigners. That evolution follows similar paths that have followed other socially constructed "distinctions" out of which discriminatory behavior against a social group has been subjectively justified. That has been the case of racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia.

Integration *à la* the European Union becomes a true Hegelian synthesis of the dialectical opposition between (A) and (B), to the extent that eliminates the inequalities implied in (A) between nationals and foreigners. By the time an exercise of a sovereign right turns (A) into its opposite (B), the new notion of human rights has erased the previous inequalities between nationals and foreigners. The new outcoming product generated by the dialectical relations between (A) and (B), namely integration, implies that human rights apply equally to both nationals and foreigners. Such is the meaning of the Schengen agreements.

There seems to be a distance of light years between the empowerment to migrants that one can derive from legislation such as that recommended by the Schengen agreements and enacted by countries such as Spain, Netherlands, Denmark and other European countries, to grant voting rights to immigrants in local elections and the conditions of vulnerability of migrants such as those exposed by the "operation gatekeeper" at the U.S.-Mexico border. However, when one takes into account the time it took for European countries to evolve from the "Treaty of Rome" in 1957 to the Schengen agreements to speak about "voting rights" to immigrants, one could hypothesize that immigrants' rights will follow in America the evolutionary line marked by their history in Europe, that is, the hypothesis behind the dialectics of vulnerability implicit in the diagram.

A recount of the dialectical contradiction between (A) and (B) includes the notion that all nation-states have the sovereign right to define who is a national and who is a foreigner, as well as the sovereign right to control their borders. In both cases, the implication is to define the frontier between the essential inner and outer components of a nation. Most democratic nations have these rights written in their constitutions. Although such legitimate distinctions,

in most of the cases, do not explicitly place the foreigner<sup>6</sup> in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the national, when they interact socially within the receiving country, the duality (national-foreigner) is nevertheless very often transformed, or, better said, socially constructed, into an object of a *de facto* discrimination against foreigners by nationals. As Robert Miles<sup>7</sup> amply discusses, this distinction is implicit at the origin of all kinds of discriminatory practices against foreigners as such, at the personal, group, and institutional levels. This implies a power structure wherein nationals are more likely to occupy dominant positions vis-à-vis foreigners, and the latter are more likely to occupy subordinate positions. In this sort of metamorphosis from the normative to the social lies the *virtual* contradiction between *immigration* and *human rights*. In reality, there is no contradiction. The sovereign right that is implicit in the definition of each concept is of the same legal nature. These concepts imply two different instances of an exercise of sovereignty, in two different times in the history of a country of destination. These two exercises of sovereignty are dialectically opposed. Such a dialectical opposition was generated from the dynamics of international relations implied in the process of globalization. To the extent that international migrations are a consequence of globalization, the international community acquires an acting role in the evolution implied on each side of the diagram. However, the level of abstraction in which this acting role is understood requires the analyst to look at the history of the specific international relations between countries of origin and destination to focus at the microcosms of the social relations between the international migrant and a national of the country of his or her destination. The following section is an attempt to penetrate analytically in such a microcosms.

## PART II. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MEXICAN IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Before September 11, it seemed like the governments of Mexico and the United States were closer than ever to an agreement on the question of migration. This raises a common-sense question: why has it taken so long? It is only logical that a bilateral agreement is the path to follow for a bilateral problem that is caused by factors located on both sides of the border.

Because this migrant phenomenon is bilateral, there is a contrasting level of public concern about it in the United States as compared to in Mexico. Other than occasional signs of public indignation when the media reports on a migrant hurt or killed by a U.S. Border Patrol agent, there is not enough debate about the causes and consequences of this phenomenon in Mexico. For instance, the legislative proposal sponsored bipartisanly by Senators Kennedy and McCain that is (as of March of 2007) pending for approval in the U.S. Senate has included, for the first time in the history of US immigration policies (these have been always unilateral), an explicit invitation to the Mexican government to express its preferences in regard to the various proposals about immigration pending approval in the U.S. Senate. There are more than 10 million Mexican immigrants in the United States, and they send close to

---

<sup>6</sup> The terms “foreigner” and “immigrant” are used interchangeably in this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the dominant/subordinate relationship of nationals/immigrants assumed in most recipient countries, see Robert Miles, *op. cit.* (particularly in reference to what he calls the problem of “Euro-racism”), pp. 207–215.



US\$20 billion annually in remittances to the Mexican economy. This, however, has not been enough for the Mexican government to respond to such an unusual invitation (as of March of 2006), more than six months after the Kennedy-McCain proposal was made public.

There is not enough historical awareness about certain elements that have made such a rational option of a bilateral agreement so difficult to reach by the two governments. It is certainly not because such an option has escaped the minds of the leaders of the two nations.<sup>8</sup> There is not enough awareness in Mexico of the extent to which certain laws pertaining to the legal context of labor relations in the United States have been in the way. For instance, the famous Wagner Labor Act of 1935 established the legal frame within which labor relations were to be conducted in the United States. This law was good news for the industrial workers but bad news for the farm workers. They were not included in the new legal frame under which labor rights were granted to industrial workers. The important point is that such labor legislation excluded farm workers from the legal definition of an “employee” for whom the rights of this law were granted [see 29 U.S.C. Sections 151 and 152(3)]. This law was amended by the Taft-Hartley Labor Act in 1947 and then amended by the Landrum-Griffing Act in 1959, but the original exclusion of agricultural workers from the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choice remained unchanged. This, in fact, signified discrimination against farm workers from the legal basis upon which industrial workers were to be treated by U.S. employers. Behind this *de jure* discrimination was the development of a structural context of an asymmetry of power between farm workers and their employers in the United States. The understanding of such an asymmetry of power lies behind the understanding of why it has been so difficult for the United States and Mexico to reach an agreement on the migration question.

As was demonstrated in the classic study of the *bracero* program made by Dr. Ernesto Galarza in his book *Merchants of Labor; A History of the Bracero Program*, published in 1964, the *bracero* agreements were thought to be a rational solution to the migrant worker question by the political leaders of the two countries. But, as Dr. Galarza so eloquently explained, far from being a rational solution for the migrant workers, the *bracero* agreements became an instrument at the service of the U.S. growers. The U.S. agribusiness used the *bracero* agreements to legitimize and perpetuate the conditions of exploitation under which Mexican migrant workers were treated in the United States.<sup>9</sup> This is what Texans, including President Bush, learned in their upbringing: that “Mexican *braceros*” were good for agribusiness. There is little wonder why President Bush still thinks that Mexican temporary workers are good for the U.S. national interests. That may be the reason he has been proposing a temporary workers or a “guest workers” program as a solution to the migration question—except that this time it would not be through a bilateral agreement but through a unilateral decision of the U.S. Congress.

What is stated here about the old “*bracero* agreements” is not to suggest that the same peasants were treated any better in Mexico. The postwar years were a time when peasants as a social class were increasingly abandoned by the Mexican government and by Mexico’s emergent middle and upper classes, in the context of a dramatic change in the nation.<sup>10</sup> At the

---

<sup>8</sup> Olloqui, Juan Jose (ed.), *Estudios en torno a la Migración* (México D.F.: UNAM, 2001), pp. 7–19.

<sup>9</sup> Galarza, Ernesto, List of migrant workers’ complaints included in a memorandum prepared for the president of Mexico cited by John Mraz and Jaime Velez Storey in, *Uprooted : Braceros in the Hermanos Mayo Lens* (Houston: University of Houston. Arte Publico Press 1996), pp. 47–49.

<sup>10</sup> Torres, Blanca, *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana VII. México en la Segunda Guerra mundial. Período 1940–1952*, Vol. 19 (Mexico D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1979\_.

middle of the 20th century, Mexico changed from being a country based on an agrarian society to a country based on a new urban society that had its economic base in industry and services.

In the Mexican government circles, for many years the notion existed that the bracero agreements were a model to be followed to regulate the migratory situation. This notion derived from the reading of the written terms of the first bracero agreement signed by the two governments in 1942. Indeed, the written texts of that first agreement spoke of very favorable conditions for Mexican migrant workers.<sup>11</sup> There was, however, an enormous difference between the written text and the reality. Ernesto Galarza tried very hard to persuade the Mexican government at the end of World War II, as one can read in his memoranda to the President of Mexico, found in the Mexico's National Archives by Jaime Velez Storey and partially published by John Mraz.<sup>12</sup> Through a series of articles published by the prestigious journal *El Trimestre Económico* in the 1950s, Galarza tried to persuade the Mexican government that the words of the first bracero agreement were something substantially different than the reality lived in the United States by the Mexican migrant workers.<sup>13</sup> The asymmetry of power between them and their U.S. employers determined the abysmal difference between the words and the reality of the bracero agreement.<sup>14</sup> The history of such an asymmetry of power derived from a historical context in which the U.S. government persuaded an initially reluctant Mexican government under the presidency of Manuel Avila Camacho (1942–1946) to sign the first bracero agreement negotiated and approved by Mexico under the geopolitical conditions in which the United States entered World War II.<sup>15</sup> The Mexican government was not in the position to challenge the emergent power of the United States. I have argued elsewhere that the asymmetry of power between the migrant workers and their U.S. employers was rooted in the asymmetry of power between the governments of the United States and Mexico.<sup>16</sup>

The realities of that asymmetry of power were reflected in the racism about the Mexican immigrants expressed at the highest circles of the U.S. government ever since the beginning of the 20th century. John Nance Garner, who was U.S. Vice President years later, once said: “The Mexican race, as inferior and undesirable as U.S. citizens as they are, should not worry any one because they are *genetically determined* with a **homing pigeon** instinct of always returning to where they came from”<sup>17</sup> (italics and boldface added for emphasis). The Mexican government did not have the power, nor the will, to protect its people against such anti-Mexican ideological statements—nor to set the record straight that what the United States was referring to as an immigration policy was in reality a U.S. labor policy.

Early in the 20th century the United States developed a basic ambivalence about the presence of immigrants from Mexico—that is, an ambivalence between wanting the immigrants as

<sup>11</sup> Olloqui, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Mraz and Velez-Storey, *op. cit.*, p. 49, footnote 25.

<sup>13</sup> Galarza, Ernesto, *Problemas Agrícolas Industriales, Mexico*.

<sup>14</sup> Galarza, Ernesto, *Merchants of Labor*. (Santa Barbara, CA: Mc Nally and Loftin Publishers, 1964), pp. 219–228.

<sup>15</sup> Ojeda-Gomez, Mario, “Estudio de un caso de decisión política: el programa norteamericano de importación de braceros” in *Extremos de México* (Mexico D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> Bustamante, Jorge A., “Interdependence, Undocumented Migration and National Security,” in Jorge A. Bustamante et al. (eds.), *U.S.-Mexico Relations; Labor Market Interdependence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> This and other equally racist arguments can be found in U.S. Congress, House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Seasonal Agricultural Laborers from Mexico*, 69th Congress, 1st Session, 1929, pp. 6–62.

cheap labor but not wanting them as members of the American society.<sup>18</sup> This has been an ambivalence that is seldom discussed in the United States, no matter how politically important the issue of immigration—let alone undocumented immigration—has become in the decision-making process determining the laws of the land in the U.S. Congress. That basic ambivalence has blinded Americans from seeing the objective realities of a U.S. labor demand that shapes the Mexican undocumented immigration phenomenon as the result of a process of interaction with the factors that produce emigration from Mexico as the labor supply for such U.S. labor demands. It is not lack of information that explains that blindness to see how Mexican immigrants are wanted so badly in the United States. The same year that “Proposition 187,” the most anti-Mexican anti-immigration law in the history of U.S.-Mexico relations (this is elaborated ahead), was voted in favor by two thirds of California’s electorate, showing how deeply rooted was the hate against Mexicans in that state, the findings of a scientific study published by the U.S. Department of Labor not only recognized the U.S. undocumented immigrants’ labor demands but empirically defined their function in U.S. agriculture as “a subsidy” to the U.S. economy.

The findings of the scientific report from which a paragraph was quoted above were published in the midst of widely publicized propaganda to vote in favor of “Prop. 187,” as a part of the reelection campaign of then-Governor Pete Wilson. Those findings were virtually nonexistent, both for the proponents of Proposition 187 as well as for the two thirds of the electorate of California who voted in favor of it during the elections of November 1994. Six months after the publication of that research report by the U.S. Department of Labor, Proposition 167 emerged.

The story of how Pete Wilson supported Proposition 187, resorting to Californians’ anti-Mexican prejudices for his political interests of reelection, is going to be told one day as an emulation of the almost successful George Wallace’s campaign to be nominated as the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party heralded by the words of his inaugural speech as a governor of Alabama in 1963: “Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!” Pete Wilson was less dramatic in his use of racist ideologies for political purposes, but no less inclined to appeal to anti-Mexican prejudices than in his time Wallace was in his appeal to anti-Blacks. Pete Wilson endorsed Proposition 187, which, as it was written for the ballots, stated:

Section 1 “Findings and Declarations”:

“The people of California find and declare as follows: That they have suffered and are suffering economic hardships caused by the presence of illegal aliens in this State. That they have suffered and are suffering personal injury and damage caused by the criminal conduct of illegal aliens in this State.” (<http://ca94.election.digital.com/e/prop/187txt.html>)

Further on, in Section 5, entitled “Exclusion of Illegal Aliens from Public Services,” Section 10001.5(c) was added to the state’s Welfare and Institutions Code, the obligation of

---

<sup>18</sup> U.S. social scientists in charge of assessing conditions of immigration to the United States were suggesting as early as 1910 an immigration policy toward Mexico that would encourage the importation of labor power without the burden of increasing immigration with the following words: “The progress of the Mexican children in the Los Angeles schools is below the average and they leave school early. A large percentage of the native born can not speak the English language. Because of their strong attachment to their native land, low intelligence, illiteracy, migratory life, and the possibility of their residence here being discontinued, few become citizens of the United States. . . . In so far as Mexican laborers come into contact with natives or European immigrants they are looked upon as inferiors. . . . Thus it is evident that in the case of the Mexican he is less desirable as a citizen than as a laborer. The permanent additions to the population, however, are much smaller than the number who immigrate for work. U.S. Senate, U.S. Immigration Commission (Dillingham Commission) Reports. Vol. 1, pp. 690–691.

state officials to denounce to the Immigration authorities any person on the basis of “his or her apparent illegal immigration status.”

The contradiction between this paragraph and the one quoted above from the U.S. Department of Labor’s study, could not be more apparent. On the one hand, publishing empirical evidence of the extent to which undocumented immigrants’ labor is not only wanted, but needed, in California; and on the other, stating that the presence of such a labor force is the cause of a “suffering of personal injury and damage”; it also demonstrates the existence of an anti-Mexican ideology that substitutes a description of the Mexican immigration reality based on scientific research about the nature and impact of Mexican immigration to California, with myths based on prejudices and racial hate. Such myths were enough basis to criminalize a whole ethnic group (the Latino)—who are ideologically identifiable in California by the color of their skin—as the most apparent basis to *a priori* “know” the migratory status of a person, so as to justify his or her denunciation to the immigration authorities.

In a state where INS statistics show that more than 90 percent of apprehensions have consisted of Mexican nationals for decades, the term “illegal alien” is socially synonymous with Mexican. Under the social conditions where this is possible, the most visible *a priori* indicator of an “apparent” illegal immigrants status is the color of the skin. This explains why there is such an enormous inconsistency between INS’s estimate of the proportion of Mexican nationals in the total of INS’s statistics of apprehensions and the estimates of the U.S. Bureau of the Census regarding the proportion of Mexican nationals in the United States in the total number of undocumented immigrants from all countries, the latter being less than 60 percent, whereas the former have shown more than 90 percent. Such a difference suggests some sort of a “police profiling” behind the apprehensions of Mexican nationals by the INS.

The criminalization of those who appear to be illegal aliens by ethnic profile, implied in Proposition 187 in California, did not disappear after it was declared unconstitutional by a federal court decision. Some of the same proponents of Proposition 187 in California years ago were behind “Proposition 200” in Arizona and, more recently, behind the legislation known as the Real ID law sponsored by Congressman James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, which led to his legislative proposal HR-3447, which was approved by the House but virtually rejected by the resounding victory of candidates of the Democratic Party in the elections of November 7, 2006. Bill HR-4437 includes some of the most xenophobic elements of Proposition 187, with some additions, such an empowerment of any police in the United States to arrest and expel from the United States any individual who looks suspicious of being an illegal alien and upgrading the criminalization of undocumented entry to the United States from a misdemeanor to a felony. The latter surfaced recently as a virtual replica of the former, thus showing the persistence of both the anti-Mexican ideologies and the ambivalence of many Americans about the presence of Mexican immigrants in the United States.

## IDEOLOGIES IN MÉXICO

The question of Mexican emigration to the United States has not being free of ideology in Mexico. This was the case of what I have called elsewhere the ideology of the “escape valve.”<sup>19</sup> In a social context in Mexico where the majority of the population at the beginning of World

<sup>19</sup> Bustamante, Jorge. A., *International Migrations and Human Rights* (Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, UNAM, México, 2002; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2002), p. 39.

War II consisted of very poor farm workers, immigrants were viewed downwardly by upper-income social classes. So, by the time the U.S. government put pressure on the Mexican government to sign the first of the “bracero agreements” in 1942, as a way to supply the labor force needed by the United States at the time of the labor shortages produced by the war effort, the recruitment of the temporary workers made under the terms of the bilateral agreement consisted basically of peasants from that virtual underclass sector of the Mexican society. By the time the war ended, there was an increasing gap between the interest of the Mexican peasants and the interest of the Mexican government. This was particularly the case under the administration of President Miguel Aleman (1946–1952).<sup>20</sup> Such a gap explained the beginning of the notion that the emigration of Mexican peasants to the United States was an “escape valve.” Under this notion, the emigration of Mexican migrant workers to the United States was seen in Mexico as a sort of solution to the pressures, both real and potential, derived from the increasing abandonment of the Mexican government of an increasingly impoverished peasants. There was an inverse relation of the support the government gave to a new social class of industrial entrepreneurs who led the beginning of the economic growth of industry, and the abandonment of the countryside, both by the government and by the Mexican civil society. Behind the “push factors” of the emigration from Mexico to the United States was Mexico’s lack of capabilities to achieve modernization through an industrial development, without abandoning its agricultural sector and its farm workers. Mexico as a nation became enchanted with the illusion of modernization by turning its back to its past of an agriculture-based society.

Emigration from Mexico to the United States became an “escape valve” that was viewed by the Mexican elites as necessary to alleviate the pressures and the costs of the abandonment of the peasant social class. That notion of emigration to the United States as an “escape valve” became a predominant ideology of the Mexican government about emigration to the United States. Such an ideology obscured the realities of exploitation and rampant violations of human and labor rights of the Mexican immigrants in that country throughout the bracero period (1942–1964).

The 1950s were the years when the Mexican government found that there was no political cost in doing nothing for Mexican migrant workers in the United States. This marked the context in which the Mexican government tried very hard to cover up the conditions under which Mexican migrant workers were treated in the United States. I had an argument with a Mexican Consul in a U.S. border state right after I posed as an undocumented immigrant in 1971, as part of the research for my doctoral dissertation, after he flatly denied there were Mexican undocumented immigrants in the United States. I had to refer to him my “participant observation” recent experience. When I asked him why he had to lie to me, denying the existence of what I had just witnessed, he reluctantly proposed that if I gave him my word that I would never reveal his name, he would let me read a “circular” (an internal memo) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, where an instruction to all Mexican Consuls in the United States was very clear not to expressively recognize, nor to make any statement alluding to, the illegal presence of Mexican immigrants in the United States. Before 1964, the Mexican government had as a top priority to persuade the U.S. government to renew the bracero agreements. This interest was an important factor that explained why the Mexican

---

<sup>20</sup> Garcia-Cantu, Gaston, “Política Exterior y Braceros 1838–1946”, in *Utopias Mexicanas* (Mexico, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978). See also Bortz, Jeffrey, “The Effect of Mexico’s Post-War Industrialization on the U.S.-Mexico Price and Wage Comparison,” in Bustamante, J.A., Reynolds, C.W., and Hinojosa-Ojeda, R.A. (eds.), *U.S.-Mexico Relations; Labor Market Interdependence* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1992), p. 228.

government was so complacent about the impunity with which frequent incidents of violations of human and labor rights of Mexican immigrants were taking place, mostly in Texas and California. Before 1964, the Mexican government was too busy lobbying for renewed versions of the bracero agreements with an increasing indifference about the distance between the written terms of these agreements and the realities lived by Mexican migrant workers.

This was helped by an increasing corruption as a way of life at all levels of the Mexican government and by the political control over the Mexican peasantry through the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC), which proved over the years to be a very efficient mechanism of manipulation of the PRI's "peasants' sector" through a mixture of populism and corruption that gave shape to the rise of "caciques," a sort of regional bosses, who ruled the countryside of Mexico by a combination of patriarchal protection to supporters and an iron hand, full of impunity, to handle opponents. The PRI ruled most of Mexico this way from 1929 until 2000.

The works of Ernesto Galarza explained the conditions under which it became functional for the two sides; on the one hand, for the interest of the Mexican government of maintaining an escape valve of Mexican emigration of an increasingly impoverished, unemployed, uneducated, unorganized underclass of Mexicans and, on the other hand, an interest of U.S. agribusiness in maintaining a source of cheap labor.<sup>21</sup> This explains why at the end of the last bracero agreement in 1964 the Texas and California's growers associations, and the Mexican government, became the most persistent proponents of the renewal of the bracero programs.

The ideology of the escape valve inhibited the Mexican government from defending or actually protecting Mexican migrants in the United States, other than through rhetorical references. Far from being a solution to the problems associated to migration between the two countries, the bracero agreements became concomitant to the rise of the undocumented migration. As was documented in Julian Samora's book *Los Mojados, The Wetback Story*, published in 1972, by the time of the end of the last of the bracero agreements in 1964, there were more Mexicans crossing as undocumented immigrants than the number of braceros contracted through the bilateral agreements at the pick of their numbers.

The absence of a political cost for the Mexican government for doing nothing for the Mexican migrants in the United States was not independent of the Mexican civil society's general indifference about their plight.

After several years of studying that difference, a hypothesis was suggested in earlier works that such indifference was not unrelated to a generally unrecognized Mexican racism. It was not until the "Chiapas rebellion" of 1994 that the question of Mexican racism virtually "came out of the closet," from a deeply entrenched part of the Mexican culture. The Mexican migrants have been viewed by the Mexican middle and upper social classes as something distant from them, as if the plight of the Mexican migrants about the constant violations of their human and labor rights in the United States and in Mexico was something virtually happening in a different planet, or something that was happening to people with whom the middle and upper classes of Mexico had nothing to do. It was certainly not racism in any pure form. The disdain of the Mexican middle and upper social classes about the problems of the Mexican migrants in the United States had elements of classism, a social distance felt by the middle and upper classes from the peasants of Mexico. This explains why the plight of the Mexican migrant workers was never taken to the streets by any Mexican organization, particularly by

---

<sup>21</sup> Galarza, Ernesto, *Spiders in the House and Workers in the Fields* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970).

any one of those who claimed to protect or defend the interest of the Mexican poor or the Mexican peasants. It has not been until very recently that public institutions such as the Mexican Catholic Church have expressed concern and have begun to support a few programs in defense of Mexican migrants. For many decades the principal institutions representing the Mexican civil society, namely the Churches, the unions, the political parties, and student organizations, did no more than rhetorical references when an incident of abuse of the human rights of the migrants reached the mass media, reflecting more anti-American sentiments than sincere concerns for the migrants.

This long-term indifference of the Mexican civil society about the plight of the Mexican migrants has not been sufficiently studied. It remains as a gross incongruence. The dependence that the national economy of Mexico has had of the remittances of U.S. dollars made by the migrant workers in the United States had no congruence with the rampant indifference of the Mexican middle and upper classes about the problems of the migrant workers in the United States. Only exports of Mexican oil have produced more income in U.S. dollars per year for the Mexican economy than the close to \$20 billion that the Central Bank of Mexico has estimated as the total of remittances from the United States for the year 2004.<sup>22</sup> There is not enough consciousness in Mexico of what the social consequence of an exhaustion or even a diminishing of migrant workers' remittances from the United States would be. It is very likely that the remittances from Mexican migrants in the United States are financing the absence of a violent break of the social order in México.

Returning to the years of the *bracero* program, a paradox should be noted. The end of the *bracero* program was basically due to the pressures exerted by the AFL-CIO.<sup>23</sup> Through several decades the AFL-CIO was one of the most important anti-immigrant forces in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Not only were they successful in ending the *bracero* program, but also they were the principal proponents of anti-immigrant legislation for decades.<sup>25</sup> That ended on February 17, 1999, when the Executive Committee of the AFL-CIO made a 180-degree change of course. Since then the AFL-CIO has become the most vocal proponent of a "blanket amnesty" to undocumented immigrants. To be sure, this change was not an act of nature. Behind it was the surging of a new Latino leadership arriving at the upper echelons of the AFL-CIO.<sup>26</sup> These new leaders, among them Linda Chavez-Thompson, the AFL-CIO's Executive Vice President, Ana Avendaño, and Eliseo Medina, conveyed the message to the top that an inclusion of undocumented immigrants in the rank and file of the AFL-CIO would bring not only a new source of union fees but also a new dimension of international involvement and political clout to an otherwise weakening political strength of the AFL-CIO. In a statement published on February 28, 1999, by the news agency Reuters, the rejection of the AFL-CIO of the "guest workers" proposals under discussion in the U.S. Congress was announced. Linda Chavez-Thompson was quoted as saying,<sup>26</sup>To embrace the expansion of temporary guest worker programs is to embrace the

---

<sup>22</sup> Craig, Richard B., *The Bracero Program. Interest Groups and Foreign Policy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1971).

<sup>23</sup> Olloqui, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Mexico, Secretaria del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS), *Los Braceros* (Mexico, D.F.: STPS, 1964).

<sup>25</sup> Garcia, Juan Ramón, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980).

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Congress, Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1926. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1926; U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. S1917. Appropriations Hearings. 1953; Taylor, Paul Schuster, *Labor on the Land: Collected Writings, 1930-1970* (New York: Arno Press, 1981).

creation of an undemocratic, two-tiered society.” This was probably related to a close watching of the demographic trends of the Latino population in various circles of the American life.

### THE YEARS OF THE “SILENT INVASION”

An important factor in the absence of a bilateral agreement on the migratory phenomenon between Mexico and the United States has been the distance between the predominant definitions of this phenomenon in the governmental circles of the two countries, respectively, as well as within the political elites and the predominant views of the public opinion about the presence of undocumented immigrants from Mexico within the United States. From the first 20th-century economic recession in the United States in 1907, to all the subsequent ones, until now, a pattern has always appeared, basically consisting of the following sequence: (1) unemployment rates rise, and other signs of a recession catch the public attention; (2) politicians make an association between the rise of unemployment and the presence of the immigrant workers; (2) the social construction of immigrant workers as “escape goats” of the recession comes into place; (2) politicians then propose anti-immigrant measures as a solution to the economic crisis; (5) the vulnerability of immigrants as subjects of human rights abuses increases together with the impunity of the abusers; (6) the economic recession subsides; (7) the anti-immigrant furor finally ends.

The recession that came as the result of the oil cartel action taken by OPEC countries in 1974 was not an exception to such a pattern. Those were the years when General Leonard Chapman was appointed as commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). He coined the phrase of a “silent invasion” in reference to the presence of undocumented immigrants from Mexico.<sup>27</sup> He gave testimony to various U.S. congressional committees speaking about estimates of 20 million undocumented immigrants from Mexico. It was only after the end of his tenure as commissioner of INS that his successor, Leonel Castillo, lowered previous estimates to 3 million. The enormous difference in the estimates that two successive commissioners of the INS presented to U.S. congressional committees made evident the extent to which previous estimates had been a fabrication made to substantiate the notion of a “silent invasion” with some base numbers of ideological origin to the political construction of the Mexican immigrant as an “escape goat.” It was under General Chapman that the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in the United States crystallized in a definition of a phenomenon of Mexican immigration to the United States as a crime-related phenomenon. This became a predominant definition in U.S. government circles, where there was a consensus to reject any recognition of the existence of a demand in the United States of the labor force of the undocumented immigrant, particularly in the agricultural production of California and Texas.<sup>28</sup> There was a social construction of Mexican undocumented immigrants as criminals that led to the notion in the United States that the only solution to a “problem” defined as one of criminal nature was either a police or a military type of solution.<sup>29</sup> This notion was concomitant to another one that the only solution to the “Mexican illegal question” had to be unilateral.<sup>30</sup>

Such a U.S. position prompted a delayed reaction of the Mexican government during the presidency of Carlos Salinas (1988–1994) expressing opposition to what was termed an

<sup>27</sup> This was confirmed in a letter from the AFL-CIO representative in México City.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, Report No. 94–506, 1975, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Meissner, Doris (Hearings).

<sup>30</sup> Bustamante, Jorge A., “Mexican Migration: The Political Dynamics of Perceptions,” in Clark W. Reynolds and Carlos Tello, eds., *U.S.-Mexico Relations: Economy and Social Aspect*, (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1983).



unfair and unjustified “criminalization” of the undocumented immigrant from Mexico. Through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Fernando Solana, the Mexican government came out with a contrasting definition of the undocumented immigration from Mexico to the United States as derived from a de facto international labor market.

The Mexican reaction defining the phenomenon of undocumented immigration of Mexicans in the United States as basically a labor phenomenon contradicted the predominant definition of the same phenomenon in U.S. government circles. The net result of this contradiction between the predominant definitions in the two governments about the same migratory phenomenon was a status quo, although the position of the Mexican government during the 1990s was never beyond the confinements of the rhetorical.

President Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000) saw that whatever degrees of freedom he had in negotiating with the United States were crippled very early in his administration by the Mexican economic crisis of 1994. This provoked not only a drastic devaluation of the peso but also a close call for the forfeiture of the Mexican foreign debt. A collapse was avoided thanks to President Clinton’s decision to bail out the Mexican government with a loan of \$20 billion.



President Zedillo owed so much politically to President Clinton that he couldn’t find room for any criticism in spite of the deaths of Mexican migrants due to the beginning of “operation gatekeeper” in 1994. This was designed not to stop, as one would expect from an immigration law enforcement agency, but to deviate the routes of entry of undocumented immigrants from Mexico into the United States toward areas away from the visibility of urban eyes like those of San Diegans. As was recognized by the chief of the border patrols in a written testimony to a U.S. congressional committee, the design of “operation gatekeeper” was made under the assumption that undocumented immigrants were going to get discouraged by the risk of death presented by the areas of crossing where the migrants were deviated to.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Committees, “INS’ Southwest Border Strategy; Resource and Impact Issues Remain after Seven Years,” August 2001, Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 24.

These were the mountainous terrain east of San Diego or the deep irrigation channels, such as the All American Canal, or the inhospitable desert areas between California and Arizona, where soon enough the number of migrants' deaths began to climb. Risks of dehydration in the desert lands or hypothermia during the winter months or drowning in the irrigation channels did not discourage the inflow of undocumented immigrants; they caused their death instead, as is shown by the increase in the number of deaths of migrants presented in the following maps:



Very soon after the start of “operation gatekeeper” in 1994, the number of migrants dying in the area where “operation gatekeeper” was put into effect showed clearly that the assumption on which “operation gatekeeper” was designed was wrong. This was a conclusion reached by a report of the GAO of the U.S. Congress after conducting an investigation of the

extent to which “operation gatekeeper” had reached its stated objectives.<sup>32</sup> What really happened with the immigration flows of undocumented immigrants from Mexico was not a diminishing of the volumes of their flow to the United States but a change of places of entry toward the west from the traditional areas through San Diego. In that process, the number of deaths of migrants has been climbing at a rate of more than one migrant killed per day as an average in the area covered by “operation gatekeeper.” Some nongovernmental organizations such as the Rural Legal Foundation of California and the American Civil Liberties Union of San Diego and Imperial Counties criticized their own government for the violation of human rights that “operation gatekeeper” implied as they alleged its implementation was in violation of the chart of human rights of the Pan American Union (OAS). No Mexican institution, let alone the Mexican government, reacted in solidarity to such a criticism made by American NGOs and by American citizens. In fact, when President Zedillo was invited by California Governor Gray Davis to visit in May of 1998, he declared to the Spanish Daily *La Opinion*, on the verge of his visit to California, that the deaths of the migrants were neither a responsibility of the United States nor that of Mexico.

### PART III. THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

These and many other things changed with the emergence of the political leadership of Vicente Fox. He was able to correctly interpret a general feeling of Mexicans being fed up with the ruling of the PRI, which had been in power for the last 71 years. Vicente Fox ran a political campaign for the election of president of Mexico based on a promise of change, particularly a change from corruption in the practice of government.<sup>33</sup> As a governor of the state of Guanajuato and as a prosperous rancher in that state, he was familiar with the phenomenon of emigration of Mexicans to the United States. Guanajuato is one of the Mexican provinces with the oldest tradition of emigration of its people to the United States. Comparably speaking, Guanajuato had a high concentration of population at the beginning of the 20th century, when the U.S. Congress decided to appropriate some monies to fund the recruitment of Mexican workers. World War I had stopped the influx of immigrants from Europe. African-Americans had gone north from the Deep South to substitute European immigrants in the lowest-paid occupations. The conditions of the war had produced a massive need for agricultural production for exports. It had also produced some labor shortages, particularly in Texas and California. The first U.S. anti-immigrant laws had succeeded in expelling the Chinese first, and then the Japanese, and then the Filipinos, in the wake of the “Asian bared zone.” This created a sort of a vacuum of cheap labor, the sensitivity of which was taken to Washington by some Californian congressman, who, after the first economic recession of the 20th century in 1907, argued in the U.S. Congress that the Mexicans should be sought after as immigrant workers, whose public monies should be appropriated. The idea was approved and recruiters were sent south to Mexico. The U.S. Congressional Records tell the story. A congressman from California argued that the “Mexican race” was physically fit for stoop labor because

---

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Border Patrol, “Border Patrol Strategic Plan 1994 and Beyond.” Prepared testimony for Congressional hearings; see [www.stopgatekeeper.com](http://www.stopgatekeeper.com).

<sup>33</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Committees, “INS’ Southwest Border Strategy; Resource and Impact Issues Remain after Seven Years,” August 2001, Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 24.

they were shorter and closer to the ground, as opposed to the white race, who were born for stand-up work, thus fit for industrial production.<sup>34</sup> Racist ideologies of white supremacy had penetrated the ivory towers of U.S. academia at the turn of the century. Ideas of white supremacy were incorporated in mainstream U.S. social science.<sup>35</sup>



Published in *Problemas Agrícolas e Industriales de Mexico*, 1958, Vol. 10, p. 15.



Published in *Problemas Agrícolas e Industriales de Mexico*, 1958, Vol. 10, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Feagin, Joe R., *Racial and Ethnic Relations*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), p. 301. Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>35</sup> Feagin, *op. cit.*, p. 385.



Published in *Problemas Agrícolas e Industriales de México*, 1958, Vol. 10, p. 65.

American recruiters were sent south to Mexico with the goal of attracting Mexican workers to fill the vacuums of cheap labor left with the immigration restrictions against immigrants from Asia. U.S. labor recruiters could not find concentrations of people in Mexico right across the border. Some of the most populated cities of the Mexican northern border, like Tijuana where I live, didn't exist as urban settlements at the beginning of the 20th century. So U.S. labor recruiters had to go farther south until they found higher concentrations of population. That is why they reached Guanajuato, thus introducing what soon became a tradition in that state, namely, to emigrate to the United States in search for higher wages.

Vicente Fox, as a governor of Guanajuato, was very much aware of the importance of remittances of dollars from the United States by the Mexican migrant workers. So, in his political campaign for the Mexican presidency, he called migrant workers "heroes," recognizing for the first time by a Mexican president the importance of migrant workers' remittances in the Mexican balance of payments, which in the year 2004 represented more than \$13 billion—currently \$30 billion—according to Banco de México's estimates, making these remittances of U.S. dollars within the top sources of dollars for the Mexican economy. Calling migrants "heroes" was quite a change from the ideology that saw migrants as an "escape valve."

There is one aspect of ethics in the discussion of U.S. immigration that is rarely covered. That is the moral responsibility that derives from the U.S. demand for immigrant labor, whose existence was scientifically demonstrated by the study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor based on data from the National Agricultural Workers Survey quoted above. Two points could be argued from the fact that there is a U.S. demand of the labor force of undocumented immigrants, unilaterally produced by Americans: one is that if there is a labor demand originated endogenously by an American source, namely, U.S. employers, there is a co-responsibility of the United States and México in the shaping of the immigration phenomenon from México. That labor force of the undocumented immigrant is as needed in the United States as it is real in a *de facto* U.S.-Mexico international labor market. The other point is that if one accepts the assumption that such a demand interacts with the factors that produce in Mexico the supply of the labor force for that market, the inherent bilateral nature of that labor market makes the migratory phenomenon caused bilaterally. This is why, no matter what the solution to the U.S. immigration phenomenon from Mexico is, it should be bilaterally approached.

That alludes to the format that the study and the eventual solution of problems related to the migratory phenomenon should take. As member nations of the United Nations Organization, the juridical nature of that responsibility should be congruent and guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is the reasoning that should substitute the irrationality of xenophobia, violence, unilateralism, and all other factors that contribute to the vulnerability of migrants as subjects of human and labor rights violations.

In order to better understand the bilateral nature of the responsibility as this was defined above, a further elaboration on Mexican politics is needed. Vicente Fox visited the United States and Canada in August 2000, after his electoral victory made him president. During this visit he surprised many Mexicans when he said that the deaths of migrants at the border would be “intolerable” in his administration. He also surprised the United States with his audacious proposals of an open border for Mexican migrants after sufficient closing of the wage gaps between the United States and Mexico. The idea was not accepted in the highest circles of the U.S. government, but it certainly made Americans think about it. Fox’s proposals on migrant labor had the legitimacy of a “democracy bonus” that had come from an electoral victory under the freest elections in Mexico’s history. The image of Vicente Fox as a champion of democracy, after having been a regional director of Coca-Cola for Mexico and Central America, was not difficult for American media to swallow. Fox came to the United States as president-elect, free of the strings attached to previous negotiations led by President Zedillo. Soon enough it became clear that Fox had a powerful ally in the United States, also a former rancher, who became president of the United States almost at the same time as Vicente Fox.

None of the U.S. presidents before George W. Bush, including his father, had deviated from the notion that the “illegal aliens” were criminals. This is why the different position taken by President Bush during his visit with Vicente Fox at his ranch in Guanajuato represented such a significant change of U.S. immigration policies. Bush’s speech on that occasion included recognition, for the first time, of U.S. labor demands as a factor that shaped the phenomenon of immigration of Mexicans to the United States. His speech included also references to the human and labor rights of the Mexican immigrants in the United States and, perhaps the most important change, he mentioned a need to negotiate a bilateral solution to the immigration question. The most serious obstacle for a bilateral agreement on the migrant question had been removed. Very efficient diplomacy under Fox’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jorge G. Castañeda, in preparation of this presidential meeting in Guanajuato, was probably an important part of such a change in the U.S. perspective, from blatant unilateralism to a proposal of a bilateral approach through negotiations. Before this change, there was an irreconcilable contrast between the predominant definition in the United States of the presence of undocumented immigrants from Mexico as a crime-related phenomenon. It was one that could only be solved by a police or military type of solution that could only come unilaterally and, on the other hand, the predominant definition in Mexico of the same phenomenon as one of labor nature, shaped by the factors that create a U.S. labor demand, in interaction with the factors that create a Mexican labor supply. A power asymmetry between the governments of the two countries had maintained a status quo of that contradiction for more than 30 years, ever since the years of General Leonard Chapman, as high commissioner of the U.S. INS, who had coined the term of a “silent invasion” that permeated the U.S. political culture as reflected by references to the Mexican immigration in the U.S. mass media.

Under that ideological environment, the abuses of human and labor rights against Mexican immigrants came to the surface through mass media reports, showing the conditions of impunity under which U.S. law enforcers of various levels, from the local to the federal,

were involved in incidents of violence against Mexican immigrants with no consequences.<sup>36</sup> These were years when extreme cases of exploitation were reported by U.S. media, such as one who provoked legal action with charges of slavery against a U.S. employer.

The Mexican government was incapable of doing anything concrete against the increasing vulnerability of Mexicans in the United States. During the 1970s through 1990s, the most important source of legal protection of Mexican immigrants came from Mexican American organizations in the United States, such as MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), National Council of la Raza, LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), and GI-Forum, in addition to numerous community organizations in California, Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico.

The legal support and the protection of the human rights of the Mexican migrants did not come from Mexico during those three decades. As was demonstrated by the litigation of *Brown v. Texas Board of Education*, lawyers who were hired by and paid for by Mexican American organizations were concerned for the vulnerability of Mexican migrants as subjects of human and labor rights. Such was the case where a federal court in Houston declared it unconstitutional to exclude from public schools the children of undocumented immigrants from Mexico. The author was an expert witness in that trial, which represented an important victory for the immigrants after a fair recognition that the majority of them pay taxes and Social Security while they work in the United States.

The role of Mexican Americans in the protection of the human and labor rights of Mexican immigrants has not been sufficiently recognized in Mexico, except for the award “Aguila Azteca,” which is the highest award granted by the Mexican government to non-nationals for services rendered to Mexicans. This award was received by Antonia Hernandez, president of MALDEF, Julian Samora, professor of the University of Notre Dame, and Blandina Cardenas, civil rights activist and scholar from Texas.

There was, however, a gradual change from rhetoric only, to a more than symbolic action, during the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, where the Mexican government reinforced consular protection. Political appointees were sent to occupy some of the most important Mexican Consul General offices in the United States. This change also meant a change from rhetoric to action in the performance of Mexican consuls. This was expressed in more conspicuous and closer contact between the new Mexican Consuls and the local communities of Mexican origin in the cities of Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago, Houston, and San Antonio. These changes were taking place at the same time that predominance of self-denominations among people of Mexican origin was changing from Mexican Americans to Chicanos, to Hispanics, to Latinos.

By the time Vicente Fox was elected as president of Mexico, the “Latino vote” had surfaced in the political scene of the United States as a political force to be reckoned with. The

---

<sup>36</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* published a series of reports from April 22 to April 24, 1993, including the following text: “Some agents complain that commanders place so much emphasis on amassing drug seizures –thus impressing top brass and law makers in Washington—that supervisors turn a blind eye to evidence of wrongdoing by agents. . . . Management will let you do whatever you need to do to get the job done to stop drug smuggling’, said Thomas A. Watson, a five-year Nogales veteran who was fired this month for complicity in the cover-up of a fellow agent’s fatal shooting of a suspected trafficker. ‘Drugs are what the chief wanted. Drugs made the head lines. . . . Many agents admit that they prefer drug duty –waiting in remote canyons with automatic weapons to waylay traffickers along backcountry trails—to the more prosaic task of apprehending illegal immigrants’” April 23, 1993. p. A26.

close victory of Loretta Sanchez over her Republican opponent in 1996 in the district that includes Orange County in California was a clear indication of the difference that the votes of former Mexican undocumented immigrants could make, after they had become U.S. citizens. That election, in what used to be a stronghold of the Republican Party, showed a pattern: the majority of Mexican undocumented immigrants who became U.S. legal residents and, then, U.S. citizens joined the Democratic Party.

President Fox has shown a particular sensitivity for the U.S. minority of Mexican origin population, referred to by themselves and by others in the United States as “Latinos.” The fact that more than two thirds of them are descendants of Mexican nationals has led President Fox to explicitly include them as a part of the Mexican population to whom he is supposed to serve as president of Mexico. It could be argued that this is not very orthodox view, if one takes into account that the majority of Latinos are U.S. citizens. Fox, however, has contributed to the blurring of national identities that began in the preceding *sexenio* (six-year term of administration of Mexican presidents) with the constitutional reform in Mexico that instituted a virtual “double nationality.” In fact, this was a constitutional reform that established that the Mexican nationality will be considered in Mexico as permanent, regardless of the acquisition of other nationalities by Mexicans. If a Mexican citizen gains another country’s citizenship, he or she can no longer use his or her citizen’s rights, particularly the right to vote in Mexican elections, unless he expressly resigns the other country’s acquired citizenship. This reform on Mexican nationality left untouched the constitutional rules for Mexican citizenship. Thus, there can be a dual nationality but not a dual citizenship for Mexicans. This distinction is confusing in the United States, where it is common to equate nationality with citizenship. This is not the case in Mexico. There, nationality implies certain patrimonial rights given in exclusivity to Mexican nationals by the Mexican Constitution, such as the right to own property within the zone of 50 kilometers parallel to Mexican borders and 100 kilometers parallel to Mexican coastal lines (Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution). President Fox’s insistence, in fact an expressive promise, of granting voting rights to Mexican citizens who reside outside Mexico in presidential elections contributes to the confusion, particularly in the United States. This is currently a controversial issue in Mexico, after the establishment of a cumbersome system of absentee ballots by certificate mail failed to produced more than 1 percent of registered voters out of an estimated 400,000 expected to cast their votes in Mexico’s presidential election on July 2, 2006. The controversy about the vote of Mexicans abroad starts from the fact that there are more Mexican citizens residing on a permanent basis in the United States (close to 20 million), that is, more than in any other Mexican province except for the Federal District (the metropolitan area of Mexico City). These numbers are associated to the hypothesis that a presidential election could be decided by those living outside the country. The truth of the matter is that there was a very poor preparation for the implementation of the constitutional reform that established the right to vote for Mexicans abroad. None of the proponents of the right to vote for Mexicans abroad, including President Fox, addressed, for instance, the fact that the right to vote was to be exercised in another country, therefore, in violation of the legal principle of international law against the extraterritoriality of the law, or the fact that there are U.S. laws that require a license issued by the U.S. federal government to conduct political activities for other countries within the U.S. territory, with penalties of fines or prison for violators. Nor it was resolved how the Mexican electoral campaigns in the United States could escape from being subjected to U.S. electoral laws, particularly for the electoral propaganda, financing, and conducting of an electoral campaign. Even worse, which country’s judicial system will decide in the final instance the eventual electoral controversies? Could it be that the U.S. Supreme Court of Justice would decide the president of Mexico? These and



many other questions remained to be answered in Mexico and in the United States, way before the rules for the implementation of such a right to vote for Mexicans abroad allows for its actual exercise.

The events of September 11 only exacerbated the difficulties of these and of many other matters pertaining to the bilateral relations between Mexico and the United States. Perhaps President Fox has been ahead of his time. The fact is that he has been proceeding as if there is no difference between what is and what might be. At the very beginning of his administration, he created a cabinet-level position for Dr. Juan Hernandez, a U.S. citizen of Mexican origin (a Latino himself), in charge of matters of “Mexicans abroad.” The creation of such a high-level office was a good idea. Its creation corresponded to the importance that the ever-growing population of Mexican nationals, Mexican citizens, and U.S. citizens of Mexican origin living in the United States should have in the Mexican decision-making process. However, the replacement of Dr. Hernandez by the creation of a new Institute of Mexicans Abroad has resulted in the establishment of certain distance between President Fox and the migrants’ everyday lives. Not that he was ever very close to them, but Dr. Hernandez used to serve as an efficient bridge of communication between the president of Mexico and the migrants’ experience in the United States. It could be said that President Fox’s personal involvement with those whom he used to call “heroes” during his electoral campaign has fallen, from weak to almost rhetorical. Another aspect where the rhetorical supersedes the factual in the Fox administration is in regard to the respect of human rights of immigrants from Central America. The reality is that there are as serious violations of human rights of Central Americans in México as there are of Mexicans in the United States. It should be pointed out, however, that this is a sort of a catch-22 for the Mexican government. On the one hand, it is criticized at home and abroad for being too lenient for the border controls of people and drugs on its southern border—the majority of both end up entering the United States—and, on the other hand, it is criticized for human rights violations in trying to do so. Mexican law enforcement authorities seem to be overwhelmed by the violence of the gang members of Mara Salvatrucha in its southern border. The fact of the matter is that, in contrast to the United States, which has not ratified the U.N. Convention for the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, México has done so, therefore it has to abide by it. This U.N. Convention entered into effect in 2003. Thus, according to the Mexican Constitution, it is “the law of the land” in México, as it is the most comprehensive U.N. standard for the human and labor rights of all migrants. This distinction makes it important to understand the difference, pointed out earlier in the paper, between the vulnerability of migrants while in their country of origin and their vulnerability once they have entered another country. In the first case, questions of the vulnerability of migrants tend to be considered a “domestic” or of an internal nature, because the rights violated are of an endogenous origin; therefore, a matter to be handled internally by the judicial system of the country of origin of the migrants, whereas in the case of the vulnerability of international migrants, the rights violated are of an exogenous origin. This gives its related matters an international character since the questions related to them are supposed to be dealt with by the international community. This is important when there is a territorial overlap between the violations of rights of internal migrants derived from the Mexican laws and the violation of the rights of international migrants, such as the case of immigrants from Central American countries in the Mexican southern border region, derived from the U.N. Convention mentioned above.

Returning to the immigration issue in the United States, some comments should be made about the options that appear to be more salient in the bilateral negotiations as they were

publicly known before the events of September 11. There are two conflicting notions in the United States about how to solve the migratory question with Mexico. Two contentious parties could not have represented that conflict more acutely than, on the one hand, the AFL-CIO promoting a “blanket amnesty” for all undocumented immigrants and, on the other, the California and Texas growers associations promoting a “guest workers program.” Both have their respective important allies. The respective promotions could not be more contradictory. The AFL-CIO side is adamantly opposed to the “guest workers program,” claiming that it will be a mechanism of perpetuation of the exploitation of migrant workers as they were by the old *bracero* agreements. On the side of the growers, in the words of former Senator Phil Gramm of Texas, amnesty will pass “over my cold dead body.” The AFL-CIO is in full support of a wide regularization of all undocumented immigrants. This is the position of all Latino organizations of national memberships. The growers’ side has the support of President Bush and the wealthiest and more conservative side of the Republican Party, with the exception of the group of legislators headed by Congressman James Sensenbrenner of the Republican Party who are adamantly opposed to any “amnesty” measures or anything that favors undocumented immigrants. This powerful group of legislators is to the right of President Bush in matters of immigration.

The general indifference in Mexico about the migrant workers’ plight has prevented a more significant participation of the Mexican political parties in a public debate about the mentioned options for a U.S.-Mexico agreement on migrant workers. In fact, there has not been a comparable debate in Mexico about these or other options on the subject in spite of President’s Fox unprecedented attention to their plight. There are, however, important implications for the Mexican migrants. The option that would be more convenient for the average Mexican migrant worker is whatever comes closest to the “amnesty,” a term not accepted by the Mexican government, because it alludes to a pardon granted to criminals by the executive of a government. There has been some confusion in the United States with the terms “legalization” or “regularization.” In reality the three terms, amnesty, legalization, and regularization, mean the same in their sought-after consequences; namely, making “documented” the “undocumented.” This means the “empowerment” that is brought to the undocumented when he or she becomes documented, including nonrestrictive access to the protection of the law such as the police or the court system in the United States, without taking the risk of being deported.

This “empowerment” has not taken place with previous temporary migrant U.S. visas program, particularly with the old *bracero* programs, as it was argued before. The main reason has been that none of the temporary visa programs (H1, H2, H2A, H2B, etc.) significantly modified the asymmetry of power between the migrant worker and his or her U.S. employer. To the extent that amnesty-related options could lead to U.S. citizenship and full voting rights, such options could indeed signify “empowerment” in the sense implied in the diagram, which means a way out of the conditions of vulnerability attached to being an undocumented immigrant. This is not the kind of migrants’ empowerment the U.S. growers would be interested in pursuing, basically because it would reduce the asymmetry of power between them and the migrant workers, whose conditions the cost of labor imposed on the latter.

Notwithstanding the greater benefit for migrants that could be derived from a “legalization” or an amnesty-related option, the reality is that this is the least likely option to be palatable for U.S. legislators. In fact, President Bush has stated that he is not going to support this option.

Geopolitics between Mexico and the United States have never been so overlapping as they are today and as they will continue to be in the near and not so near future. If there is one factor even more important than NAFTA for such a future, this would be the Latino vote.

With the exception of California's gubernatorial election of 2004, when Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected, previous elections in California have shown the political cost that Republican candidates could suffer by supporting anti-immigrant measures. Both the elections of 1996 and, more clearly, the election of 1998 showed how the Latino vote of California punished the candidates of the Republican Party by giving the victory to Democrats, such as Governor Gray Davis and Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante. Such a pattern of punishing vote appeared again in the 2006 elections, when 26 percent of the Latino vote went to candidates of the Republican Party, compared to 42 percent in the 2004 elections.

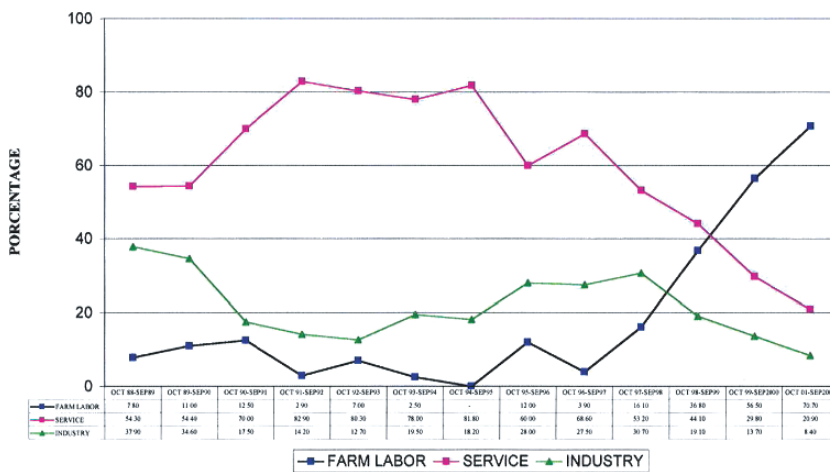
The emergence of the Latino vote in California was the result of a paradox derived from the reelection campaign of Pete Wilson in 1994, which was based in the support of Proposition 187. Reference by its proponents of extending the limitations established for the undocumented immigrants to all "aliens," that is, to all Mexicans in California, including those with a U.S. visa of legal residence, instilled a serious fear in all of Mexican origin population in the state, including U.S. citizens. This reminded many Latinos of the anti-Mexican campaign in the 1930s, where U.S. citizens of Mexican origin were expelled from California back to Mexico, as documented by Hoffman in *United States and Carreras de Velazco in México*.<sup>37</sup> The paradox was that a law (Proposition 187) intended against the Mexican undocumented immigrants produced a "fear of God" among the Mexican origin population of California. Those among them who were U.S. citizens went to the following elections (1996–1998–2000) in California, ready to vote against all candidates of the Republican Party whose political platform had included strong anti-immigrant language ever since the Republican Party's convention where President's Bush's father was elected candidate, to the present.

Public debate on Proposition 187 was marked by the court's main argument in its first and, again, in its final decisions about its unconstitutionality, namely, its violation of the "supremacy clause" (immigration matters are of the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government). This was perhaps the main reason why there has not been an in-depth discussion of Proposition 187's basic premises. It is argued here that Proposition 187 was based on biased perceptions, tainted by racist and xenophobic ideologies, and that its basic provisions represent instances of "institutional racism" against people of Mexican origin, identified as such by the color of their skin. This bias has persisted in all the subsequent anti-immigrant legislative projects such as the "Law 200" in Arizona, the "Real ID Law" sponsored by Congressman James Sensenbrenner, and the subsequent HR-4437 also sponsored by Sensenbrenner, which was only approved by the House of Representatives and (as of March 2006) still pending approval by the U.S. Senate. It is further argued that all of these legislative projects are a reflection of the conditions of "vulnerability" in which an ethnic minority of Mexican origin in general, and Mexican immigrants in particular, have lived in the United States as subjects of human rights. The most relevant empirical evidence that supports the argument of an ideological bias against undocumented immigrants is summarized by the conclusive remarks quoted above from the U.S. Labor Department Study published in 1994.

---

<sup>37</sup> The two best studies on the massive expulsion of Mexicans during the years of the Great Depression are by Mercedes Carreras de Velazco, *Los Mexicanos que Devolvió la Crisis 1929–1932* (Mexico, D.F.: Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Dirección General de Archivo) and by Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican-Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929–1939* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1974).

GRAPH 1  
TRENDS IN THE U.S. LABOR DEMAND OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS MALE FROM MEXICO, D.F. AS THEY ENTER THE U.S. THROUGH TIJUANA FROM 1988 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2001



The Mexican immigrant labor is not only necessary for a return to business as usual in the United States; it is necessary for the recovery of the U.S. economy. President Bush will hear voices from his own party, i.e., Senator McCain, and certainly from the other party, speaking about the need to rationalize what so far has been a *de facto* labor market between Mexico and the United States, one where the U.S. demands for immigrant labor are as real as the supply of it.

As this Handbook was going to press, the legislative process aimed at responding to President Bush’s initiatives of a “comprehensive reform” of the U.S. immigration laws received a severe blow, perhaps fatal, on June 2007. A U.S. Senate’s majority decided to suspend the debate on what was expected to be the approval for such a legislative reform. This could have allowed the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss and approve their own proposal, which would have led to a Conference Committee that in turn would have discussed and reconciled the differences between the texts of each House. U.S. analysts agree in their interpretation of the Senate’s decision as a triumph of the anti-immigrant legislators, mostly Republicans, together with some Democrats, who objected to any amendment that would have improved the rights of undocumented migrants, under claims that it would amount to an unacceptable amnesty. The virtual status quo resulting from the June 7 decision is likely to increase the human rights vulnerability of undocumented migrants.

It was said before that there were two factors in the return of the bilateral relations to where they were before September 11. Reference was made before to the sharing of a bilateral *de facto* labor market as one factor. The other is of a different nature. It is the “Latino vote.” As this is growing as a sheer consequence of demography, it is bound to be of crucial importance for the election of U.S. president, particularly in the states of California and Texas, which might determine who the next president will be. The November 2005 elections in California established an important lesson. The “Latino vote” is not impartial to immigration policies. They vote in favor of proponents of pro-immigrant measures, and they vote against the proponents of anti-immigrant measures. That explains the voting pattern against the candidates and programs of the Republican Party in California, including the blatant defeat of all

the amendments proposed by Governor Schwarzenegger, as they were voted in the elections of November 2005, a defeat basically due to the Latino vote. It is true that Latinos have had a history of low voting records, but it is also true that those ethnic differences tend to disappear when controlled by education levels. As Latinos are improving in their education levels, they will be voting in greater numbers. Thus, presidential candidates of both parties are going to try hard to obtain the Latino vote in the whole United States, and this factor will work in favor of the return of both governments to the table of negotiations for a bilateral agreement on the immigrant labor question.

### A SYNTHETICAL CONCLUSION

This paper has implied a navigation from the abstract level of dialectics to the concrete level of migrant deaths at the border. The fact of the matter is that the international migration from México to the United States is a human phenomenon with too many facets, and is therefore difficult to explain. An effort has been made here to cover just a few of them by focusing on its contradictions. This corresponds to an old analytical suggestion used by a number of philosophers ever since the dialogues of Plato, who went beyond Socrates' recommendation to postpone the study of dialectics until the age of 30. For Hegel as for Plato, dialectic moves in the realm of truth and ideas. The synthesis of *thesis* and *antithesis* results in a more complete truth. The German philosopher George Hegel viewed dialectic as an avenue to respond to the challenge of explaining history. Looking at the contradictions between the *material* and the *ideal* was a first step in Hegel's dialectics as a method of analysis. There is no further claim of a Hegelian analysis here than what it corresponds to the basic epistemological premise of his dialectical approach to the understanding of history.

After many years of doing empirical research on the migrations from México to the United States, it has become increasingly clear that international labor migrations touch on every aspect of the social, economic, and cultural elements of the development of a nation, both of its origin and its destination. As the world seems to shrink with the rise of new technologies of communication, the mobilization of people crossing borders in multiple directions makes migrations an ever-growing phenomenon impossible of being disassociated to what is understood in this paper as "the process of globalization" (see footnote 3). In the sense of this understanding arises the question of the human rights of the migrants. Its dialectical analysis is suggested by the apparent contradiction between the universality of a notion of human rights that does not accept distinctions of national origins and a notion of international migrations that cannot be disentangled with the sovereign right of a country to make distinctions between nationals and foreigners. When this question is analytically separated in its two elements, as it was in this paper, it becomes apparent that in between lies a process, social in nature, because it derives from the social relations between "nationals" and "immigrants" as so defined by most constitutions. From this basic premise derives a complex development in which the conditions of migrants' vulnerability emerge and is reinforced by the rise of anti-immigrant ideologies including prejudices and racism. The dynamics that get started on each end of the diagram enter in a collision course where the force from one end (impunity of violators of immigrants' rights) clashes against the force coming from the opposite end (empowerment, voting rights) giving place to something new, a synthesis, conceptualized as the "integration" of immigrants to the receiving nation. This integration is more a hypothesis than a reality, particularly in the case of the immigration from México to the United States. A historical perspective was included in order to

analyze some salient aspects of the social process of a *de facto* international labor market in which the immigration phenomenon takes place. An emphasis is placed in the bilateral nature of the phenomenon, one that is caused by factors located at the two sides of the U.S.-México border, for which a solution to problems related to it can only come from a bilaterally shaped agreement. An analysis was presented of some of the factors that have prevented such an agreement. Some U.S. proposals for immigration policies in 2006 were analyzed, and Mexican politics about the labor emigration from Mexico to the United States were discussed.

## CHAPTER 12

# Race, Ethnicity, and Health: An Intersectional Approach

LYNN WEBER AND M. ELIZABETH FORE

### INTRODUCTION

Nowhere is the severity and impact of racism on our nation and its people clearer and more profound than in the arena of health—where racism is literally a matter of life and death. Since the middle of the 20th century, extensive population studies have repeatedly documented the lowered quality and length of life and restricted life chances that people of color endure in the United States and indeed worldwide. In fact, compared to the White majority in the United States, racial and ethnic minorities, particularly African Americans, Native Americans, and some Latino and Asian American groups, are more likely to die in infancy and to have shorter life spans. Their lives are characterized by poorer health and health care as well—they are more likely to live with the debilitating effects of chronic diseases (hypertension, diabetes, AIDS/HIV, asthma, liver disease, and heart disease) and to die of cardiovascular (heart) disease, stroke, and some cancers [Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2004; Institute of Medicine (IOM), 2003]. Racial/ethnic people also have greater exposure to environmental hazards, and to health-damaging social contexts (e.g., violence), less insurance coverage, less access to health care, and lower quality of care when they do have access.

This essay will address four aspects of the relationship between health and race, ethnicity, and other intersecting systems of inequality. First, we present several ways that racial and ethnic differences in health are defined. Second, we provide an overview of data on differences in health and health care. Third, we examine dominant and critical models for explaining the differences, specifically comparing traditional biomedical approaches with intersectional social constructionist approaches. Finally, we address strategies to reduce and eliminate health disparities across race, ethnicity, gender, and social class.

## RACIAL/ETHNIC HEALTH DISPARITIES DEFINED

These differences in life and death experiences are variously referred to as health inequalities, health inequities, and health disparities. U.S. government agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as well as public health and social science practitioners tend to view health disparities as

a chain of events signified by a difference in: (1) environment, (2) access to, utilization of and quality of care, (3) health status, or (4) a particular health outcome that deserves scrutiny. (Carter-Pokras and Baquet, 2002: 427)

Margaret Whitehead (1991) developed a somewhat broader concept of health equity, which has been adopted by the European World Health Organization (EURO/WHO) and which defines health inequities as “differences in health which are not only unnecessary and avoidable but, in addition, are considered unfair and unjust.” She distinguishes between those health inequalities that are more likely to be considered unavoidable and thus fair, such as natural biological variation or health-damaging behavior that is freely chosen (such as in recreational athletics), and those that are avoidable and thus unfair, such as exposure to unhealthy, stressful living and working conditions, inadequate access to essential health and other basic services, and health-damaging behaviors where the degree of choice of lifestyles is severely restricted.

The avoidability and unfairness of racial/ethnic health disparities—which are seen as serious consequences of racism—have long served as fuel for the movement to eliminate health inequities specifically, and for the civil rights movement more broadly. For example, nowhere has the connection among racial justice, human rights, and health been more clearly stated than when Fanny Lou Hamer rallied the civil rights movement saying that she and all Black people were “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” Health issues have been major foci of Black women’s political activity for over 100 years, and they continue so be so—one leading Black women’s health advocacy and education group today, the National Black Women’s Health Project, took Fanny Lou Hamer’s famous words as their slogan (Smith, 1995).

In recent years, the advocacy of grassroots activists (e.g., National Women’s Health Network, National Black Women’s Health Project, National Latina Health Organization), professional organizations (e.g., American Public Health Association, American Nurses Association), and policy-makers (e.g., Congressional Black, Hispanic, and Women’s Caucuses) has brought greater research, visibility, and action to the cause of eliminating health disparities (Morgen, 2006; Ruzek, 1999). The government has responded in a variety of ways over the last 10 to 15 years.

In his radio address on February 21, 1998, President Clinton committed the nation to an ambitious goal by the year 2010: eliminate disparities in six areas of health status experienced by racial and ethnic minority populations while continuing the progress made in improving the overall health of the American people. Infant mortality, cancer screening and management, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and immunizations were selected for emphasis because they reflect areas of disparity that are known to affect multiple racial and ethnic minority groups at all life stages. *Healthy People 2010*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (USDHHS) 10-year health objectives for the nation, defines health disparities as differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United States (USDHHS, 2000). Elimination of persistent health disparities



has become a major priority for national health agencies, politicians, health advocates, and researchers:

- In July 2002, over 2,000 people attended the first “National Leadership Summit on Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health,” sponsored by the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, and it is now an annual event.
- *Healthy People 2010* has eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities as one of its top two priorities.
- The NIH developed a strategic plan to reduce and eliminate health disparities and established a National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities.
- The 2006 NIH research priorities for women’s health identify health disparities as one of four themes critical to addressing women’s health.

## OVERVIEW OF HEALTH DISPARITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Race and ethnicity, social class, and socioeconomic status are life and death matters—they affect our quality of life, the kinds of diseases and conditions we live with, the kinds of health behaviors we engage in, how long we live, the likelihood that our children will live past infancy, our access to health care, and the quality of care we receive. Below we present recent data summarizing racial and ethnic disparities in our nation’s health. We begin with data on three key indicators of a healthy population: causes of death, infant mortality, and life expectancy. We next present data on the differences in the prevalence and mortality of three chronic conditions that contribute to heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States: hypertension, diabetes, and overweight/obesity. We follow with data on the differences in cancer rates for breast cancer and cervical cancer, diseases that are diagnosed later among women of color, resulting in their earlier death. And finally, we present differences in the use of tobacco, which is associated with the top three causes of death—heart disease, stroke, and cancer—particularly among racial/ethnic groups, but also lower socioeconomic groups [CDC, 2004a; National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), 2005].

One of the difficulties encountered when attempting to identify, understand, and redress health inequalities is getting access not only to health data that represent multiple racial/ethnic groups but also to data that reflect significant variations within those groups across genders, socioeconomic statuses, social classes, and sexual orientations. These limitations need to be addressed if we are to meet the challenge of eliminating health disparities. Further, even though our social locations across multiple dimensions of social inequality shape the circumstances of life and death for all of us, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between every possible indicator of morbidity and mortality and racial ethnic subordinate status. Still, of the top 15 causes of death in 2002, Whites had higher mortality rates than African Americans on only 4 causes of death: chronic lower respiratory diseases, Alzheimer’s disease, suicide, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (Kochanek et al., 2004). And the very indicators on which dominant groups rank highest also provide insights into the different experiences of life and death for people in dominant and subordinate racial/ethnic, social class, and gender groups. White men, for example, are more likely to commit suicide than White women or racial/ethnic people, but these deaths have been associated with the shame and stress associated with *downward* social mobility (CDC, 2004b; Kochanek et al., 2004). Likewise, White women are more likely to die from Alzheimer’s disease than any other race-gender group—an indicator that is certainly related to the fact that they live longer than any other group (NCHS, 2005; Kochanek et al., 2004).

## Population Health Indicators: Causes of Death, Infant Mortality, Life Expectancy

**CAUSES OF DEATH.** Table 12.1 presents available data on the leading causes of death in the United States (NCHS, 2005). African Americans have the highest mortality rates on 8 of the 11 indicators ranking highest on heart disease, stroke, cancer, influenza and pneumonia, and diabetes. On HIV and homicide their rates are 8.65 and 5.68 times the White rates, respectively. American Indians are more likely than any other group to die from cirrhosis/liver disease and unintentional injuries (including car accidents)—and more likely than Whites to die from diabetes and homicide. All of these causes of death have clear associations with alcoholism and violence. Likewise, Hispanics are much more likely than Whites to die from diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and homicide (1.54, 2.23, and 1.97 times, respectively). Asian Americans, who also have the highest occupational status and incomes in the United States, have the lowest death rates on 8 of the 11 indicators and lower rates than Whites on all indicators (NCHS, 2005). As will be seen in later data, although these major group-level data suggest particular patterns across race and ethnicity, variations across ethnic groups within racial categories are significant, and socioeconomic and class differences are also implicated in these data.

**INFANT MORTALITY.** Infant mortality rates are a second indicator of a healthy population and differ significantly across racial and ethnic groups. As shown in Table 12.2, African American women have the highest infant mortality rate of any group (13.5) and more than double the rate among White women (5.7). Although these rates suggest important differences in the health of women of color, the data also remind us of significant variations within racial groups. Mortality and morbidity data are often categorized based on five racial/ethnic categories defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), yet differences across

**TABLE 12.1. Age-Adjusted Death Rates per 100,000 for Whites for Selected Causes of Death (2002)**

	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	White, Not Hispanic or Latino
Heart disease	236.7	308.4	157.4	134.6	180.5	239.2
Stroke	54.2	76.3	37.5	47.7	41.3	54.6
Cancer	191.7	238.8	125.4	113.6	128.4	195.6
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	45.4	31.2	30.1	15.8	20.6	46.9
Influenza and pneumonia	22.6	24.0	20.4	17.5	19.2	22.6
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	9.6	8.5	22.8	3.2	15.4	9.0
Diabetes	23.1	49.5	43.2	17.4	35.6	22.2
HIV	2.6	22.5	2.2	0.8	5.8	2.1
Unintentional injuries	37.5	36.9	53.8	17.9	30.7	38.0
Suicide	12.0	5.3	10.2	5.4	5.7	12.9
Homicide	3.7	21.0	8.4	2.9	7.3	2.8

Source: National Center for Health Statistics (2005). *Health, United States, 2005 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans*, Hyattsville, MD.

**TABLE 12.2. Infant Mortality Rates, 2000–2002, by Race**

	Death rate per 1,000 live births
White, non-Hispanic	5.7
Black, non-Hispanic	13.5
American Indian	8.9
Asian American	4.8
Chinese	3.2
Hawaiian	8.7
Hispanic	5.5
Puerto Rican	8.3
Cuban	4.2

Source: National Center for Health Statistics (2005). *Health, United States, 2005 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans*, Hyattsville, MD.

ethnicities within racial categories are often greater than differences between races. For example, Asians have the lowest infant mortality rates of any group, but rates among Asian groups vary dramatically, with Hawaiians having almost three times the death rates of Chinese. Likewise, among Hispanics, Cubans—who have the highest socioeconomic status among Hispanics—have an infant mortality rate lower than Whites while the Puerto Rican rate is significantly higher than the White rate (8.3 vs. 5.7) (NCHS, 2005).

**LIFE EXPECTANCY.** Life expectancy data from the National Center for Health Statistics for racial/ethnic groups include only comparisons across three groups: all races, African Americans, and Whites. Although, on the average, women of all races live longer than men of the same race, African Americans can expect to live approximately five fewer years than Whites (Table 12.3). For persons born in 2002, the life expectancy for African American women is 75.6, while for White women it is 80.3 (NCHS, 2005). Substantially shorter lives are expected for African American men, who are projected to live an average of 11.1 years less than White women (NCHS, 2005).

### Chronic Conditions: Hypertension, Diabetes, Obesity/Overweight

**HYPERTENSION AND DIABETES 2.** Hypertension and diabetes, major risk factors for both heart disease and stroke, are more common among African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans than among Whites. In the CDC's (2004a) 2002 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, 34.2% of African Americans and 18.9% of Hispanics reported hypertension. When age differences between groups were adjusted, African Americans were 1.8, Native

**TABLE 12.3. Life Expectancy at Birth by Race and Sex for 2002**

Race/Ethnicity	Both Sexes	Male	Female
All races	77.3	74.5	79.9
White	77.7	75.1	80.3
African American	72.3	68.8	75.6

Source: National Center for Health Statistics (2005). *Health, United States, 2005 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans*, Hyattsville, MD.

Americans 2.2, and Hispanics 1.7 times more likely to have diabetes than Whites, respectively (CDC, 2004; NIDDKD, 2005).

**OBESITY.** Over the last 20 years, overweight [defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 25–29.9] and obesity (BMI > 30) have increased dramatically and quickly in U.S. adults in every race/ethnic group, both genders, and all age groups (Eberhardt et al., 2001; Kuzmarski and Flegal, 2000; Mokad et al., 2002). Obesity, estimated to be the second leading cause of “preventable” death in the United States, is directly related to poor diet and physical inactivity and is a risk factor for a multitude of chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, and some cancers (endometrial, colon, and postmenopausal breast) (Allison, 1999; McGinnis, 1993; Must, 1999; NIH/NHLBI, 1998; USDHHS, 2001). African Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics all have overweight/obesity rates that are higher than Whites. Native Americans have the highest rate, 69.3%, while Native Americans and Hispanics have similarly high rates of 63.9% and 63.7%, respectively, and 57.4% of Whites report being overweight or obese (CDC, 2004).

### **Cervical and Breast Cancer**

Cervical cancer is more prevalent among African American women than among White women, with rates of 10.28 and 6.83 per 100,000 population, respectively, and African American’s survival rates are also lower (SEER, 2004). Breast cancer data reveal more fully the complex impact of race, ethnicity, and social class on women’s life experiences with these cancers. Data in 2002 indicate that African American women are less likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer than White women. However, when they are diagnosed, the diagnosis occurs at a later stage in the disease, and, consequently, they are much more likely to die from it (34.09 deaths per 100,000 vs. 24.93) (SEER, 2005).

### **Behavioral Health Risks: Smoking**

Tobacco use is the major contributor in the three leading causes of death among women: heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Smoking increases the risk of a woman’s dying of lung cancer by 12 times, dying of bronchitis and emphysema by 10 times, and triples the risk of dying of heart disease (CDC, 1993). Smoking is a behavior that is not only correlated to race/ethnicity but also to socioeconomic status. Smoking is more common among White women than African American women, with smoking rates being inversely related to education (NCHS, 2005). Almost 19.5% of White women currently smoke, compared to 18.9% of African American women (NCHS, 2005). Though these rates are similar, the most striking differences are across educational levels. For women of all races/ethnicities with at least a bachelor’s degree, only 9.3% smoke, but 24.9% of women who do not have a high school diploma or GED smoke (NCHS, 2005).

### **Disparities in Health Care: Access and Treatment**

**HEALTH INSURANCE.** In the United States, where we do not have universal access to care, health insurance is a critical determinant of one’s access. Although government-funded

programs, such as Medicaid, aim to ensure that the lack of health insurance coverage does not affect access to care, many people are left out—either not employed in jobs that provide private health insurance or not eligible for government assistance. In 2003, 31.9% of the population whose incomes were between 100% and 149% above the poverty level lacked health insurance while only 10% of people living at 200% or more above poverty lacked insurance (NCHS, 2005). In a 2001 national telephone survey of 3,966 women, 21% of African Americans, 30% of Latinas, and 19% of Whites reported delaying medical care because they lacked insurance (Kaiser, 2004). While 35% of Native Americans are uninsured, the highest rate of all race/ethnic groups, only 16% of Whites—who have the best rates of insurance coverage—are uninsured. (NCHS, 2005).

**ACCESS TO CARE AND TREATMENT.** Research on cardiovascular disease, kidney transplantation, and the use of analgesics has documented that African Americans and Latinos receive poorer treatment in the health care system (Institute of Medicine, 2003). They are less likely to receive diagnostic procedures, pain medications, and pharmaceutical or surgical interventions than Whites (Carlisle et al., 1995; Ford et al., 2000; Goff et al., 1995; Cleeland et al., 1997; Ng et al., 1996).

## UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF RACIAL/ETHNIC HEALTH DISPARITIES

Despite increased public awareness and outcry, increased concern among researchers and government funding agencies, and a half-century of funding of social science research on health inequalities, there is very little evidence that health disparities across race and ethnicity as well as class and gender have abated (Hofrichter, 2003; House, 2002; House and Williams, 2000; Smedley, Stith, and Nelson, 2003). One reason for the stubborn persistence of racial and ethnic health disparities lies in the hegemony of biomedical conceptions of and approaches to health in the United States. The biomedical paradigm, with its narrow focus on disease, individual bodies, health care, and treatment in clinical settings, inadequately represents health because it leaves out or only nominally considers the social forces and contexts that shape and actually *produce* health (Ruzek et al., 1997; Smedley and Syme, 2000; Weber, 2006; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003). And even though biomedicine has responded to racial/ethnic and feminist scholars and grassroots activists about how race and gender affect the etiology, natural history, and treatment of disease, for example, by initiating changes in policy such as mandated inclusion of women and people of color in clinical trials, the clinical practice framework remains. That framework has also dominated social science research designed to broaden the biomedical model by examining psychosocial factors in the etiology of disease and race and gender-related health practices in the use of medical services. But these models do not adequately represent health because they too are tied to conceptions of health as located in individuals, their bodies, and their micro-level interactions while the underlying social dynamics that actually produce health and health inequality are left unexamined (Ruzek et al., 1997; Weber, 2006; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003).

Even scholars working solidly within the positivist biomedical paradigm have identified its hegemony over the research and policy landscape as an obstacle to improving the nation's health and eliminating health disparities. The prestigious Institute of Medicine of the National

Academies of Science,<sup>1</sup> for example, has begun to recognize the need for new approaches to public health and health disparities. In a recent report, *The Future of the Public's Health in the Twenty-First Century* (2002), the Institute points to the dominance of the biomedical paradigm as a *cause* of the gap between U.S. health-related expenditures—roughly 13% of our gross domestic product, more than any other industrialized nation—and our health status, which lags behind that of many nations:

The vast majority of health care spending, as much as 95 percent by some estimates, is directed toward medical care and biomedical research. However, there is strong evidence that behavior and environment are responsible for over 70 percent of avoidable mortality, and health care is just one of several determinants of health.” (Institute of Medicine, 2002, p. 2)

That 95% of our spending is devoted to research in areas that—at best—account for less than 30% of avoidable deaths clearly speaks to the power of biomedicine in America. The social structures and physical environments that provide the contexts for illness, disease, and death are clearly much more potent determinants of disparities and useful sites for interventions to eliminate them.

In order to effectively address health disparities, how race and racism get into our bodies is the critical question that needs to be answered. We cannot, however, even begin to answer the question without first understanding what race, ethnicity, and racism are and how they are produced, maintained, challenged, and changed. And as has been the case for over a century—a central question today centers on whether race and racism are social or biological constructs and whether racial/ethnic disparities in health are the result of “(a) innate genetic differences, (b) the biological impact of present and past histories of racial discrimination and economic deprivation, or (c) both” (Krieger, 2005, p. 2155).

## Race and Genes

In the last decade, a centuries-old debate over the biological and/or social construction of race, ethnicity, and disease has been refueled by the Human Genome Project—a 15-year, \$3 billion project to catalog and analyze the entire human genome—the repository of DNA building blocks. Spurred by new technological capacity, the Human Genome Project has become one of the highest scientific priorities of the government—eclipsing all other contenders for research dollars and reshaping the fields of biology and medicine (Cook-Deegan, 1994; Woliver, 2002). Scientists working on health disparities in this area subscribe to the notion that race is a genetic construct and that understanding patterns of genes across racially defined populations could help to identify populations at risk for various diseases and illnesses and at some point enable medical practitioners to use the information in treatment (Fine, 2005).

That genetics has become hegemonic within health science and has overwhelmed social science approaches in research funding is undeniable. Krieger (2005) reports that for the decade from 1995 to 2004, the NIH and CDC awarded 21,956 new grants that were

---

<sup>1</sup> The IOM, solidly entrenched in the positivist biomedical paradigm, is designed to provide scientific advice for policy development. In its own words, “The Institute provides unbiased, evidence-based, and authoritative information and advice concerning health and science policy to policy-makers, professionals, leaders in every sector of the society, and the public at large.” (<http://www.iom.edu/about.asp>)

indexed in the CRISP database of all NIH grants with the term *genetics* (including 181 additionally indexed by *race*) and only 44 that were indexed with the terms *racism* or *racial discrimination*—a ratio of 500 to 1.

This gross imbalance might not be so disturbing had social science and biological research not demonstrated that human beings share 99.9% of their DNA in common and that the vast majority of genetic variation (90–95%) occurs within, not across, human populations (Braun, 2002; Lee et al., 2001). And although it is possible to classify geographically defined populations by DNA clusters, there is no evidence that race as defined by continent or ancestry is useful in determining causes of disease or in predicting individual diagnoses or responses to drugs (Cooper et al., 2003; Fine, 2005).

In a recent issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* devoted to the race, genetics, and health debate, Michael Fine (2005) summarized the state of the scholarship. He reports that to date

- *genes appear to have no role in the detection of racial/ethnic health disparities* because detection typically relies on self-reported race as collected in cohort studies or from administrative databases,
- extensive health-disparities research has identified numerous patient, provider, health care system, and environmental (including social) factors that are powerful determinants of health disparities *independent of biology*,
- there are *no published reports of interventions* based on genetics specifically designed to reduce or eliminate health disparities.

The search for genetic explanations and solutions to racial/ethnic and other health disparities is not a benign venture. Shifting science and medicine in the direction of genetics has moral, ethical, and political import—and it is precisely this context within which the rush to genetics has generated significant controversy. Scholars working from social constructionist perspectives critique genetic approaches to the race–disease relationship not only on genetic science’s failure to demonstrate its viability but also on ethical and social justice grounds. First, for centuries biological explanations for racial hierarchies have been used to justify discrimination against individuals and to stigmatize communities. In the presence of persistent racial and ethnic hierarchies of power and privilege in the United States and abroad, there is no reason to believe that discriminatory explanations for racial differences of any sort won’t find new rationales in genetics. Second, the rush to find genetic determinants of health disparities serves as a powerful force to divert public attention, research, and health resources away from the social and environmental factors that are known to produce health disparities. As feminist scholar Barbara Katz Rothman (1998, p. 18) writes, the Human Genome Project is “the ultimate reductionist project,” where even the soul has been moved into the genes. Finally, the promotion of specific drug therapies for particular racial/ethnic niche markets could distract physicians from prescribing proven therapies (Fine, 2005).

One need only pick up a newspaper on any day to see a story that illustrates these concerns. For example, on January 16, 2006, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story headlined “Gene Increases Diabetes Risk, Scientists Find: Discovery Could Lead to a Diagnostic Test.” The article reports that Decode Genetics, a private company in Iceland, discovered a variant gene that is carried by more than one third of Americans and leads to a higher likelihood of type 2 diabetes. One medical geneticist in the U.S., David Altshuler, is quoted as saying the finding is “a beautiful piece of work, as convincing as any initial publication could be.” The story also touted the “immediate practical consequence of the discovery” to develop a diagnostic test to identify people who carry the variant gene.

Later in the article in the “skip to a back page,” we learn that the process of developing new treatments from the discovery will probably take one or two decades. Further, although African-Americans, Latinos, American Indians, and Asian-Americans have higher rates of diabetes 2, Dr. Stephanson, chief executive of Decode Genetics, said he could not yet say if the genetic variant was more common in these populations but noted that the variant was ancient—predating the dispersal of modern humans some 50,000 years ago. But he still called for “more studies to see whether there were significant differences in the genes’ distribution among races.” And what is the diagnostic test to do while we await any other treatment that might be discovered in 10 to 20 years? Identify the one third of the population that carries the gene so that “if people know of their extra risk, they would have an incentive to stay thin and exercise,” said Dr. Karl Stephanson.

In short, this exciting, beautiful, very expensive discovery will identify far more people than are actually at risk for diabetes 2 and provide an incentive to do what we already know works with diabetics—weight loss and exercise. And it will support the development of drug therapies over the next 20 years. In the meantime, as national resources are directed toward genetics in research and biomedicine, funds and support for programs, policies, and research that would encourage and support a healthy lifestyle—and be made more available to the poor, working class, and racial/ethnic populations that have higher incidence of diabetes 2—will receive less funding and attention.

While it is certainly likely that in years to come genetic research will provide answers to questions about causes of some diseases and conditions and will even hold keys to treatments, today there is little reason to see genetic research as an effective avenue for eliminating racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, or gender disparities in health. Perhaps more importantly, the dominance of the biomedical paradigm and its current fascination with genetics make it increasingly difficult to address the *social hierarchies* of race and ethnicity as well as class, gender, sexuality, and nation—hierarchies that are demonstrably more involved in producing different health outcomes. By obscuring the social bases of health, the biomedical paradigm facilitates the shift of national resources away from the fundamentals of health and toward an overmedicalized, highly technical, and socially unequal health care system that increasingly works well only for the privileged few.

### **Beyond Genetics: Psychosocial and Biobehavioral Explanations for Health Disparities**

The recent push to find genetic causes and solutions for race-based health disparities is just the latest in the long-standing biomedically driven search for health inequities in individuals’ bodies. But the assumptions and epistemology of the biomedical paradigm extend beyond human biology and have shaped the ways that behavioral and social sciences have approached the study of health and health disparities. Most importantly, biobehavioral and psychosocial research on health disparities also assumes that health and health disparities are to be located in individuals but looks for psychological and behavioral correlates or “antecedents” of health outcomes. The search is for causes of morbidity and mortality that rest in the thoughts/perceptions, emotions, actions, and social interactions of individuals.

Receiving the bulk of research funding allocated to the study of health and health disparities in the behavioral and social sciences, psychosocial and biobehavioral research that extends the biomedical model to incorporate more psychological and social traits has increased our knowledge of the disease process and supported behavioral interventions that



work for individuals. This research has, for example, identified health-related behaviors (e.g., smoking, exercise, diet) and psychological and social characteristics and processes among individuals and/or as manifested in individuals (e.g., social supports, locus of control, faulty logic, self-esteem, stress of discrimination, perceptions of mastery and control) that have significant impacts on health and in some cases on health disparities (House 2000, 2002; Lantz et al., 1998; Smedley and Syme, 2000).

One of the reasons that biobehavioral and psychosocial research has had such an appeal to funders, researchers, and policy makers is that the factors identified as causes of poor health outcomes (e.g., exercise, diet, smoking) are deemed to be more amenable to intervention than the presumably less malleable historically embedded social structures of race and ethnicity as well as other intersecting inequalities—social class, socioeconomic status, and gender.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), for example, the leading cause of death and disease in the United States, is disproportionately experienced by racial/ethnic and low-income groups [American Heart Association (AHA), 2000; United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), 2003]. Biobehavioral research has consistently documented that physical inactivity, adverse dietary patterns, smoking, and obesity increase the risk of CVD (Allison, 1999; Johnson and Sempos, 1995; Must, 1999; Mokdad et al., 2000). Population-wide surveillance data indicate that inactivity rates are particularly prevalent among women, older adults, adults with lower educational achievement, and racial/ethnic minorities. In recent years, physical inactivity has been a primary target for research and intervention to eliminate disparities in CVD because, while race, gender, and social class are deemed to be “unmodifiable,” physical inactivity is believed to be modifiable, a “true” proximal cause of disease, and to hold great potential for reducing or preventing CVD and other chronic conditions (Johnson and Sempos, 1995).

Research has similarly focused on identifying mediators between social inequalities and mental health. Some common intervening factors in mental health research on depression in women, for example, have been sense of control, resilience, stress, role overload, and social supports (Bird, 1999; Bullers, 1994; Matthews et al., 1998; Pavalko and Woodbury, 2000; Swanson et al., 1997; Walden et al., 1998). But even when these factors reduce or explain variance attributed to race, gender, class, socioeconomic status, or other dimensions of inequality in particular depression indicators, and as in CVD-physical activity research, fundamental questions about how these systems of inequality are generated and maintained go unanswered because the dimensions are simply taken as “givens” in the research.

Since research in this vein relies on individual-level data and analyses, it cannot fully capture the group processes that define systems of social inequality. By ignoring the social processes that generate and sustain race, class, gender, and other dimensions of inequality, researchers cannot see beyond the “proximate causes” to challenge the “fundamental causes” of health disparities (Link and Phelan, 2000). Interventions generated from psychosocial research are also unlikely to have a significant impact on *health disparities* because discoveries about intervening pathways or proximate causes of disease and illness get introduced into a social order hierarchically organized by race, ethnicity, class, socioeconomic status, and gender (Link and Phelan, 1995, 1996, 2000; Ruzek, 1999). As Williams (1997, p. 327) states of social inequality, “As long as the basic causal forces are in operation, the alteration of surface causes will give rise to new intervening mechanisms to maintain the same outcome.”

For several reasons, privileged groups benefit, and oppressed racial and ethnic and social class groups lose, when new knowledge and interventions are introduced into the population. As Link and Phelan (2000) note, coronary artery disease was seen as a “disease of affluence”

until the last 50 years, when it has become more common among the poor and working classes. Breast cancer mortality is no longer more common among high socioeconomic status women, at least among White women. And AIDS, while not associated with socioeconomic status early in the epidemic, has become so. In each of these cases, the most likely explanation for the change in relationship is the ability of dominant groups to take advantage of new developments and knowledge in the etiology of diseases and treatments for them. Link and Phelan (2000, p. 39), summarizing some of the reasons that the relationship between socioeconomic status and disease persists, suggest that socioeconomic status “embodies resources like knowledge, money, power, and prestige that can be used in different ways in different situations to avoid risks for disease and death” (Link and Phelan, 1995, 1996). When interventions are developed to address health disparities, new intervening pathways spring up to replace the ones that may have been reduced or eliminated.

### **The Sociology of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities: Macro Structures and Intersections**

Two promising directions in sociological research on health disparities aim

- to move health disparities research “upstream” beyond the narrow focus on the individual,
- to complicate the notion of disparities by examining race and ethnicity in the context of other systems of social inequality with which they are closely intertwined—gender, social class, socioeconomic status, sexuality, nation.

**BEYOND PATHWAYS: THE NEED TO LOOK FURTHER “UPSTREAM.”** Recognizing the limits of existing models, Smedley and Syme, in an Institute of Medicine report, *Promoting Health: Intervention Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research* (2000, p. 3), argue that “intervention efforts should address not only ‘downstream’ individual-level phenomena (e.g., physiologic pathways to disease, individual and life-style factors) and ‘mainstream’ factors (e.g., population-based interventions), but also ‘upstream,’ societal-level phenomena (e.g., public policies).” They suggest that the need to move upstream exists for several reasons:

- Many risks for disease and poor health are shared by large numbers of people.
- Many population groups have characteristic patterns of disease and injury over time even though individuals move in and out of the groups.
- Many improvements in health over the last century can be attributed not to medical interventions but to factors such as hygiene, rising standards of living, and nutrition.
- Many narrow, individually focused models of behavioral change have proven insufficient to help people change high-risk behavior (Smedley and Syme, 2000, pp. 3–4).

Arguments to move “upstream” have included calls for multilevel (household, neighborhood, and community) as well as individual-level data and multidisciplinary research and new and consistent measures of social inequality variables (Breen, 2001; Kreiger, 1999; Kreiger et al., 1993, 1997; NIH, 2001; Robert and House, 2000; Smedley and Syme, 2000). Scholars and activists seeking to eliminate health disparities have increasingly noted the interrelationships of race and ethnicity with indicators of socioeconomic status—most commonly income, but also with education and occupation. This scholarship contends that (1) unraveling race and ethnic

disparities will certainly also require addressing the ways that they often appear in research as proxies for unexamined socioeconomic disparities and (2) socioeconomic disparities themselves need to be eliminated (for reviews, see Adler and Newman, 2002; Kreiger et al., 1997; Navarro, 1990; Williams, 1990; Smedley and Syme, 2000). Some research has also focused on gender disparities and women's health, without significant attention to racial and ethnic or socioeconomic differences (cf. Weissman, 1998). But increasingly, health scholars call for and engage in research that explores gender in interaction with racial and ethnic and/or socioeconomic disparities (Breen, 2001; Kreiger, 1999; Ruzek et al., 1997; Williams, 2002). In fact, the FY2006 NIH research priorities for women's health lists four top thematic priorities for women's health research, one of which is "Health Disparities/Differences and Diversity" (National Institutes of Health, 2006).

These calls to "move upstream" to understand the macro social structural contexts shaping health and to incorporate gender and socioeconomic status into health disparities research emerge from traditional social science, which has been wedded in critical ways, like the biobehavioral research discussed above, to the biomedical framework. Largely based on survey research where individuals are units of analysis, the research still typically aims to identify the intervening links between social inequalities and individual health—albeit while incorporating more dimensions and measures of social inequality. Statistical problems arising from inadequate sample sizes, however, often limit the ability of such research to actually investigate the ways that race, ethnicity, gender, and social class may interact with one another to produce health outcomes for communities or individuals (Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003). In short, adding new measures may not be enough to adequately assess the impact of socially structured inequalities on health. As Ruzek et al. (1997, p. 22) state, "Grafting psychosocial factors onto biomedical models may lead to incremental improvements in primary prevention, screening, and treatment, but these are not adequate substitutes for providing the prerequisites for health. Nor does such grafting even begin to address women's differences and the complexities of meeting their health needs."

**FEMINIST INTERSECTIONALITY AND HEALTH DISPARITIES.** One critical body of research that has the advantages of being centered both on the intersectional and interactive dynamics of multiple systems of social inequality and on the macro as well as micro power relationships that constitute them is feminist intersectional scholarship. Feminist intersectional scholarship emerged from the voices of African-American and other women of color whose social location at the intersections of multiple systems of oppression made any politic, practice, or scholarship that treats these systems as separate seem absurd. Black women have spoken of this contradiction for a very long time. In a now-classic speech delivered in 1851, Sojourner Truth described the contradictions between her life as an African American and the qualities presumed to be those of women:

That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (Loewenberg and Bogin, 1976, p. 235)

The complexities and contradictions in Black women's lives that Sojourner Truth describes remain relevant, and understanding this "intersectionality" is today a primary concern of feminist scholars across disciplinary, thematic, and scholar-activist boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

Because it emerged from a very different scholarly and social-justice impulse than traditional biomedically driven scholarship on health and health disparities, feminist intersectional scholarship is a good place to look for a fresh critical approach to health science generally and to health disparities research in specific. First, it arose among women of color inside and outside the academy—not from the centers of power in the legitimized halls of academe and government, where women of color's voices are still not well represented. Second, intersectional scholarship arose as a critique of mainstream scholarship and scholarly institutions and of the exclusionary practices of emerging interdisciplinary and critical movements, including women's studies and ethnic studies (e.g., see Baca-Zinn et al., 1986). Consequently, intersectional scholarship benefits from the ways that these critical scholarships opened up new intellectual spaces that allow for different approaches to knowledge and research. Third, it arose primarily to understand and to address the multiple dimensions of social inequality (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, nation, sexuality, and gender) manifest at both the macro level of institutions and the micro level of the individual experiences of people who live "at the intersections" of multiple inequalities. Finally, feminist intersectional scholarship's focus is not narrowly on health but more globally on the constructions of hierarchies of privilege and power across all social institutions, including the economy, family, education, law, religion, and media. As a result, inquiry is not framed by the traditional biomedical emphasis on individuals or individual bodies as units of analysis and as targets of concern.

As a consequence of this very different history and motivation for and approach to research, feminist intersectional scholarship raises critical questions that challenge some of the taken-for-granted assumptions in traditional health disparities research. (For a detailed comparison of these approaches, see Morgen, 2006; Weber, 2006; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003.) Intersectional theory argues that gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class are mutually constitutive, intersecting in the lived experiences of those who occupy and negotiate different social locations in systems of power in the health care system and in the larger society, and that health inequalities are produced by racism, gender inequality, and class relations (Morgen, 2006, p. 398).

Although much intersectional research has centered on concerns such as the economy and labor, education, family, and sexuality, research by feminist health researchers, especially in reproductive health, problematizes and seeks to revise the social construction of health in a more complex and inclusive way (e.g., Clark and Olesen, 1999; Kreiger et al., 1993; Ruzek et al., 1997; Zambrana, 2001). Among other themes, this scholarship

- expands our conception health to incorporate a broad framework of social relations and institutions, not just diseases and disorders, and situates health in communities and families not simply in individual bodies,

---

<sup>2</sup> For example, in a special issue entitled, "Feminisms at the Millennium," of one of the leading journals in women's studies, *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 25(4), 2000, asked 55 former editors, U.S. and international advisory board members, senior and junior scholars spanning the sciences, social sciences and humanities to reflect on anything they wanted to emphasize at the millennium. In those 55 essays, the significance of and need for addressing theoretical, empirical, and activist questions regarding "intersectionality," or stated otherwise as inequality, difference, or diversity" was present in virtually every essay. Further, addressing the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality was also identified as a current "best practice" in feminist scholarship.

- sees power relationships, not just distributional differences, in resources as central to social inequality and health disparities,
- simultaneously addresses the intersections of race and ethnicity with gender, class, socioeconomic status, sexuality, age, rural-urban residence, region, and other markers of social difference,
- embraces interdisciplinarity and multiple methodologies,
- centers research in the lives and perspectives of multiply oppressed groups, particularly women of color,
- sees activism for social justice in health for all people as an integral part of the knowledge acquisition process (cf. Clark and Olesen, 1999; Kreiger et al., 1993; Ruzek et al., 1997; Schulz and Mullings, 2006; Weber, 2006; Zambrana, 2001, 2002).

By challenging traditional approaches and centering the perspectives of multiply oppressed groups, intersectional scholars provide situated knowledge that raises new questions and presents new opportunities for understanding health disparities.

Sandra Morgen recently demonstrated the strengths of an intersectional paradigm for addressing health disparities by contrasting two recent reports on the issue: an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care* (Smedley, Stith, and Nelson, 2003), published by the National Academy of Sciences, and a publication prepared for the National Colloquium on Black Women's Health, an event and publication co-sponsored by the National Black Women's Health Project (NBWHP), the Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust, and the U.S. Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus (National Black Women's Health Project, 2003). The IOM report clearly approaches the question of health disparities from the positivist biomedical framework, while the Colloquium on Black Women's Health takes a feminist intersectional approach.

Morgen (2006) notes three critical problems with the positivist biomedical paradigm in the IOM report, each of which distinguishes it from an intersectional approach:

- (1) the extraction of race/ethnicity from the complex matrix of power relations that characterize and shape inequality in the United States;
- (2) the reduction of structural/systemic inequalities to individual-level problems of bias, stereotyping, and discriminatory behavior;
- and (3) framing issues in a putatively objective, scientific manner that also tends to mute the urgency and mask the human costs of injustice.

In her analysis of the IOM report, Morgen notes that race and ethnicity are extracted from other critical inequalities such as gender and class, which are rarely referenced in the 243 pages of the report—except most commonly when they are reported as variables “controlled for” in studies and therefore eliminated from discussion or analysis. By defining the technique of statistically controlling for other inequalities as a standard for establishing the scientific validity of race and ethnic health disparities, Morgen (2006) points out that “the committee, by definition, could not develop an intersectional analysis.” Further, the focus of the report was set by its Congressional mandate to assess racial and ethnic differences in health care that *are not otherwise due to known factors such as access to care, e.g., the ability to pay or insurance coverage* (Smedley, Stith, and Nelson, 2003, p. 3, emphasis added). This approach set the focus squarely on problems such as bias, stereotypes, and interpersonal discrimination in health care settings and away from the larger structural processes (e.g., institutional racism, classism, sexism) that shape health. And finally, the tone of the report—valuing as it does scientific discourse, which relies on language that sounds objective and grants authority to the speaker because of the perception of professional distance

and the absence of bias—sacrifices the sense of urgency and diminishes the impact of the human costs of oppression.

By contrast, the NCBWH was

organized to explore issues impacting the unequal burdens in health, health care access, and quality of care borne by African American women; to facilitate dialogues and public policy recommendations relative to those issues toward the elimination of racial and gender health disparities among African American women; and to generate a national sense of urgency to address the unequal burden of health issues borne by African American women (National Black Women Health Project, 2003, p. 8).

Morgen (2006) notes that this mission refocused attention on the effects and the experience of inequality. While the IOM report is a compendium of articles summarizing published results from studies operating within the positivist biomedical frame, the NBWHP report relies on biomedical studies but also on many other sources, including research studies that incorporate the experiences of actual women who report how the intersections of racism, sexism, and classism shape their health and that of those around them. The articles move from empirical evidence of health disparities to analysis of the institutionalized structures of inequality. Dr. Maya Rockey Moore, of the National Urban League Institute of Opportunity and Equality, for example, argues that the unequal health burden borne by Black women is centered in a host of converging social policies that have reduced the economic, health, and social safety net in the United States—including changes in welfare policies, food stamps, and social security. Likewise, Dorothy Roberts argues that Black women's reproductive health can be understood only as the historical convergence of a variety of social policies—eugenics, family planning, welfare “reform,” differential opportunities for access to health care coverage—that represent the institutional mechanisms of race, class, gender, and religious inequalities in Black women's lives. As Morgen (2006) notes, the impact of these policies on health disparities are rarely mentioned in the IOM report because they are deemed to be outside the purview of the report.

### **Intersectionality and the Social Construction of Health Disparities: Case Examples**

**HIV/AIDS.** That race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, and nation-based inequalities are socially constructed, intricately intertwined, power relationships that determine health is nowhere more evident than in the case of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has taken over half a million lives in the United States, and which took 3.1 million lives worldwide in 2005 alone (UNAIDS/WHO, 2005).

Because the first cases of AIDS identified in 1981 were among gay men, intravenous drug users, and later Haitians, the illness was attributed to “lifestyle choices,” victims were stigmatized, and diagnosis, prevention, and care were impeded for these and other groups. The threat of contracting the disease through heterosexual contact was largely denied. The perception of AIDS as a “gay white disease” led to the loss of many lives because the government was slow to respond. In 1987, after a six-year silence, President Ronald Reagan used the word “AIDS” in public for the first time. In 1988 the Reagan Administration sent a booklet “Understanding AIDS,” to every household in America, but even then, according to the Centers for Disease Control, the epidemic would not spread widely in the heterosexual population.

Women were invisible in the epidemic. In many studies they were merely seen as “vehicles” or “vectors” of the disease, not its victims. The construction of AIDS based on symptoms and manifestations in men led to defining criteria of the disease that excluded numerous

conditions noted in women, including cervical cancer, pelvic inflammatory disease, and human papillomavirus—until 12 years after the disease was first diagnosed. Since the early 1980s, the face of HIV/AIDS has changed dramatically from a disease that affected White middle-class, gay men to one that disproportionately affects heterosexuals, Blacks, Hispanics, and women in the United States and worldwide. In the United States in 2003, Blacks and Hispanics accounted for 2.5 times more new cases than Whites (30,061 vs. 12,222) even though they constitute only 24.8% of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Further, heterosexual contact now accounts for more new AIDS cases than injection drug use and for almost as many cases as gay-male homosexual contact (Centers for Disease Control, 2005).

Even after scientists and the government moved beyond initial biased conceptions of the disease, lack of knowledge among scientists of different cultural definitions of sex among Hispanic men—where men who engage in male-to-male sex do not see themselves as gay or bisexual—rendered public campaigns targeted to gay men ineffective for these groups. And dominant cultural—White, heterosexual, Christian, and middle class—political forces have controlled knowledge and information that could limit the disease by restricting sexuality education in schools. In short, biased science and its deployment in a social order hierarchically structured by race and ethnicity, as well as by class, gender, and sexuality, led to underdiagnosis, lack of care and treatment, and increased death and burden of disease among less powerful groups—women, racial and ethnic minorities, the poor, and sexual minorities (for discussions of this history, see Teare and English, 1996; Treichler, 1999).

**THE SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF REPRODUCTION.** Leith Mullings and Alaka Wali (2001), in collaboration with other researchers, students, community organizations, activists, and individuals, undertook a multiyear, ethnographic, participatory action research study of the social contexts of reproduction in Central Harlem—specifically of the great disparity in infant mortality rates (more than double) between African American and White women of all classes (Mullings, 2000, 2002; National Center for Health Statistics, 2004; Schoendorf et al., 1992).

The researchers and community participants first grounded their observations in an extensive exploration of the economic, political, and demographic history of the place and of the ways that social groups and inequalities have shaped the current environment. Women's lives were explored in a variety of institutional settings to reveal the meaning of inequality in everyday life:

the ways in which race, class, and gender structure differential access to such resources as employment, housing, recreation, health care, and consequently health, and the structure of constraints and choices within which people operate. (Mullings, 2002, p. 33)

Community participants were key players in virtually all aspects of the research—from defining the problem to using results and shaping their presentation to affect city health policies. By working closely with community members over four years, researchers became aware of the ways that ideological constraints (i.e., controlling images or negative stereotypes) both psychologically and materially produced stress in the everyday lives of the community members. For example, a *New York Times* article on poverty in Harlem during the time the researchers were involved in the community revealed that images of dilapidated buildings that were dirty and unclean served both to reinforce existing negative stereotypes of residents and to justify blaming them for the conditions of their housing. What was not apparent to the journalists—and thus to the readers—was that broken light bulbs had been reported to building supervisors, dirty walls had been scrubbed but sorely needed paint, and residents had repeatedly advocated on behalf of their buildings by taking landlords to housing court.

As Mullings and Wali (2001, p. 54) state:

In addition to the exposures to specific stressors and chronic strain brought on by poor housing conditions, women in tenements and public housing developments also had to expend extensive time and effort to keep their homes safe and clean. The continual representations in the media (much of it inaccurate) of poor people's homes as dirty and unkempt added to their frustration and sense of discrimination.

By engaging in ongoing and close relationships with community members, researchers came to see what most traditional research approaches often miss: the ways that poor African American women resisted the negative controlling images that ultimately serve to justify further negative treatment and the neglect of communities of color. And the researchers were taught the value of presenting community strengths/assets in their presentations to others of descriptive data about the community (e.g., the percentage of residents *not* receiving welfare, *with* college or high school educations, *employed*—not simply the reverse).

In this specific community, researchers learned that the mechanisms through which stressors and strains affecting reproductive health are likely to be found in the struggle to find or to maintain adequate income and benefits and healthful resources such as adequate housing, nutrition, child care, and a safe environment. They put forth the concept of the Sojourner Syndrome to represent the physical, psychological, and emotional toll that these struggles effect in the lives of black women (Mullings and Wali, 2001, p. 162).<sup>3</sup> They describe the Sojourner Syndrome as the negative health effects that result from the beliefs and behavioral strategies that African American women devise to survive in an oppressive and discriminatory social system. The constant stress of trying to improve one's position in a hostile society can result in negative health consequences such as hypertension and infant mortality (Mullings, 2000).

**SMOKING AND PREGNANCY.** One of the major causes of low-birthweight babies and of CVD and other health risks in mothers is smoking. Largely seen as an individual behavior, freely chosen, the causes of smoking among low-income women are little understood. Laury Oaks' (2001) study of the social construction of smoking during pregnancy, however, reveals the ways that power relationships of race, class, and gender shape who smokes, why they smoke, how their smoking is interpreted by others, and the treatment accorded smokers. Dominant cultural explanations for why women smoke during pregnancy either absolve women for responsibility by seeing the smoking as an addiction or hold them fully accountable and judge them as irresponsible, uncaring, and unfit mothers.

---

<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, when the purpose of research is to examine contextually specific, fluid social constructions of race, class, and gender rather than to uncover universal laws governing presumably relatively immutable individual traits, different methodologies are often employed. Specific feminist intersectional methodologies for studying inequality (e.g., research design, data gathering and analysis methods) are not completely unique from methodologies employed in positivist biomedical research—many methods used are in fact the same. Most feminist social scientists now contend that the use of multiple methods makes for the best research, that no particular methodology is either uniquely feminist or not feminist, and decry the binary oppositional construct of qualitative vs. quantitative research (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1993). Yet in practice research methods are labeled feminist more often by researchers “working in interpretive traditions,” and there is little writing about quantitative methods as explicitly feminist (Fonow and Cook, 1991; DeVault, 1999; Weber Cannon et al., 1988). Even still, different approaches to, questions about, and interpretations of quantitative methods are common among scholars who place the experiences of multiply subordinated groups at the center of their work.



Even though White women (16.2%) are more likely than either Black women (9.9%) or Latinas (4%) to smoke during pregnancy (Ventura et al., 2000, p. 54), Oaks found that the most negative attributions were made about young Black mothers—a group otherwise seen as least fit to be mothers. These groups of poor women are most likely to come into contact with state systems of surveillance when they are pregnant (e.g., via Medicare, family social services) and thus are most likely to bear the brunt of any state-sponsored interventions when women are deemed unfit. For example, although smoking has not yet sufficed to convict pregnant women for child abuse, over 200 women in 30 states have been prosecuted since the mid-1980s for practices during pregnancy that were deemed harmful to their fetuses, including drinking, taking drugs, and having sex (Oaks, 2001; Roth, 2000; Woliver, 2002). But in the late 1980s, child custody cases began to admit smoking as evidence of unfit parenting and to revoke custody rights to protect children from unsafe, smoke-filled homes (Oaks, 2001).

By examining smoking in the contexts of these women's lives, however, Oaks (2001) reveals that the phenomenon is not as simple as either an uncontrollable addiction or a voluntary choice would suggest. She finds that it is not income level per se that explains why poor pregnant women smoke—indeed, they find the money to buy cigarettes. Nor is it simply a lack of knowledge—public health campaigns, the health care system, and the political forces of the state have successfully construed smoking as unhealthy and stigmatized the women who smoke—and the women are aware of the implications of their smoking. It is rather the experience of being in subordinate social locations—with their stresses, constraints, and absence of social supports—that characterizes life for these women. And understanding the context and power structures of their lives better enables us to understand the phenomenon of their smoking.

Reminiscent of the contexts of reproduction in the Harlem study (Mullings and Wali, 2001), critical institutional and interpersonal power relationships shape the contexts of pregnancy for these women—producing stresses and constraints for which smoking provides some relief. First, the conditions of work and gender dynamics in the family leave poor women under great stress with little time to rest and restore. For some, smoking is “the only time I get five minutes to myself” (Oaks, 2001, p. 197). Second, many of the women are involved in romantic relationships with partners who smoke and are surrounded by family and friends who smoke. Macro-level policies that have isolated smokers from non-smokers have normalized smoking in some social circles. Finally, while the women recognize the health risks, many do not trust that the “experts” are at all clear about the true risks for individuals. The increased surveillance and control by the health care and legal systems over pregnant women—especially poor women of color—in the name of protecting the rights of fetuses have posed pregnancy as a conflict between mother and fetus that is to be mediated by the state. This adversarial position contributes to a lack of trust, especially among poor women, for whom a designation as “bad mothers” can have dire consequences (Oaks, 2001).

Although the reasons for smoking are varied, they can be understood in the contexts of women's lives and the power relationships within which they live. Poor women who smoke are a seriously stigmatized group. They lack options, choices, and control in the economic, familial, political, and health arenas. They lack the power to set macro policies and precedents that will shape the contexts of their lives. And they lack the power to shape the public interpretation for their smoking. So they are stigmatized as bad mothers, blamed for jeopardizing the health of their unborn children, and denied full access to society's valued resources.

## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE AND ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES

When we move “upstream” to fully integrate macro-structural forces into our understanding of the causes of health and disease and take seriously the intersections of race and ethnicity with other dimensions of social inequality as in feminist intersectional scholarship, then certain strategies for change follow, and the limits of traditional interventions are highlighted.

Mullings and Wali (2001, p. 26) argue that national agencies and institutions—particularly those concerned with health and disease—typically take a social problems approach to health disparities. This approach portrays poor and racial/ethnic communities as pathological, “sick” and “disorganized.” Oppositional behaviors are interpreted as “noncompliant,” “dysfunctional,” or “pathological.” From within this framework, national health agencies and policy makers

are frequently unwilling to accept results that point to long-term structural change. Research emphasizing dysfunctional cultural and individual behavior produces recommendations for “manageable” interventions in the lives of subjects. On the other hand, research designed to illuminate the structures of oppression and the ways in which people resist them frequently points to the need for large-scale societal changes in employment and access to shelter, education, and health care. Though these “rights” are integral to the discourse of international human rights, state institutions are not generally prepared to tackle transformative social change.

To consider long-term structural change in broad social systems is a daunting task, but one that scholars, including intersectional scholars, operating from a social justice framework, see as essential to making any substantial headway on addressing health disparities (Hofrichter, 2003). Otherwise, as has been repeatedly demonstrated, treatments and interventions get introduced to a hierarchical social system wherein those with substantial resources and power are better able to take advantage of them, and health hierarchies get reproduced even as the health status of some is improved. Further, since intersectional researchers take seriously the structural conditions shaping health inequalities, they are much more sanguine about the prospects for “eliminating” health disparities in the foreseeable future. But because of their overt social justice agenda, they may be even more committed to finding effective strategies to challenge and to reduce health disparities. Thus, it is not surprising that most intersectional scholars recognize the necessity of concerted political action as well as of forging alliances across the domains of many groups—policy makers, researchers working from multiple paradigms, grassroots activists, professional organizations, and most importantly, community groups—to bring about the kinds of change necessary to reduce health disparities (Collins, 2000a; Ruzek, 2004; Morgen, 2002; 2006; Mullings and Schulz, 2006; Naples, 2003; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003; Weber, 2006).

As Mullings and Wali (2001) imply, a fundamental part of the process of addressing health disparities lies in reconceptualizing health as a characteristic of societies and a human right. Moving beyond narrow biomedical constructions, which largely view health as the absence of disease, intersectional scholars’ views of health more closely align with the World Health Organization’s (WHO) broader definition of health. The WHO calls for a perspective on health that focuses on the prerequisites for health—what people need to make health possible—freedom from fear of war; equal opportunity for all; satisfaction of basic needs for food, water, and sanitation; education; decent housing; secure work and a useful role in society; and political will and public support (for a more detailed discussion, see Downie Fyfe and Tannahill 1990, p. 62). This broader view of health makes clear that providing the prerequisites for health can both eliminate health disparities and require significant systemic change at the macro level of policies and practices both within and outside health care systems.

The focus on macro-level systemic change also reminds us of the power relationships that shape access to the prerequisites for health and the inevitable conflicts across race, ethnicity, class, and gender that accompany efforts to shift power and resources in the direction of oppressed groups. In intersectional research, directly addressing conflicting interests by highlighting how the health of some is tied to the sickness of others becomes the preferred path to understanding and reducing disparities and to providing for the collective health of a nation and the global community.

Using the Clinton health care reform process in the early 1990s as an example, Ruzek (1999) reveals the underlying values and conflicts in our medical system and even in feminists' positions on it. She unveils the ways in which underlying values of individualism and choice, which emerged as primary themes to spur change through the modern women's health movement of the 1960s and 1970s—and which are widely seen as an ultimate good—hide inequalities and conflict among women because within the employment-based, consumer model of health, issues of individual choice in health care have meaning only to those who have access. Furthermore, couching the debate in terms of individual choices obscures the fact that the current high-dollar, capital intensive, for-profit, and consumer-driven system, which does not provide universal access, is supported by the taxes paid by millions of low-income, uninsured, and underinsured people who have no access to care.

The U.S. health care system also takes funds away from societal investments in other material components of the living and working conditions that actually *produce* health, including education, job training, housing, transportation, and economic development. Ruzek, for example, points out that in 1994 the United States spent 7% of GDP on education and 6% on the military (a popular target for reduction among feminists), while health care expenditures were 14% of GDP—doubling since 1965, a period when education and the military saw little change. These rising costs of health care have been directly responsible for the loss of jobs (and thus health care) among many Americans as well as reductions in coverage among the remaining workers, as employers seek to cut expenditures to meet these costs. She concludes (1999, p. 319) that our society needs to rethink basic values in order to find common ground for a health care system that provides all citizens primary and preventive care “even though this may require rethinking how much we should support costly tertiary care, and a massive biomedical research enterprise that institutionalizes inequalities, unless equal access to the benefits of medical innovations is widely distributed.”

Ruzek (1999) argues that any serious attempts to eliminate disparities in our health care system will have to involve structural solutions more likely to benefit larger groups of people, including separating medical benefits from employment, tempering entitlements, reducing personal choice, and shifting national resources away from highly profitable capital-intensive investments in medical technologies and toward primary and preventive care. She cautions that feminist ideologies of inclusiveness and commitments to extending health and medical care benefits to all women across class and race lines are credible only if they are conceivably attainable (1999, p. 307). Professing commitment to universal access without looking at the fiscal issues involved in enacting such coverage or being willing to give up some measure of convenience or choice as a condition of widening access creates dissonance between ideology and action.

Hard lessons about the conflicting interests across race, class, and gender lines have been learned by intersectional scholars in the work of the women's health movement over the last 35 years. In fact, many feminist intersectional scholars contend that knowledge about social inequality is itself gained in the collaborative process of acting to promote social justice (cf. Collins, 1998, 2000b; DeVault, 1999; Mies, 1983, 1991). In advocating participatory

action research, for example, Maria Mies wrote (1983, p. 125): “Social change is the starting point of science, and in order to understand the content, form, and consequences of patriarchy, the researcher must be actively involved in the fight against it; one has to change something before it can be understood.” The women’s health movement has been a testing ground for interracial, multi-ethnic, cross-class, and sexually diverse efforts to bring about broad structural changes in our nation’s health that benefit women across race, class, ethnic, and sexual lines. The lessons learned in the movement have been critical to developing intersectional theory as the complexity of these power relationships was revealed in efforts to change them (Morgen, 2002).

The social movements of the Civil Rights Era have demonstrated both the possibility of change for justice and the long-range difficulty of sustaining and building on that change (cf. Mullings, 2005; Morgen, 2002, 2006; Naples, 2003; Omi and Winant, 1994; Ruzek and Becker, 1999). One clear message that has emerged from intersectional scholars’ understandings of this history and their own involvement in activist scholarship is that effective research and policy for the future—in health and other arenas—will depend on our ability to develop strong, principled alliances and coalitions (Collins, 2000a; Ruzek, 2004; Morgen, 2002, 2006; Mullings and Schulz, 2006; Naples, 2003; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003; Weber, 2006). In the conclusions of her book on the women’s health movement, Sandra Morgen (2002, p. 236) looks to the future and calls for “a movement that is politically sophisticated, racially and class inclusive, vibrant, adaptable, and willing to nourish alliances with other movements and organizations that envision a more just and equitable society.”

Ruzek and Becker (1999) specifically call for alliances between grass-roots health movement groups and the professionalized women’s health equity organizations (e.g., disease-focused groups such as those for breast cancer and AIDS that are more closely tied to the biomedical paradigm) that have arisen since the 1990s.

If we hope to develop a more equitable and engaged scholarship and practice to eliminate health disparities, we must also promote a more inclusive intellectual landscape to support alliances, dialogue, and collaboration across intersectional, critical public health, and biomedically derived paradigms. These coalitions will involve scholars with a justice agenda who may be working from different disciplinary approaches as well as community groups whose engagement is necessary to sharpen the critique of the status quo, to improve scholarship, and to identify paths to effective activism and change.

Several areas show promise for building and sustaining effective, principled coalitions for social justice. Recent reports of the Institute of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, while still quite different in approach from feminist intersectional approaches, call for changes to the traditional biomedical paradigm in health research, policy, and education—changes that converge with key elements of both intersectional and other critical social science paradigms. Recent IOM and NIH reports have called for

- an ecological approach to health research, policy, and education that incorporates “upstream” factors such as social contexts and public policies even in sectors beyond health that nonetheless shape it, such as law, economy, education, media,
- community-based collaborative research,
- multilevel, multi-method (including qualitative and quantitative methods), interdisciplinary research (IOM 1998, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; NIH 2000, 2001, 2004; Smedley, Stith, and Nelson, 2002; Smedley and Syme, 2000).

To some extent, these calls reflect the impact on dominant health research institutions of feminist, racial/ethnic, and other alternative, justice-oriented public health approaches to

health disparities that differ in significant ways from the biomedical paradigm: ecological (Bent, 2003; McLeroy et al., 1988; Glanz et al., 1995; Parra-Medina and Fore, 2004), technoscience (Clarke and Olesen, 1999; Shim 2002), social capital (Wallack, 2000), community-based participatory research (Israel et al., 1998; McLeroy et al., 2003; Merzel and D’Afflitti, 2003; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003; Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1988; Wallerstein and Sanchez-Merki, 1994), and social justice (Hofrichter, 2003).

One common theme in these alternative approaches is that they shift the focus of attention away from individual bodies as primary loci of health and biomedical research as the best way to understand and improve a nation’s health. Instead, they attend to the social production and construction of health and illness, public health issues, and social equity in access to health care, education, and other determinants of health. Additionally, these critical perspectives share an awareness of and engagement with the power dynamics at play in the knowledge production and health promotion institutions.

In conclusion, efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, class, gender, and sexual health inequalities will require a thorough understanding of the ways that these systems of social inequality are constructed both inside and outside health. Social transformation efforts must focus on systems that shape the prerequisites for health, not simply on the treatments for illnesses and disease. And principled coalitions—including across multiple scholarly traditions aimed at promoting social justice—must be forged to shift the balance of power toward promoting and sustaining health for the entire population, not just for the ever-shrinking group who have access to the conditions of health and health care.

## REFERENCES

- Adler, N. E., and Newman, K. “Socioeconomic Disparities in Health: Pathways and Policies.” *Health Affairs*, 2002, 21(2): 60–76.
- Allison, D. B., Fontaine, K. R., Manson, J. E., Stevens, J., and Van Itallie, T. B. “Annual Deaths Attributable to Obesity in the United States.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1999, 282:1530–1538.
- American Heart Association. *Heart and Stroke Statistical Update: 1999*. Dallas, TX: Author, 2000.
- Anderson, R. N., and Smith, B. L. “Deaths: Leading Causes for 2001.” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 2003, 52(9):1–86.
- Baca-Zinn, M., and Dill, B. T. “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism.” *Feminist Studies*, 1996, 22(2):321–333.
- Bent, K. N. “The People Know What They Want: An Empowerment Process of Sustainable Ecological Community Health.” *Advances in Nursing Science*, 2003, 26(3):215–226.
- Bird, C. “Gender, Household Labor, and Psychological Distress: The Impact of the Amount and Division of Housework.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 1999, 40:32–45.
- Braun, L. “Race, Ethnicity, and Health: Can Genetics, Explain Disparities?” *Perspectives in Biological Medicine*, 2002, 45:159–174.
- Breen, N. “Social Discrimination and Health: Understanding Gender and Its Interaction with Other Social Determinants” [<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/Hupapers/gender/breen.html>] Oct. 2001.
- Bullers, S. “Women’s Roles and Health: The Mediating Effect of Perceived Control.” *Women and Health*, 1994, 22(2):11–30.
- Carlisle, D. M., Leake, B. D., and Shapiro, M. F. “Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Use of Invasive Cardiac Procedures among Cardiac Patients in Los Angeles County, 1986 through 1988.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 1995, 85(3):352–356.
- Carter-Pokras, O., and Baquet, C. “What Is a Health Disparity?” *Public Health Reports*, 2002, 117:426–434.
- Casper, M. L., Barnett, E., Halverson, J. A., Elmes, G. A., Braham, V. E., Majeed, Z. A., et al. *Women and Heart Disease: An Atlas of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mortality (2nd edition)*. Morgantown, WV: Office for Social Environment and Health Research, West Virginia University, 1999.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 2004*, Vol. 16. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005. Also available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/stats/hasrlink.htm>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The Burden of Chronic Diseases and Their Risk Factors: National and State Perspectives 2004a*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004a.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (producer). *Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Online]*, 2004b. Available online from: <http://www.cdc.gov/nipc/wisqars/default.htm> (accessed June 21, 2004).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Smoking-Attributable Mortality and Years of Potential Life Lost—United States, 1990." *MMWR*, 1993, 42(33):645–648.
- Clarke, A., and Olesen, V. (eds.) *Revisioning Women, Health, and Healing: Feminist, Cultural, and Technoscience Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Cleeland, C. S., Gonin, R., Baez, L., Loehrer, P., and Pandya, K. J. "Pain and Treatment of Pain in Minority Patients with Cancer. The Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group Minority Outpatient Pain Study." *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 1997, 127, 9:813–816.
- Collins, P. H. *Black Feminist Thought. Second Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2000a.
- Collins, P. H. "Moving Beyond Gender: Intersectionality and Scientific Knowledge." In M. M. Ferree, J. Lorber, and B. Hess (eds.), *Revisioning Gender* (pp. 261–284). New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2000b.
- Collins, P. H. *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Cook-Deegan, R., *The Gene Wars: Science, Politics, and the Human Genome*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1994.
- Cooper, R. S., Kaufman, J. S., and Ward, R. "Race and Genomics." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2003, 348:1166–1170.
- DeVault, M. L. *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999.
- Downie, R. S., Fyfe, C., and Tannahill, A. *Health Promotion Models and Values*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Eberhardt, M. S., Ingram, D. D., and Makuc, D. M. "Urban and Rural Health Chartbook." *Health, United States, 2001*. Hyattsville, MD: NCHS, 2001.
- Fine, M. J. "The Role of Race and Genetics in Health Disparities Research." *American Journal of Public Health*, 2005, 95(12):2125–2128.
- Ford, E., Newman, J., and Deosaransingh, K. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Use of Cardiovascular Procedures: Findings from the California Cooperative Cardiovascular Project." *American Journal of Public Health*, 2000, 90:1128–1134.
- Glanz, K., Lankenau, B., Foerster, S., Temple, S., Mullis, R., and Schmid, T. "Environmental and Policy Approaches to Cardiovascular Disease Prevention through Nutrition: Opportunities for State and Local Action." *Health Education Quarterly*, 1995, 22(4):512–527.
- Goff, D. J. Jr., Nichaman, M. Z., Ramsey, D. J., Meyer, P. S., and Labarthe, D. R. "A Population Based Assessment of the Use and Effectiveness of Thrombolytic Therapy. The Corpus Christi Heart Project." *Annals of Epidemiology*, 1995, 5(3):171–178.
- Hofrichter, R. "The Politics of Health Inequities: Contested Terrain." In Hofrichter, R. (ed.), *Health and Social Justice: Politics, Ideology, and Inequity in the Distribution of Disease* (pp. 1–56). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- House, J. S. "Understanding Social Factors and Inequalities in Health: 20th Century Progress and 21st Century Prospects." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 2002, 43(2):125–142.
- House, J. S., and Williams, D. R. "Understanding and Reducing Socioeconomic and Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health." In B. D. Smedley and S. L. Syme, *Promoting Health: Interventions Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research* (pp. 81–124). Washington, DC: 284 National Academy Press, 2000.
- Institute of Medicine. *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*. B. A. Smedley, A. Y. Stith, and A. R. Nelson (eds). Committee on Understanding and Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care, Board on Health Sciences Policy, 2003.
- Institute of Medicine. *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*. Committee on Assuring the Health of the Public in the 21st Century. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 2002.
- Israel, B. A., Shulz, A. J., Parker, E. A., and Becker, A. B. "Review of Community-based Research: Assessing Partnership Approaches to Improve Public Health." *Annual Review of Public Health*, 1998, 19:173–202.
- Johnson, C. L., and Sempos, C. T. "Socioeconomic Status and Biomedical, Lifestyle, and Psychosocial Risk Factors for CVD: Selected US National Data and Trends." *Report of the Conference on Socioeconomic Status and CVD Health and Disease, November 6–7*. USDHHS-PHS-NIH-NHLBI, 1995.

- Kaiser Family Foundation. *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Women's Health Coverage and Access to Care: Findings from the 2001 Kaiser Women's Health Survey*. Issue Brief, March 2004.
- Kneipp, S. M., and Drevdahl, D. "Problems with Parsimony in Research on Socioeconomic Determinants of Health." *Advances in Nursing Science*, 2003, 26(3):162–172.
- Kochanek, K. D., Murphy, S. L., Anderson, R. N., and Scott, C. "Deaths: Final Data for 2002." *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 53, no. 5. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.
- Krieger, N. "Stormy Weather: Race, Gene Expression, and the Science of Health Disparities," *American Journal of Public Health*, 2005, 95(12):2155–2160.
- Krieger, N. "Embodying Inequality: A Review of Concepts, Measures, and Methods for Studying Health Consequences of Discrimination." *International Journal of Health Services*, 1999, 29(2):295–353.
- Krieger, N., and Fee, E. "Man-Made Medicine and Women's Health: The Biopolitics of Sex/Gender and Race/Ethnicity." *International Journal of Health Services*, 1994a, 24(1):265–283.
- Krieger, N., and Fee, E. "Social Class: The Missing Link in US Health Data." *International Journal of Health Services*, 1994b, 24(1):25–44.
- Krieger, N., Rowley, D., Herman, A., Avery, B., and Phillips, M. "Racism, Sexism, and Social Class: Implications for Studies of Health, Disease, and Well-Being." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 1993, 9(6, supplement): 82–122.
- Krieger, N., Williams, D. R., and Moss, N. E. "Measuring Social Class in US Public Health Research: Concepts, Methodologies, and Guidelines." *Annual Review of Public Health*, 1997, 18:341–378.
- Kuczmarski, R. L., and Flegal, K.M. "Criteria for Definition of Overweight in Transition: Background and Recommendations for the United States." *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2000, 72:1074–1081.
- Lantz, P. M., House, J. S., Lepkowski, J. M., Williams, D. R., Mero, R. P., and Chen, J. "Socioeconomic Factors, Health Behaviors, and Mortality." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1998, 279:1703–1708.
- Lee, S. S., Mountain, J., and Koenig, B. A. "The Meanings of 'Race' in the New Genomics: Implications for Health Disparities Research." *Yale Journal of Health Policy Law Ethics*, 2001, Spring (1):33–75.
- Link, B. G., and Phelan, J. C. "Evaluating the Fundamental Cause Explanation for Social Disparities in Health." In C. Bird, P. Conrad, and A. M. Fremont (eds.), *Handbook of Medical Sociology (5th ed.)* (pp. 33–46). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000.
- Link, B. G., and Phelan, J. C. "Understanding Sociodemographic Differences in Health: The Role of Fundamental Causes." *American Journal of Public Health*, 1996, 86:471–473.
- Link, B. G., and Phelan, J. C. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 1995 (extra issue):80–94.
- Loewenberg, B. J., and Bogin, R. (eds.) *Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976.
- Matthews, S., Hertzman, C., Ostry, A., and Power, C. "Gender, Work Roles, and Psychosocial Work Characteristics as Determinants of Health." *Social Science and Medicine*, 1998, 46:1417–1424.
- McGinnis, J. M., and Foege, W. H. "Actual Causes of Death in the United States." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1993, 270:2207–2212.
- McLeroy, D. R., Norton, B. L., Kegler, M. C., Burdine, J. N., and Sumaya, C. V. "Community-based Interventions." *American Journal of Public Health*, 2003, 93(4):529–533.
- McLeroy, K. R., Bibeau, D., Steckler, A., and Glanz, K. "An Ecological Perspective on Health Promotion Programs." *Health Education Quarterly*, 1988, 15(4):351–377.
- Merzel, C., and D'Afflitti, J. "Reconsidering Community-based Health Promotion: Promise, Performance, and Potential." *American Journal of Public Health*, 2003, 93(4):557–574.
- Mies, M. "Women's Research or Feminist Research? The Debate Surrounding Feminist Science and Methodology." In J. Cook, and M. M. Fonow (eds.), *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research* (pp. 60–84). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Mies, M. "Towards a Methodology for Feminist Research." In G. Bowles and R. D. Klein (eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies* (pp. 117–139), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
- Minkler, M., and Wallerstein, N. (eds.) *Community-based Participatory Research for Health*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Mokdad, A. H., Marks, J. S., Stroup, D. F., and Gerberding, J. L. "Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2004, 291:1238–1245.
- Mokdad, A. H., Serdula, M. K., Dietz, W. H., Bowman, B. A., Marks, J. S., and Koplan, J. P. "The Spread of Obesity Epidemic in the United States, 1991–1998." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1999, 282:1519–1522.

- Morgen, S. "Movement Grounded Theory: Analysis of Health Inequities in the United States." In L. Mullings and A. Schulz (eds.), *Race, Class, Gender and Health* (pp. 394–423), San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Morgen, S. *Into Our Own Hands: The Women's Health Movement in the United States 1969–1990*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Mullings, L. "African-American Women Making Themselves: Notes on the Role of Black Feminist Research." *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, 2000, 2(4):18–29.
- Mullings, L. "The Sojourner Syndrome: Race, Class, and Gender in Health and Illness." *Voices*, 2002 (December): 32–36.
- Mullings, L., and Wali, A. *Stress and Resilience: The Social Context of Reproduction in Central Harlem*. New York: Kluwer Academic, 2001.
- Mullings, L. "Interrogating Racism: Toward an Antiracist Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 2005, 34:667–693.
- Must, A., Spadano, J., Coakley, E. H., Field, A. E., Colditz, G., and Dietz, W. H. "The Disease Burden Associated with Overweight and Obesity." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1999, 282:1523–1529.
- Naples, N. *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2003.
- National Women's Health Project. Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust, and U.S. Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus. *National Colloquium on Black Women's Health*. Washington, DC: Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust and U.S. Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus, April 2003.
- National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 2005 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans*. Hyattsville, MD, 2005.
- National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 2004 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans*. Hyattsville, MD, 2004.
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDKD). "National Diabetes Statistics Fact Sheet: General Information and National Estimates on Diabetes in the United States, 2005." Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, 2005.
- National Institutes of Health/Office of Women's Health Research. *FY 2006 NIH Research Priorities for Women's Health*, 2006.
- National Institutes of Health/Office of Behavioral and Social Science Report. *Towards Higher Levels of Analysis: Progress and Promise in Research on Social and Cultural Dimensions of Health: Executive Summary*. Washington, DC: NIH Publication No. 21–5020, September 2001.
- National Institutes of Health and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults*. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, 1998, p. 23.
- Navarro, V. "Race or Class Versus Race and Class: Mortality Differentials in the United States." *The Lancet*, 1990, 342:1238–1240.
- Ng, B., Dimsdale, J. E., Rollnik, J. D., and Shapiro, H. "The Effect of Ethnicity on Prescriptions for Patient-Controlled Analgesia for Post-Operative Pain." *Pain*, 1996, 66(1):9–12.
- Oaks, L. *Smoking and Pregnancy: The Politics of Fetal Protection*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.
- Parra-Medina, D., and Fore, E. "Behavioral Studies." In B. M. Beech and M. Goodmand (eds.), *Race and Research* (pp. 101–112), Washington, DC: American Public Health Association, 2004.
- Omi, M., and Winant, H. *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Pavalko, E. K., and Woodbury, S. "Social Roles as Process: Caregiving Careers and Women's Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 2000, 41:91–105.
- Robert, S. A., and House, J. S. "Socioeconomic Inequalities in Health: Integrating Individual-, Community-, and Societal-Level Theory and Research." In G. L. Albrecht, R. Fitzpatrick, and S. C. Scrimshaw (eds.), *Handbook of Social Studies in Health and Medicine* (pp. 115–135), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2000.
- Roth, R. *Making Women Pay: The Hidden Cost of Fetal Rights*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Rothman, B. K. *Genetic Maps and Human Imagination: The Limits of Science in Understanding Who We Are*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.
- Ruzek, S. "How Might the Women's Health Movement Shape National Agendas on Women and Aging?" *Women's Health Issues*, 2004, 14:112–114.
- Ruzek, S. "Rethinking Feminist Ideologies and Actions: Thoughts on the Past and Future of Health Reform." In A. Clarke & V. Olesen (eds.), *Revisoning Women, Health, and Healing: Feminist, Cultural, and Technoscience Perspectives* (pp. 303–323), New York: Routledge, 1999.



- Ruzek, S., and Becker, J. "The Women's Health Movement in the U.S: From Grassroots Activism to Professional Agendas." *Journal of American Medical Women's Association*, 1999, 54(1):4–8.
- Ruzek, S., Clarke, A., and Olesen, V. "What Are the Dynamics of Difference?" In S. Ruzek, V. Olesen, and A. Clarke (eds.), *Women's Health: Complexities and Differences* (pp. 51–95), Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1997.
- Ruzek, S., Olesen, V., and Clarke, A. (eds.) *Women's Health: Complexities and Differences*, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1997.
- Schoendorf, K. C. et al., Mortality Among Infants of Black as Compared to White College-Educated Parents, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 1992, 326:1522–1526.
- Schulz, A. J., and Mullings, L. (eds.). *Gender, Race, Class, and Health: Intersectional Approaches*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Shim, J. "Understanding the Routinized Inclusion of Race, Socioeconomic Status and Sex in Epidemiology: The Utility of Concepts from Technoscience Studies." *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 2002, 24(2):129–150.
- Smedley, B. D., and Syme, S. L. (eds.). Institute of Medicine Report. *Promoting Health: Intervention Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
- Smedley, B. D., Stith, A. Y., and Nelson, A. R. (eds.) Institute of Medicine Report. *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2002.
- Smith, S. *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America, 1890–1950*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.
- Sorlie, P. D., Johnson, N. J., and Backlund, E. "Socioeconomic Status and Cardiovascular Disease Mortality: National Longitudinal Mortality Study." In *Report of the Conference on Socioeconomic Status and Cardiovascular Health and Disease, November 6–7, 1995*, USDHHS-PHS-NIH-NHLBI (pp. 23–26), 1995.
- Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program ([www.seer.cancer.gov](http://www.seer.cancer.gov)) SEER\*Stat Database: Mortality - All COD, Public-Use With State, Total U.S. (1969–2002), National Cancer Institute, DCCPS, Surveillance Research Program, Cancer Statistics Branch, released April 2005. Underlying mortality data provided by NCHS ([www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs)).
- Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program ([www.seer.cancer.gov](http://www.seer.cancer.gov)) SEER\*Stat Database: Incidence - SEER 9 Regs Public-Use, Nov 2004 Sub (1973–2002), National Cancer Institute, DCCPS, Surveillance Research Program, Cancer Statistics Branch, released April 2005, based on the November 2004 submission.
- Swanson, N. G., Piotrkowski, C. S., Keita, G. P., and Becker, A. B. "Occupational Stress and Women's Health". In S. J. Gallant, G. P. Keita, and R. Royak-Schaler (eds.), *Health Care for Women: Psychological, Social, and Behavioral Influences* (pp. 147–159), Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1997.
- Teare, C., and English, A. "Women, Girls, and the HIV Epidemic." In K. L. Moss (ed.), *Man-Made Medicine: Women's Health, Public Policy, and Reform* (pp. 123–160), Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Treichler, P. A. *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 Redistricting (Public Law 94–171) Summary File, Tables PL1 and PL2.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS). *Morbidity and Mortality: 2002 Chartbook on Cardiovascular, Lung, and Blood Diseases* (pp. 5–14), USDHHS-PHS-NIH-NHLBI, May 2002.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General, 2001.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health, 2nd ed.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000.
- UNAIDS/WHO. *AIDS Epidemic Update*: December 2005. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) World Health Organization (WHO), 2005, [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org).
- Ventura, S. J., Martin, J. A., Curtin, S. C., Mathews, and Park, M. M. *Births: Final Data for 1998. National Vital Statistics Report 48(3)*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2000.
- Waldron, I., Weiss, C. C., and Hughes, M. E. "Interacting Effects of Multiple Roles on Women's Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 1998, 39:216–236.
- Wallack, L. "The Role of Mass Media in Creating Social Capital: A New Direction for Public Health." In B. D. Smedley and S. L. Syme (eds.), *Promoting Health: Intervention Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research* (pp. 337–365), Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
- Wallerstein, N., and Bernstein, E. "Empowerment Education—Freirian Ideas Adapted to Health Education." *Health Education Quarterly*, 1988, 15(4):379–394.

- Wallerstein, N., and Sanchez-Merki, V. "Freirian-Praxis in Health Education—Research Results from an Adolescent Prevention Program." *Health Education Research*, 1994, 9(1):105–118.
- Weber, L. "Reconstructing the Landscape of Health Disparities Research: Promoting Dialogue and Collaboration between the Feminist Intersectional and Positivist Biomedical Traditions." In L. Mullings and A. Schulz (eds.), *Race, Class, Gender and Health* (pp. 21–59), San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Weber, L., and Parra-Medina, D. "Intersectionality and Women's Health: Charting a Path to Eliminating Health Disparities." In V. Demos and M. T. Segal (eds.), *Advances in Gender Research: Gender Perspectives on Health and Medicine* (pp. 181–230), Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2003.
- Weisman, C. S. *Women's Health Care: Activist Traditions and Institutional Change*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Whitehead, M. *The Concepts and Principles of Equity and Health*. WHO/EURO, 1991.
- Williams, D. R. "Racial/Ethnic Variations in Women's Health: The Social Imbeddedness of Health." *American Journal of Public Health*, 2002, 92(4):588–597.
- Williams, D. R. "Race and Health: Basic Questions, Emerging Directions." *Annals of Epidemiology*, 1997, 7(5):322–333.
- Williams, D. R. "Socioeconomic Differential in Health: A Review and Redirection." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 1990, 53:31–99.
- Woliver, L. *The Political Geographies of Pregnancy*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Zambrana, R. E. "Improving Access and Quality for Ethnic Minority Women: Panel Discussion." *Women's Health Issues*, 2001, 11(4):354–359.
- Zambrana, R. E. "A Research Agenda on Issues Affecting Poor and Minority Women: A Model for Understanding Their Health Needs." *Women and Health*, 1987, Winter:137–160.

## CHAPTER 13

# What Would a Racial Democracy Look Like?

PETER KIVISTO

The nation-building projects in the modern world, whether they are nations located at the world system's core or periphery, entail coming to terms with ethnic and racial heterogeneity. For scholars, it is necessary to examine carefully the historically contingent processes at play in the construction of what Spickard (2005) calls "ethnic systems" and others, following the lead of Omi and Winant (1986), refer to as "racial formations." Whatever the language that one might prefer, the common thread linking them is the understanding, as Spickard (2005: 2) puts it, that "*race is about power, and it is written on the body*" (italics added for emphasis). In this chapter, I will argue that, as applied to the United States, the idea—indeed, the ideal—of a racial democracy can be a valuable analytic tool in understanding the implications of Spickard's statement. Insofar as this is the case, what is being proposed herein is the importation of a term from Latin America to the United States, ironically perhaps because in its earliest articulations it was intended to distinguish the racial dynamics of Brazil in particular and other Latin American nations in general from the United States. Simply put, a racial democracy can be defined for our purposes as a racially diverse nation that is not characterized by racial inequality.

Central to any discussion of democracy is citizenship, for it is by virtue of being a citizen that people are accorded membership in a polity that entails an admixture of rights and obligations. It is as citizens that they are in a position to make claims on the political system. In making this case I will explore two distinct but nonetheless interrelated matters. The first involves the question of who is to be included among the ranks of citizens and, the reverse side of the coin, who is to be excluded. The second claim involves the matter of the terms or the modes of inclusion. Although there is considerable overlap between these two topics, it is also true that, in terms of both public discourse and scholarly agendas, the first received substantially more attention until about 1970, while, with the rise of multiculturalism thereafter, the second has become a major theme (Kivisto 2005).

As such, the first topic requires a look to the past, while the second more explicitly and evidently concerns the present and its implications for the future. This examination of the past is not intended to offer anything resembling a comprehensive historical overview of the processes of exclusion or the movements aimed at advancing the cause of expanding inclusion. Rather its purpose is to indicate in what ways inclusion in the former sense of the term

remains an unrealized goal and to understand the relevance of inclusion for the emergence of multiculturalism as a new mode of societal incorporation.

The democratic cultures that shaped the nations of Western Europe and North America, certainly by the 18th century, revived and redefined the idea of citizenship. This involved at the philosophical level inheriting and embracing elements of citizenship's ancient origins in the Greek city-state and in the Roman Empire, while at the same time at the political level repudiating and replacing the autocratic model of subjecthood that characterized the feudal era with the idea of the citizen as an active agent in political decision-making. It also held out the conviction that the status of the citizen *qua* citizen was an equal to all other citizens in spite of inequalities of wealth. At its core, despite nation-specific variations, the citizen was seen as an independent or free person engaged in the process of self-rule. Skinner (1998: 74) describes the system of self-rule as one "in which the sole power of making laws remains with the people or their accredited representatives, and in which all individual members of the body politic—rulers and citizens alike—remain equally subject to whatever laws they choose to impose on themselves." Kerber (1997: 34) concurs with this definition while stressing: "'Citizen' is an equalizing word. It carries with it the activism of Aristotle's definition—one who rules and is ruled in turn."

The role of citizen came to constitute the central mode of belonging to the nation. It is thus implicated in the construction of modern conceptions of nationality. For this reason, the distinction between citizens and noncitizens, those who were for one reason or another excluded from full membership as citizens in these societies, served as a significant and consequential differential mark of identity (Heater 2004). It spoke to who could and who could not take part in the ongoing process of self-rule. The idea of full membership is crucial here insofar as while in some instances it was possible to distinguish the citizen from the alien, in other instances the distinction is not quite so clear, as the idea of denizens attests.

What does the idea of full membership suggest? Likewise, what do we mean when we speak about second-class citizens? In other words, what do these adjectives tell us about those individuals who are in some ways members of a nation-state, but lack something possessed by those for whom the second adjective is not attached to their citizenship status? This can be answered by considering one of the three crucial features that characterize the democratic political process. The three are (1) the right to participate in the public sphere, (2) limitations on the power of government over the individual, and (3) a system based on the rule of law. The latter two elements speak to the framework in which citizens participate in the democratic process as equals. Those who do not possess full membership but are regarded as second-class citizens are permanent residents of the nation who do not have the right to participate in the political process as equals. Such individuals are not permitted to vote, to engage in policy making, to run for elective office, and the like. They possess formal, but not substantive, citizenship. Although their identities may be different from aliens, they share much in common insofar as both are denied certain fundamental rights that accrue to those possessing full membership in the society (Marshall 1964; Kivisto 2004).

## THE DIALECTIC OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

The principal fault lines used to define the boundaries of inclusion versus exclusion have historically been based on three major social divisions: class, gender, and race. And though much has changed, these divisions remain salient—and indeed tend to be intersecting. During

the formative period of these fledging democracies, the privileged white, property-owning male citizens were intent on disqualifying a majority of the nation's residents from citizenship rights. Confronted with a disjunction between the egalitarian ideals of democratic theory and the desire to exclude from full societal membership certain categories of persons who did not share their class, gender, or racial identities, they responded by erecting ideological justifications for exclusionary policies that resulted in, to borrow the language of Parkin (1979: 44–73), “social closure as exclusion.” For their part, the white working class, women, and nonwhites responded, always in difficult circumstances and with varying degrees of success, by creating social movements aimed at acquiring the political voice that had been denied them.

Race and gender constituted the two most significant limitations inscribed on the universalistic values of Enlightenment thinkers. This was evident in the varied social constructions of nation-specific definitions of citizenship during the 18th and 19th centuries. Although there was a universal character to citizenship status for all who possessed it, the general tendency was to deny membership to certain categories of people not only based on certain moral defects or defects of character (criminals and the insane), but on the ascribed identities of race and gender. Thus the universal citizen was invariably a circumscribed identity insofar as it was only available to white males. As Glenn (2002: 21) has pointed out, the argument for constructing this boundary rested to large extent on the public–private and the independent–dependent dichotomies. Both loomed large in the rationales for the exclusion of women from the ranks of citizens. In the case of race, the public–private was less evident, while the idea of independence–dependence was central.

This could be seen in countries such as Germany that historically operated with a *jus sanguinis* conception of national identity. Underpinning this exclusionary policy was the racist belief that various non-German ethnic groups were incapable of the independence required of citizens. While useful as manual laborers, they were not capable of participating in collective self-rule. Such a conception shaped Germany from the founding of the modern state in 1871 until a new citizenship law was passed in 1999, thereby ending one of Europe's most exclusionary citizenship policies (Kivisto 2002: 169). While in effect, the previous law prevented those who entered Germany due to labor shortages from becoming citizens, whether they were Slavs working in East German agriculture a century ago, or Turks and Yugoslavs doing the nation's dirty, difficult, and dangerous work today. Germany was clearly not alone among the ethnonational civic regimes, but it did serve as a paradigmatic instance of this particular type.

One can find a parallel resistance to inclusionary policies in other societies that did not embrace an explicitly ethnonational definition of national identity, defining nationalism in civic rather than ethnic terms. For example, although the republican ideals of France ought to have made that nation far more open to absorbing diverse peoples into its ranks, provided they embraced the ideals of the republic, in practice France's civic nationalism was far from universal in its willingness to accept the racial other (Brubaker 1992). One could see a similar racial exclusion in operation in settler societies. Australia, due to its status as part of the British Empire, at first viewed those eligible for citizenship as being limited only to British subjects. This was transformed into a whites-only policy until the 1960s, after which time the nation became more receptive to redefining who was eligible for citizenship. Henceforth, the battle pitting those advocating an open society versus those promoting a restrictive version of national identity increasingly took place over immigration policy (Kivisto 2002: 109–112; Pearson 2001). In the end labor shortages became sufficiently acute that economic considerations won out over the opposition of cultural conservatives. Coincident with changes in

naturalization policies regarding immigrants was a change in the relationship of the state to Aboriginal peoples who had long been excluded from citizenship. Originally treated as wards of the state, it was not until the passage of the 1948 National and Citizenship Act that all Aboriginals were defined as citizens, and only after a 1967 referendum were they granted the right to vote in federal elections.

Thus, racial exclusion shaped citizenship regimes widely. However, nowhere was its impact more consequential than in the United States, and for that reason this particular case is of unique importance in understanding racial exclusion. Judith Shklar (1991) is not alone in arguing that the existence of chattel slavery in a presumably democratic nation more than anything else shaped the ways Americans thought about race and racial exclusion. Shklar writes that she had not “forgotten how ungenerous and bigoted immigration and naturalization policies have often been, but [she argues] their effects and defects pale before the history of slavery and its impact upon our public attitudes” (Shklar 1991: 14). Indeed, the way that blacks were defined vis-à-vis the issue of citizenship served to frame the way that other groups defined as racially distinct were located in the scheme of things, as will be seen below in surveying the history of immigrant groups seeking citizenship.

Between independence and the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the United States operated with a rather ill-defined conception of national independence. The states possessed considerable latitude in determining both who was and who was not eligible for citizenship, but also in defining the precise rights accruing to citizens. However, the Constitution did divide the nation’s population into three categories: those defined as “the people,” who were presumably candidates for citizenship; Indians, who were viewed as permanent aliens residing within the nation because they were members of tribal governments that had relations to the United States similar to the relations with foreign nations; and, finally, “others” referred to black slaves. In this scenario, Indians as members of various tribes and black slaves were treated as ineligible to become citizens (Ringer 1983). Feagin (2006: 279) points out that enshrined in the U.S. Constitution were provisions that insured that democracy was not available to all people, and nowhere in the document was there “recognition of the humanity or rights of” African slaves.

However, there were ambiguities contained in this formulation, not the least of which had to do with the status of free people of color. Particularly in the wake of the American Revolution, when as Bailyn (1967: 60) put it, a “contagion of liberty” swept the new republic, free blacks pressed for the right to become citizens. Glenn (2002: 32–33) has described their situation during the latter part of the 18th century as follows:

More generally, blacks, especially free blacks, had fewer explicit restrictions on their rights at the beginning of the [19th] century than by mid-century. Indeed, there was a brief period after the Revolution when some blacks were able to realize in a small way the status and rights of citizens. Blacks themselves had seized the initiative during the Revolution, taking advantage of the upheaval to escape from bondage . . . . In sum, though far from enjoying equality, for the first quarter-century after the Revolution free blacks were conceded to be citizens of a sort, and in many states could vote on the same terms as whites.

During this period, an extremely small minority of blacks, who were not only free people of color but also owned property, managed to achieve a second-class version of citizenship. But as Glenn (2002) and Wilentz (2005) have noted, even this limited access to citizenship eroded as the nation got closer to the Civil War. It was only in the aftermath of the war that blacks were formally accorded the rights to citizenship. In 1865, the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, while in the following year the Fourteenth Amendment granted citizenship to all blacks and required equal treatment of all citizens under both federal and state laws, and the Fifteenth Amendment forbade denying the right to vote on the basis of race.

During Reconstruction, African Americans vigorously asserted their new political status. In the first place, they voted. But more than going to the polls, they entered the political process by running for office at the local, state, and federal levels. Numerous blacks were elected to prominent positions, serving in various southern states as lieutenant governors, secretaries of state, state treasurers, and related high-ranking positions, while at the national level blacks were elected to both houses of Congress (Foner 1988).

However, by the mid-1870s, the federal government withdrew from its active engagement in the reconstruction of the South (where over 90 percent of blacks resided), thereby allowing whites in the region to reassert their supremacy. Emerging in the latter part of the 19th century and extending until the civil rights movement succeeded in dismantling it in the 1960s, the Jim Crow era entailed two interrelated features: domination and segregation. Scholars debate whether the laws passed in the southern states merely codified the existing pattern of race relations or amounted to a significant structural change (Glenn 2002: 113; Fredrickson 1995).

Whatever the case, the result was the perpetuation of a caste system within a class society. While the impact of Jim Crow laws operated at all levels—cultural, economic, and political—we look here solely at the political consequences. Opposed to the political power of blacks, yet due to the Fifteenth Amendment unable to simply legally prohibit all blacks from voting, states sought to employ a variety of criteria whose sole purpose it was to disenfranchise blacks. The two most widely used means for accomplishing this task were literacy tests and the poll tax.

The legislated basis of white supremacy was backed up by the threat of extra-legal violence at the hands of a number of terrorist organizations. Lynching became a pervasive feature of southern life, serving as a constant form of intimidation of blacks. Although precise figures on the actual number of lynchings do not exist, one reliable source, the Tuskegee Institute, reported that 4,730 people were lynched between 1882 and the dawn of the civil rights movement in 1951. Another type of collective violence directed against blacks was the riot, whereby whites attacked blacks and their property—often burning homes and businesses to the ground (Glenn 2002: 109–110; Litwack 1998: 284–298). The peak of much of this activity occurred between 1890 and 1920, and the intended results were achieved. The percentage of blacks that were eligible to vote declined dramatically throughout the South. Thus, by the first decade of the 20th century, only 6 percent of blacks could vote in Mississippi, while the figures were 4 percent in Georgia and 1 percent in Louisiana (Glenn 2002: 112).

When blacks began to migrate to the North, beginning around World War I and again during and after World War II, they did so not only for economic reasons, but for political reasons as well. In effect, when they moved to what for a short time they called the Promised Land (until they discovered the northern version of racism), they were both economic migrants and political refugees. This situation would characterize the situation for blacks until the 1960s.

The civil rights movement constituted a watershed moment in the history of black–white relations. In particular, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 signaled a new effort on the part of the federal government to insure that blacks in the South would no longer be denied the franchise. At the same time, there are vestiges of efforts aimed at disenfranchisement. For example, in the post–Civil War period a number of laws were passed in Southern states that denied the vote to convicted felons for life. Given that blacks were disproportionately imprisoned, the intent of such legislation was the same as that of literacy tests and poll taxes.

Other people of color confronted barriers to inclusion. Thus, because they continued to be viewed as members of alien tribal nations, Native Americans did not acquire the right to citizenship until passage of the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924. However, the majority of non-black people of color were immigrants, and for that reason the barriers they confronted were shaped chiefly by immigration and naturalization laws. Actually, as we shall see below, the phrase “people of color,” a contemporary expression, can be ironically applied to immigrants from the late 19th and early 20th centuries whose progeny have over the passage of time “become white” (Roediger 1991, 2005). Newcomers were needed as the demand for labor in an industrial economy could not be met by the native-born alone. At the same time, intense opposition to the entry of certain groups of people emerged, or if they were to be admitted as temporary workers, nativists were adamant in their opposition to granting them citizenship.

Tichenor (2002) has pointed out that four collective actors have historically shaped immigration and naturalization policies. Two have favored liberal laws and two have historically supported restrictive ones. Promoters of a liberal approach include business interests seeking labor recruits and cultural cosmopolitans. Those embracing restrictive laws included organized labor opposed to what they perceived to be a competitive threat by foreign workers who were presumed to undercut existing wage levels and cultural conservatives. What has made coalitions among natural allies over this issue vexing is that business and cultural conservatives tend to be aligned with the Republican Party, while labor and cultural cosmopolitans tend to be Democratic Party stalwarts. Thus, effective coalitions required cross-party alliances. This situation shaped the politics of immigration control from the 19th century until recently when organized labor (though not necessarily the rank-and-file) changed its stance and become an active advocate of new immigrants, whom they see as key to union growth.

In terms of immigration control, Asians were singled out earliest. More specifically, with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Chinese were the first group to be denied admission to the United States. The Gentleman’s Agreement of 1907 was designed to place strict limits on the number of Japanese that could enter the country. However, this was merely the beginning of a far more aggressive campaign of immigration restriction that arose during a period of heretofore unprecedented immigration.

Asians were not alone in being singled out, as increased attention was directed at the larger components of the new immigrants who originated from nations in Southern and Eastern Europe. As a variety of piecemeal laws passed around the turn of the century attests, nativists feared the newcomers for a variety of reasons. They were seen as a threat to the culture, advocates of political radicalism, morally and intellectually inferior, inclined to pauperism, and bearers of disease (Daniels 2004: 27–58; Higham 1955). The zenith of opposition to mass immigration occurred with the passage of the National Origins Act in 1924, which set admission quotas of 2 percent of the number of persons of a nationality as reflected in the 1890 census. In so doing, the law was intentionally structured along lines that privileged Western and Northern Europeans at the expense of other groups. The result was to in effect end mass immigration to the nation for the next four decades.

Naturalization laws likewise were shaped along racial lines. The earliest law, the Naturalization Act of 1790, defined those persons eligible to become citizens through a process of naturalization as limited to “free white persons” (Glenn 2002: 24). In the wake of the Civil War and the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, the definition of who qualified for naturalization was redefined to include in addition to free white persons, “persons of African nativity or African decent.” Subsequently, as Lyman (1993: 380) notes, both the Chinese and Japanese were denied the right to become citizens. Such would be the case for the Chinese from 1882 until 1943, when the exigencies of a world war would prompt the



government to permit its Chinese allies' residents in the United States to naturalize. In the case of the Japanese, this would not occur until 1952, well after the cessation of hostilities.

Within this framework, where whites and blacks could naturalize but the two main immigrant groups from Asia could not, members of many groups found themselves located in an ambiguous situation. The law called for discerning what it meant to be non-white but not black. Actually, a number of both Chinese and Japanese immigrants raised this question in the courts. Thus in 1878 Chinese immigrant Ah Yup, who was identified in the court brief as a member of the Mongolian race, petitioned to become a citizen. His petition was rejected. The rationale offered by the court was that neither "in popular language, in literature, nor in scientific nomenclature, do we ordinarily, if ever, find the words 'white person' used in a sense so comprehensive as to include an individual of the Mongolian race" (quoted in Lyman 1991: 204). In a 1922 Supreme Court case, a Japanese immigrant named Takao Ozawa claimed that anthropological evidence indicated that the Japanese were Caucasian and thus they ought to be considered eligible for citizenship. His argument, too, was rejected (Lyman 1991: 206–208).

This set the stage for numerous other groups to seek to be declared white in order to be accepted into the "white republic" (Saxton 1990). Thus, as Lyman (1991) has chronicled, among the groups declared ineligible for citizenship were the Burmese, Koreans, Hawaiians, Arabs, and East Indians, while others such as Armenians and Syrians were declared to be white and therefore were permitted to become naturalized citizens. Race as it was deployed in some of these cases was linked to religion (thus, the designation Hindoo contained both religious and racial connotations) or politics. One of the more interesting instances of the latter occurred when 16 Finnish immigrants in northern Minnesota were denied their first citizenship papers on the grounds that Finns were Mongolians. This rejection took place in 1908, in the immediate aftermath of a bitter strike by iron miners on the Mesabi Range. The Finns singled out in this way were all activists in the Finnish Socialist Federation, and thus their involvement in what was described in court papers as an "East Asian philosophy" was meant to imply that their political views were reflective of their racial origins. This was a somewhat hard sell given that there was a growing sentiment that European-origin immigrants were white. In fact, the case was soon thereafter thrown out, with the District Court judge concluding that although the ancient Finns had indeed been Mongols, nonetheless they had over the course of history mixed sufficiently with Teutonic peoples to be considered white (Kivisto 1984: 128).

Over the course of the 20th century, scientific racism progressively lost influence, with World War II serving as a watershed. The Nazi experience gave what was once respectable a bad name. However, this did not mean that racism simply evaporated; rather it persisted, albeit in different guises. Thus, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 not only reaffirmed the national quota system of the 1924 National Origins Act but added new reasons for exclusion based on political ideology and sexual orientation. At the same time, the Jim Crow system, despite challenges, remained intact. It took a powerful civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s to finally dismantle that racial formation (Omi and Winant 1986).

As the nation entered into the post-civil rights era, race and class began to intersect in new ways, making possible the expansion of a black middle class no longer rooted in the segregated black community. At the same time, however, it left behind in those communities the poor, or what Wilson (1987) described as "the truly disadvantaged." Thus, while one sector of black America came to acquire the various forms of capital—financial, social, and human—that permitted civic involvements as something other than second-class citizens, the other sector remained marginalized. High levels of persistent inequality intruded on their

prospects of casting off the exclusionary legacy of Jim Crow. The concerted efforts to remove black voters from the rolls in Florida and elsewhere during the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections testified to the fact that four decades into the post-civil rights era what Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza (1993) call “the scar of race” has not healed—cosmetic surgery notwithstanding.

It was in the heat of the civil right struggle that a new immigration law, the Hart-Celler Act (1965), was passed (Schneider 2001). Its liberal sponsors sought to end the racist character of existing law by abolishing the national quotas system. Although its sponsors downplayed the significance of the law, and in particular its potential for creating a new period of mass migration, it is quite clear that the law was intended to open the nation’s doors once again. In this it succeeded; indeed, the United States is now in a migratory wave that is having as significant an impact on American society as the earlier major wave from 1880 to 1930. Tichenor (2002: 217) summarizes the climate in which Hart-Celler was passed as follows:

Tellingly, the demise of the national origins quota system came only at the zenith of the Great Society, when an extraordinary convergence of pro-immigration developments propelled an opening of the gates. In the final analysis, the expansive turn of national immigration policy in 1965 sprang from a familiar set of order-shattering forces: new international pressures, shifting group alliances, fresh expertise, and institutional change.

In terms of the ethnic composition of the nation, the consequence of the current migratory wave is that the Latino and Asian populations have grown significantly. Indeed, as the 2000 census revealed, Latinos now outnumber blacks. The nation is now considerably more diverse—ethnically, religiously, and linguistically—than it was in 1965. This has alarmed contemporary nativists. Thus, Huntington (2004: 181, 184) argues:

In the contemporary world, the greatest threat to the societal security of nations comes from immigration . . . . Historically America has thus been a nation of immigration *and* assimilation, and assimilation has meant Americanization. Now, however, immigrants are different; the institutions and processes related to assimilation are different; and, most importantly, America is different. The great American success story may face an uncertain future.

This represents a serious misreading of present realities: it misrepresents the immigrants themselves (and one might add that it also misrepresents other minority groups—including ethnonational minorities and indigenous peoples), and it misinterprets the ways that contemporary liberal democracies are experimenting with novel modes of incorporating diversity (Kivisto 2005). In particular, it misconstrues multiculturalism. It is to this topic that we now turn. What follows is predicated on the conviction that modern industrial nations have until recently relied on a limited number of modes of incorporating heretofore marginalized groups that have tended to rely on the expectation that incorporation occurs at the individual, and not at the group level. Multiculturalism, in both practice and theory, is a recent mode of incorporation that challenges this assumption. In the process, it informs current discourses on the relationship between inclusion and citizenship.

### MULTICULTURALISM AS A MODE OF INCLUSION

Multiculturalism has generated during the past two decades a veritable cottage industry of scholarly and popular publications, primarily but not solely focusing on the advanced industrial nations of the globe. It has been widely used in various ways during this time, including in the

depiction of interethnic relations, the defense of group rights, as a valorization of difference, and as a rationale for new state policies of incorporation. It has also generated intense ideological debates. Not long ago Nathan Glazer (1997) proclaimed that “we are all multiculturalists now,” and others have argued that however fitfully and fraught with conflict and unease, the world’s liberal democracies have imbibed what might be seen as a multicultural sensibility, even if it has not been translated into official policies or explicit endorsements of multiculturalism (Favell 1998; Modood 2001; Kivisto 2002; Pearson 2001; Joppke and Morawska 2003; Kymlicka 2003). However, this view has been challenged by those who contend that the multicultural moment is over as state policy, social practice, and perhaps as theoretical construct as well (Delanty 2000: 104; see also Barry 2001; Kelly 2002; Joppke 2005).

Part of the reason for the widely divergent assessments of the short history and potential future of multiculturalism as well as why it has been a flashpoint of political contestation is that the word is often used with widely disparate meanings (Delanty 2000: 102–106; Delgado-Moreira 2000: 75–102; Joppke 2001; Tiryakian 2004; Wieviorka 1998). In its typical articulation, it is generally presented in a fashion that manages to blend or blur its utility as an analytic concept with its expression as a normative precept. David Pearson (2001: 129) also noted the significance of context in coming to terms with the particular meaning attached to this “highly contested and chameleon-like neologism whose colours change to suit the complexion of local conditions.”

Although the United States did not become an officially state-sanctioned multicultural society, due to a number of causal variables, it increasingly came to exhibit a multicultural sensibility. What made the U.S. case distinctive (as noted in the preceding section) was the emergence of a civil rights movement from within the black community—a movement created by the only involuntary migrants in the nation. This movement originally pressed for equality and integration, but a more militant Black Power phase would question the desirability of the latter.

Criticism of Anglo-conformity as the appropriate model of incorporation into American society grew from the 1960s onwards, when it was challenged both by newly minted white ethnics from Southern and Eastern Europe (the “unmeltable ethnics” of Michael Novak’s title) and by the rise of Black Nationalism. The Red Power and Chicano movements would also play roles in critiquing it. Even without multicultural legislation, the federal government, paralleling the attitudes of the general public, was increasingly willing to tolerate and even support manifestations of symbolic ethnicity (the proactive role of the federal government became especially evident with the passage of the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act in 1972).

However, multiculturalism was not merely advanced symbolically. Rather, it took more substantive form in policies that came to constitute “the minority rights revolution,” which Skrentny (2002: 4) depicts as rising very quickly during the 1960s as a result of a congeries of “federal legislation, presidential executive orders, bureaucratic rulings, and court decisions that established nondiscrimination rights.” The minority rights revolution was generally not equated with multiculturalism, though the parallels to policies elsewhere that were so designated is quite clear. A distinctive feature of these efforts, Skrentny (2002: 4) went on to note, was that they “targeted groups of Americans understood as disadvantaged but not defined by socioeconomic class.”

Two particular policies stand out as being of singular importance: affirmative action and bilingual education. At least from the perspective of state intent—however difficult it is to specify state intentionality—these policies resemble those enacted in Australia insofar as the focus is on individual members of disadvantaged groups, and not the groups themselves. Thus, the legislative purpose of affirmative action was to assist minority individuals to obtain

university admission, employment slots, and business ownership opportunities through a variety of administrative devices. In other words, its purpose was defined as assisting individual upward social mobility. Likewise, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was conceived as assisting individual immigrants—chiefly Latinos and Asians—in making the transition from their native languages to English language proficiency. Lawmakers did not see the act as designed to protect or preserve native languages over time. Perhaps the only significant exception to this focus on minority individual rights was the gerrymandering of electoral districts to enhance the likelihood of increasing minority membership in Congress.

Multiculturalism in practice has meant that at the same time that differences were to be not only tolerated but valorized, there was also an expectation that such an approach would serve the interests of the state insofar as it simultaneously constitutes what Alexander (2001) calls a “mode of incorporation.” As the experiences of these and some other advanced industrial nations indicates, the logic of such an approach is predicated on the assumption that multiculturalism threatens neither the core values of liberal democratic societies nor the incorporation of ethnically marginalized groups—both “multinational” and “polyethnic” ethnics, to use Kymlicka’s (1995: 17) terminology.

If there is a lesson to be learned from existing practice-related formulations of multiculturalism, it is that they are designed to serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, they are a response to the demands on the part of marginalized ethnic groups for collective rather than merely individualistic solutions to inequality and exclusion. In other words, they are responses to the claims-making efforts of mobilized groups for recognition and/or redistribution (Young 1990; Parekh 2000; Kymlicka 2001: 152–176; Sciortino 2003). On the other hand, at least from the perspective of decision-makers, policy-formulators, and most of the political advocates of some version of group rights, the other objective is to bring heretofore-marginalized groups into the societal mainstream. Moreover, as Alexander and Smelser (1999: 14–15) observe, “Although the radical multicultural position advocated by many spokespersons for minority groups seems to contradict [the sense of] connectivity, the actual political and social movements advocating multiculturalism consistently employ a civil-society discourse.” In other words, multiculturalism in a racial democracy constitutes a “mode of incorporation” that is characterized by a particular type of civil participation.

It should be noted that this is not the way multiculturalism is construed by many commentators. Critics of multiculturalism seldom consider the possibility that it constitutes a mode of democratic inclusion. Such critics are varied and can be found across the political spectrum, though those on the political right are more inclined to be hostile to multiculturalism both as an ideal and as social policy. The arguments of those opposed to multiculturalism fall into several broad categories. The first argument is that multiculturalism is divisive and as such threatens national unity. This was the thesis advanced by Schlesinger, advocate for the “vital center,” in his highly influential *The Disuniting of America* (1992). Counterparts to this thesis have been advanced for other developed nations, such as Bibby’s critique of Canadian multiculturalism in *Mosaic Madness* (1990). The inverse of this argument is that multiculturalism serves to ghettoize marginalized populations rather than assisting them to enter the mainstream (Bissoondath 2002; Malik 2002).

Another critique of multiculturalism emanates from the political left. Although often intertwined, this critique contains two complaints. First is the charge that the differentialist focus of multiculturalism results in the erosion of the possibility of progressive alliances and coalitions. A particularly influential argument along these lines is Gitlin’s (1995) contention that multiculturalism has contributed to the “twilight of common dreams.” This argument parallels that of Schlesinger, as the concern is that multiculturalism divides rather than

unites—in this case dividing not the nation but the progressive political left. The second aspect of the left's concerns with multiculturalism is that one of the unintended consequences of the promotion of a politics of recognition (Taylor 1992) is that in the process a politics of redistribution is ignored or placed on the back burner (Fraser 1995). More ominously, as Modood (2005) has noted, some critics have concluded that terrorist attacks from 9/11 to 7/7 are an indication of multiculturalism failures—and in some instances the charge has gone even further by claiming that multiculturalism itself is in part to blame for such attacks.

It is necessary to move beyond these and related polemics and to similarly move past the philosophical controversies surrounding multiculturalism in its varied forms (see, for example, Benhabib 2002; Gutmann 2003; Habermas 1998; Tully 2002), ranging from, to use the distinction employed by Appiah (2005: 73–79), “hard pluralism” (e.g., Iris Marion Young and John Gray) to “soft pluralism” (e.g., Will Kymlicka and Joseph Raz), if a convincing conceptual framework for multiculturalism is to emerge.

## RACIAL DEMOCRACY AND REDISTRIBUTION

This article does not seek to articulate a full-blown conceptualization of multiculturalism. It begins by noting that much of the scholarly conversation to date has focused on the issue of recognition. While this is an essential component of multiculturalism, it represents only one side of the coin, the other being redistribution. In other words, the concerns of those on the left such as Nancy Fraser and Todd Gitlin are valid, but to so conclude is not to reject the politics of recognition. Instead, the task at hand is to integrate such a politics with a politics of redistribution, which has been the hallmark of the traditional left. The argument offered herein is that the idea of racial democracy offers a conceptual handle for linking recognition and redistribution.

To make such a claim requires offering an account of what racial democracy means. As is the case with most concepts used in the social sciences, it has a history. Racial democracy was first developed as an explanatory device to depict race relations in Brazil by anthropologist Gilberto Freyre, who in *Master and Slave* (1963a [1933]) and its sequels, *The Mansions and the Shanties* (1963b [1936]) and *Order and Progress* (1970 [1959]), sought to distinguish the situation in his nation from the *Herrenvolk* democracy of the United States. In part, he painted an idyllic portrait of the Brazilian past where white masters lived in close proximity to and in general harmony with the vast slave population. Racial interdependency, high rates of miscegenation, and the greater ease by which Brazilian slaves could obtain their freedom signaled for Freyre factors contributing to the conclusion that Anglo-American racism was a virtual impossibility in the Brazilian context.

Winant (2001: 226–228) contends that Freyre was chiefly responsible for providing the nation with a myth of national origins, one that “abandoned in part the previously taken-for-granted superiority of whiteness and the principles of racial hierarchy, substituting for these a new racial nationalism that vindicated and glorified miscegenation and hybridization.” In his formulation, what emerged in Brazil's relatively relaxed racial climate was the “new man (sic) of the tropics.” Racial democracy, thus, constituted a form of assimilation predicated on the creolization of the population—in effect, a racial melting pot (Degler 1986; Hoetink 1971; Pierson 1942).

In both scholarly and popular form, the idea of racial democracy took root, not only in Brazil, but throughout Latin American and Caribbean nations with similar colonial histories

to that of Brazil, resulting in what some have referred to as Iberian exceptionalism, which attributes the presumed racial egalitarianism of this part of the Americas to three factors. This include the fact that Spain and Portugal lived under Moorish rule, that Catholics were more willing than Protestants to view the racial other as having a soul, and the demographic reality of small numbers of single male colonizers entering into sexual and emotional contacts with indigenous women (Peña et al. 2004).

Critical race theorists have made the argument that Brazil and similar nations cannot accurately be described as racial democracies, contending that the concept is a myth, and a pernicious one at that (Guimarães 2001; Hanchard 1994; Twine 1998; Warren 2002; Winant 1999, 2001). One part of the critique focuses on a historical question about the nature of the Spanish and Portuguese pasts, challenging the racial democracy perspective, which viewed these pasts as essentially benign. The reality, critical race theorists point out, is that all of the colonizers of the Americas were brutal, the only significant differences being in regard to the varying degrees of brutality. In comparative terms, it is not clear whether the Iberians were the least brutal. It is clear, however, that they were brutal. The second part of the critique calls attention to the fact that darker-skinned people are far from equal in these nations. They are economically disadvantaged and prevented from entering the centers of power. In short, as Spickard (2005) would put it, their oppression and marginalization is inscribed on their bodies. The third prong of the critique of the myth of racial democracy is that it is pernicious insofar as it stymied the development of social movements aimed at redressing oppression and marginalization. The claim of critical race theorists is that the myth succeeded in denying, in Winant's (2001: 228) words, "both black difference and black inequality." In other words, it served as an ideological mask that, in the name of national unity, has affected what amounts to censorship about existing racial disparities, with the result being that antiracist struggles have been to large extent thwarted (Twine 1998; Hanchard 1994).

While these criticisms of the myth are accurate, what has emerged in Brazil and other nations of the region is a multicultural sensibility, one in which it is now possible to engage in a reconsideration of racial democracy. Recently, Bailey (2004) has pointed out that there is a growing consensus among scholars that earlier criticisms have been overly critical. Thus, Fry (2000) and Sheriff (2001) have argued that the concept of racial democracy functions in Brazilian society less as an ideology and more as an ideal by which to measure and judge present reality. Bailey's research has lent support to this position by providing empirical evidence for the idea that ordinary Brazilians do not share the elite ideology of a racial democratic paradise, but instead are acutely aware of the existence of racial inequality and racism. For them, racial democracy serves as the basis of a counter-hegemonic critique of the existing racial formation. This perspective constitutes what can be viewed as the "racial commonsense" of most Brazilians (Bailey 2004: 729), which shapes how they come to engage in egalitarian claims-making in what they perceive to be an unequal world shaped to a significant extent along racial lines (Guidry 2003). In this sense, racial democracy comes to constitute a useful concept in the arsenal of race and ethnic studies scholars. It can serve as a framework for constructing a metric to adjudicate the extent to which any particular ethnically heterogeneous society can be construed as sufficiently egalitarian to be a genuine democracy. The role of sociology is to provide the metrics, while the task of political philosophy is to provide the arguments for what constitutes a just and egalitarian democratic society. The following section reviews existing levels of inequality in the United States and their deleterious consequences, which are viewed as impediments to achieving a genuine racial democracy.

## RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES

This article cannot provide the metrics, but rather can only call attention to the sorts of issues involved in linking levels of inequality to critiques of existing liberal democratic regimes. In so doing, such an enterprise is inextricably linked to a progressive politics. The traditional political fault line that divides left and right speaks to widely divergent views about the appropriateness of seeking to construct an egalitarian society. The left, in its various forms, has argued that inequality must be a goal in the effort to create a society that does not exploit or oppress some sectors of the population in order to enhance the position of other sectors. From this side of the political divide, a truly just society must be an egalitarian one. In contrast, the right contends that inequality is not only natural and therefore inevitable, but also often proves to be beneficial. If, in the past, the right justified inequality in religious terms, appealing to the idea of God's hierarchical order in which all people had their appropriate place, today they are more likely to appeal to the ideology of meritocracy. Sometimes this takes on a biological essentialism, as with Social Darwinians a century ago or the authors of *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein and Murray 1994) more recently. In other instances, there is a distinctly psychological cast to the argument. Thus, conservatives justify the inequality of privilege on the basis of certain individuals' presumed value to society and on such imputed personal attributes as diligence, possessing a strong work ethic, intelligence, competitiveness, and so forth. From this ideological perspective, the poor are poor due to character defects. Inequality can actually serve them well insofar as it succeeds in goading them to change their profligate ways.

In the current epoch of global capitalism defined by neoliberal economic policies, the pursuit of equality has not been on the political agenda. Indeed, it has not been a centerpiece of mainstream political action since the demise of the Good Society (leaving aside for this discussion the shortcomings and the bad faith of liberal politics during that era). Instead, policies have been promoted that allow markets to operate increasingly free from the intervention of the state. Markets are seen as generators of wealth, and any intrusion into the "natural" functioning of markets is criticized for stifling economic growth. Thus, the welfare state is seen as an impediment to growth and for this reason efforts to reduce its size and scope have been vigorously pursued. The logic of this strategy is based on the assumption that when those at the top are permitted to increase their wealth, the impact of their increased wealth benefits not only them, but the rest of society as well, as added wealth trickles down throughout the class structure. In such a scenario, levels of inequality may increase, but everyone is better off for it. Therefore, according to exponents of neoliberalism, any attempt to implement redistributive policies that are designed to reduce existing levels of inequality ought to be rejected.

The problem with this argument is that it is based on ideology rather than empirical evidence or a clearly articulated moral vision about what a just and fair society would look like. It fails to adequately account for the wide range of negative impacts of inequality on individuals and communities. It also fails to account for the fact that once in place, inequality tends to be perpetuated—becoming what Tilly (1998) refers to as "durable inequality." As he points out, such inequality speaks less to ideas of meritocracy or the functionally beneficial character of inequality, and more to the capacity of those with power, wealth, and privilege to effect strategies of closure that prevents those who are lower on the social ladder from climbing up the rungs.

Sociology and the related social sciences have long-established research agendas devoted to the analysis of social problems. The focus of much of this work is on either the consequences of specific problems for those individuals most adversely impacted by them

or for the society at large. However, little attention has been devoted to linking social problems to the functioning of a liberal democracy and to the capacity of all citizens to function as equals in the democratic process of self-rule.

### **Income and Wealth Inequality**

A substantial body of research has established that the United States is the advanced industrial nation with the highest level of inequality. This is evident in the most commonly used yardsticks to measure inequality: income and wealth distribution. In terms of the former, in 2003 the median income for Asian households was about \$55,000, \$48,000 for non-Hispanic white households, \$33,000 for Hispanic households, and \$30,000 for African American households (DeNavas-Walt et al. 2004: 4–10). Likewise, whereas only 8.2 percent of non-Hispanic whites were living at or below the poverty line in 2003, 11.8 percent of Asians, 22.5 percent of Hispanics, 23.9 percent of American Indians, and 24.3 percent of blacks lived in poverty. Even when they are found in the same occupations and work full-time and year-round, Asian men earn 94 percent of the income of white men, Hispanic men only 86 percent, and black men only 84 percent (Xu and Leffler 1996: 119).

Wealth is distributed along racial lines in an even more skewed manner. While a quarter of white households possess no wealth or negative wealth, 61 percent of black and 54 percent of Hispanic households fit into this category. While 38 percent of white households lack the financial assets to survive for three months at the poverty line, as many as 73 percent of Hispanic households and 80 percent of black households live in this precarious financial position (Oliver and Shapiro 1997: 86–87). Viewed another way, the median white household possesses \$7,000 in net financial assets, in contrast to the zero assets held by the median black household. The median white household has over eight times the net worth of the median black household (Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey 2003: 284).

Even considering only middle-class households, whether defined by income, college education, or white-collar occupation, black households possess only 35 percent of the net worth of white households in the first definition, 23 percent by the second, and 15 percent by the third. In terms of financial assets—that which can help prevent financial disaster in extenuating circumstances—white-collar black households have no net financial assets whatsoever if one excludes home equity and vehicle ownership (Oliver and Shapiro 1997: 94). This means that the average black middle-class family has to rely almost entirely on income alone to maintain its middle-class standard of living, and cannot withstand a single financial obstacle without it becoming a potential financial catastrophe.

### **The Consequences of Inequality**

Considerable attention has been devoted to teasing out the consequences of inequality, which serve as a necessary empirical grounding for assessing the constraints on equal opportunity, which in turn impact the ability to enter the public sphere in the role of citizen on equal terms with other members of the polity. The assumption of liberal democracies is that an equal opportunity society is one that provides the means by which disadvantaged citizens are provided the tools to do so. In order to assess whether or not a society has succeeded in making equal opportunity a reality, there are a variety of quality of life measures one can turn to. For instance, Hughes and Thomas (1998) demonstrate that African Americans experience a lower



quality of life (measurements include life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, mistrust, happiness, anomie, and health) than whites, even when classified as middle or upper class. These two researchers suggest that this is due to a “racial tax”—the harmful psychological effects of a long historical legacy of racism.

The physical health consequences of inequality also reveal significant racially based disparities. Regardless of the exact measurement used, low income and poor health are strongly linked. For example, impoverished African Americans endure disproportionately high incidences of hypertension, heart problems, diabetes and its complications, and sudden infant death syndrome (Mullahy and Wolfe 2001: 284). Cancer among males, sickle-cell anemia, tuberculosis, arteriosclerosis, and AIDs also affect significantly higher percentages of blacks than whites (Pearson 1994). Life expectancy is another factor that varies by race. Geronimus et al. (2001) found that the life expectancy of a black male living in urban poverty is 42 years old, three decades short of the national average. Health-related disparities are linked to the lack of adequate access to affordable and quality health care. In 2003, 15.6 percent of the population was without health coverage, amounting to 45 million people. This trend has a disproportionate impact on racial minorities. For example, nearly one third of Latinos have no health coverage (DeNavas-Walt et al. 2004: 14–15; see also Feagin and McKinney 2003: 180–210).

Food insufficiency is another problem that strikes racial minorities harder than the general population. Thus, while about 4 percent of the population does not have enough food either occasionally or frequently, the figure for Mexican-Americans is 15 percent, while it is 8 percent for African Americans (Alaimo et al. 1998). Making matters worse, food costs more for the urban poor than for the general population (Chung and Myers 1999). Because many chain stores, where customers find the lowest prices, are not located in or near urban poor neighborhoods, and because many poor people do not own cars or have access to adequate public transportation, residents often have little choice but to shop at closer, but more expensive, non-chain stores. These stores carry a far smaller selection of certain types of food, particularly fresh produce, meat, and dairy products.

Turning to housing, discrimination based on race remains an endemic problem long after the civil rights movement, which, combined with a shortage of decent and affordable housing, is responsible for the concentration of poverty in select geographic areas (Massey et al. 1994). While some of the most overt forms of housing discrimination have been far less in evidence since the 1960s, new and more subtle modes of discrimination persist, many of them difficult to detect. For example, housing audits have demonstrated that housing agents show blacks fewer housing units than whites, particularly if those units are located in predominantly white neighborhoods. In addition, redlining practices and discriminatory lending policies result in blacks being denied housing loans at a higher rate than whites (Marcuse 2005).

What is the result of geographic segregation by race? A body of evidence shows that while highly educated black communities can truly uphold a “separate but equal” status with socio-economically similar white communities, poorer and less educated blacks experience neighborhood conditions inferior to other impoverished populations due to their relative concentration in urban inner city settings. This is particularly evident in those neighborhoods characterized by hypersegregation (Massey and Denton 1993). Police protection, firefighting, sanitation services, and similar municipal services are invariably of poorer quality in such neighborhoods. Children have fewer places to play and an even smaller number of safe recreation areas (Evans and Kantrowitz 2002). More youth in these neighborhoods drop out of school, have decreased childhood IQ scores, and become pregnant as teenagers (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993). Those who live

in impoverished and racially segregated neighborhoods (especially African Americans and to a lesser degree Mexican Americans) suffer from significantly higher mortality rates (including infant mortality rates) (LeClere et al. 1997). Wilson (2000) has stressed the emergence since deindustrialization took hold of “jobless ghettos,” which are plagued by crime, prostitution, drug trafficking, and gang activity. Often, potential employers do not welcome individuals raised in these locales, in part due to discrimination, but also in part due to the underdevelopment of skills in these communities; this inability to find work reinforces and thus perpetuates disadvantage.

Racial inequality results in vast educational inequalities, which are rooted in two interconnected factors: unequal funding for schools and discrimination. School funding is based significantly on local property taxes, which means that schools located in areas populated primarily with lower-class households are going to have substantially smaller budgets than schools in middle- or upper-class districts. However, this inequality is exacerbated in inner cities, where lower-class youth and racial minorities are concentrated.

Despite *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, a half-century after its decision American schools are undergoing a process of resegregation. In a recent study conducted by Harvard’s Civil Rights Project, the researchers have determined that the gains made in the 1960s and 1970s have eroded, and particularly in the 1990s the rate of resegregation has increased dramatically. At present, 70 percent of black students attend schools that contain predominantly minority student populations, while Latinos, too, have witnessed increasing levels of educational segregation (Orfield 2004). The result is that minority students, particularly poorer ones, increasingly attend public schools that are inferior to those of their white counterparts.

The net result is that minority students lag behind whites in terms of educational achievement. A smaller percentage of blacks and Latinos enroll in colleges and universities than do whites; in 2000, 39 percent of 18- to 24-year-old whites were enrolled, 31 percent of blacks, and 22 percent of Latinos (Hoffman et al. 2003: 93). Additionally, the percentage of degrees earned by blacks decreases as the level of the degree increases, earning 11 percent of associate’s degrees, 9 percent of bachelor’s, 8 percent of master’s, 7 percent of professional, and 5 percent of doctorate degrees. For Hispanics, the respective percentages are 9 percent, 6 percent, 4 percent, 5 percent, and 3 percent (Hoffman et al. 2003: 96–97). Given that education has a direct effect on the development of human capital, which in turn plays a central role in securing quality positions in the job market, there is ample evidence to indicate that the nations’ school system fails to provide genuinely equal educational opportunities, thereby serving to reinforce existing inequalities rather than contributing to overcoming them.

Discrepancies in the possession of social capital perpetuate inequality by deterring upward mobility for those at the bottom of the social structure while simultaneously facilitating it for those already near the top. While social capital is important to the attainment of socioeconomic status, its benefits are distributed highly inequitably by race. Since individuals tend to maintain social networks with others of similar characteristics, the networks of members of the disadvantaged racial minorities tend to consist of individuals from within the group with similar SES profiles. These connections tend not only to be lacking in the number of beneficial resources for socioeconomic advancement, but also to lack the diversity of resources that are available to those of higher SES (Lin 2000). Portes (1998) observes that all too frequently for inner-city residents, social networks do not reach outside the inner city, and therefore their knowledge of and ability to obtain good jobs is severely limited. Furthermore, since inner-city residents tend to be more transitory, social ties within these locales tend to be

more tenuous and less extensive. Blacks and to a somewhat lesser extent Latinos have less extensive networks than whites. Since blacks often reside in segregated neighborhoods, their social networks are restricted to other blacks, which is not advantageous in an economy dominated by whites. Even in the middle and upper classes, blacks often have relatively few weak ties to white networks, instead forming strong ties among themselves (Lin 2000). These differences play out in explicit ways, such as when a person seeking a job begins to turn to people she knows. Simply stated, blacks' social networks are such that they do not work to their advantage in terms of entering the economic mainstream.

As this survey indicated, racial inequality remains a pervasive feature of American society four decades after the civil rights movement ended. It takes many different guises, impacting racial minorities in all facets of their lives. Moreover, there is a durable character to this inequality that suggests it will not be remedied without a concerted effort to address its structural underpinning. Insofar as this is the case, it is clear that the United States falls far short of being a racial democracy.

### WHAT WOULD A RACIAL DEMOCRACY LOOK LIKE?

Perhaps the simplest answer to the question of what a racial democracy would look like is that it would be a society in which racial differences at the level of identity carried with them no race-specific inequalities. In other words, such a society would be predicated on racial difference *and* racial equality. Being a citizen is not cost-free. Full citizenship requires investments of resources, specifically financial capital, human capital, and social capital. Those without adequate resources to enter the public sphere as a relative equal of others find themselves marginalized and incapable of genuinely engaging in the ongoing process of self-rule. Despite the progressive move to becoming a more inclusive society since the founding of the republic, the preceding survey of racial inequality reveals that the legacy of exclusion and oppression continues to adversely impact the lives of blacks and Latinos who confront the impacts of the durable inequalities that the nation has not yet remedied (Feagin and Vera 1995).

The value of the idea of racial democracy is that, by serving as an ideal type, it simultaneously provides a tool of analysis to assess whether or not the racial barriers to equal citizenship have been overcome and a political goal. It is a constructive antidote to the pervasive desire to treat the United States as a colorblind society, the trope widely favored by political conservatives and by sectors of the liberal community (Sleeper 1997). Proponents of a colorblind ideology have come into prominence since the end of the civil rights movement, deflecting questions about the continuing impact of racism by seeking to account for racial inequalities by turning to non-racial explanations. The result, as Bonilla-Silva (2003) describes it, is a new form of racism, "without racists."

More specifically, the idea of racial democracy is intended as a concrete concept that can be used to assess the state of democracy in the nation. Those who have been historically disenfranchised and more recently ignored by policy makers and the public alike function, to borrow from Guinier and Torres (2002), as miner's canaries. They test the atmosphere of the public sphere to see if democracy can survive. One of its virtues is that it can provide a comparative frame of reference, allowing us to assess the extent to which identity politics remain tied to redistributive politics, and thus measuring the distance we still have to travel to achieve a just, multicultural, and egalitarian social order.

## REFERENCES

- Alaimo, Katherine, Ronnette R. Briefel, Edward A. Frongillo, Jr., and Christine M. Olson. 1998. "Food Insufficiency Exists in the United States: Results from the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III)." *American Journal of Public Health*, 88: 419–426.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2001. "Theorizing the 'Modes of Incorporation': Assimilation, Hyphenation, and Multiculturalism as Varieties of Civic Participation." *Sociological Theory*, 19(3): 237–249.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. and Neil J. Smelser. 1999. "Introduction: The Ideological Discourse of Cultural Discontent." Pp. 3–18 in Neil J. Smelser and Jeffrey Alexander (eds.), *Diversity and Its Discontents: Cultural Conflict and Common Ground in Contemporary American Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2005. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bailey, Stanley. 2004. "Group Dominance and the Myth of Racial Democracy: Antiracism Attitudes in Brazil." *American Sociological Review*, 69(5): 728–747.
- Bailyn, Bernard. 1967. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Barry, Brian. 2001. *Culture and Equality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Benhabib, Seyla. 2002. *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in a Global Era*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bibby, Reginald. 1990. *Mosaic Madness: Pluralism without a Cause*. Toronto: Stoddart.
- Bissoondath, Neil. 2002. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Penguin.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2003. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne, Greg J. Duncan, Pamela Kato Klebanov, and Naomi Sealand. 1993. "Do Neighborhoods Influence Child and Adolescent Development?" *American Journal of Sociology*, 99(2): 353–395.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 1992. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chung, Chanjin and Samuel L. Myers, Jr. 1999. "Do the Poor Pay More for Food? An Analysis of Grocery Store Availability and Food Price Disparities." *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 33(2): 276–296.
- Daniels, Roger. 2004. *Guarding the Golden Gate: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Degler, Carl. 1986. *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Delanty, Gerard. 2000. *Citizenship in a Global Age: Society, Culture, Politics*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Delgado-Moreira, Juan M. 2000. *Multicultural Citizenship of the European Union*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Robert J. Mills. 2004. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2003*. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, pp. 60–226. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Evans, Gary W. and Elyse Kantrowitz. 2002. "Socioeconomic Status and Health: The Potential Role of Environmental Risk Exposure." *Annual Review of Public Health*, 23: 303–331.
- Favell, Adrian. 1998. *Philosophies of Integration*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2006. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Hernán Vera. 1995. *White Racism: The Basics*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Karyn D. McKinney. 2003. *The Many Costs of Racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Foner, Eric. 1988. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Fraser, Nancy. 1995. "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a Postsocialist Age." *New Left Review*, 212(August/September): 68–93.
- Fredrickson, George M. 1995. *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Freyre, Gilberto. 1970 [1959]. *Order and Progress*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Freyre, Gilberto. 1963a [1933]. *The Masters and the Slaves*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Freyre, Gilberto. 1963b [1936]. *The Mansions and the Shanties*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Fry, Peter. 2000. "Politics, Nationality, and the Meanings of 'Race' in Brazil." *Daedalus*, 129: 83–118.
- Geronimus, Arline T., John Bound, Timothy A. Waidmann, Cynthia G. Colen, and Dianne Steffick. 2001. "Inequality in Life Expectancy, Functional Status, and Active Life Expectancy across Selected Black and White Populations in the United States." *Demography*, 38(2): 227–251.
- Gitlin, Todd. 1995. *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

- Glazer, Nathan. 1997. *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2002. *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Guidry, John. 2003. "Being Equal in an Unequal World: Citizenship, Common Sense, and Social Movements in Brazil." Unpublished manuscript.
- Guimarães, Antonio S. 2001. "The Misadventures of Nonracialism in Brazil." Pp. 157–185 in C. Hamilton, L. Huntley, N. Alexander, A. Guimarães, and W. James (eds.), *Beyond Racism: Race and Inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Guinier, Lani and Gerald Torres. 2002. *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gutmann, Amy. 2003. *Identity in Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1998. *The Inclusion of the Other*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Hanchard, Michael G. 1994. *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1945–1988*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Heater, Derek. 1994. *A Brief History of Citizenship*. New York: New York University Press.
- Herrnstein, Richard J. and Charles Murray. 1994. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: The Free Press.
- Higham, John. 1955. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Hoetnik, Hartimus. 1971. *Caribbean Race Relations: A Study of Two Variants*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hoffman, Kathryn, Charmaine Llagas, and Thomas D. Snyder. 2003. *Status and Trends in the Education of Blacks*. Report No. NECS-2003–034. Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics.
- Hughes, Michael and Melvin E. Thomas. 1998. "The Continuing Significance of Race Revisited: A Study of Race, Class, and Quality of Life in America, 1972–1996." *American Sociological Review*, 63(4): 785–795.
- Huntington, Samuel. 2004. *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Joppke, Christian. 2005. *Selecting by Origin: Ethnic Migration in the Liberal State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Joppke, Christian. 2001. "Multicultural Citizenship: A Critique." *Arch. Europ. Sociol.*, XLII(2): 431–477.
- Joppke, Christian and Ewa Morawska, eds. 2003. *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation States*. New York: Palgrave.
- Kelly, Paul, ed. 2002. *Multiculturalism Reconsidered*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Kerber, Linda. 1997. "The Meanings of Citizenship." *Dissent*, 44(Fall): 33–37.
- Kivisto, Peter, ed. 2005. *Incorporating Diversity: Rethinking Assimilation in a Multicultural Age*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Kivisto, Peter. 2004. "Inclusion: Parsons and Beyond." *Acta Sociologica*, 47(3): 291–297.
- Kivisto, Peter. 2002. *Multiculturalism in a Global Society*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Kivisto, Peter. 1984. *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University.
- Kymlicka, Will. 2003. "Immigration, Citizenship, Multiculturalism: Exploring the Links." Pp. 195–208 in Sarah Spencer (ed.), *The Politics of Migration: Managing Opportunity, Conflict, and Change*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Kymlicka, Will. 2001. *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- LeClere, Felicia B., Richard G. Rogers, and Kimberly D. Peters. 1997. "Ethnicity and Mortality in the United States: Individual and Community Correlates." *Social Forces*, 76(1): 169–198.
- Lin, Nan. 2000. "Inequality in Social Capital." *Contemporary Sociology*, 29: 785–795.
- Litwack, Leon. 1998. *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lyman, Stanford M. 1993. "Marginalizing the Self: A Study of Citizenship, Color, and Ethnoracial Identity in American Society." *Symbolic Interaction*, 16(4): 379–393.
- Lyman, Stanford M. 1991. "The Race Question and Liberalism: Casuistries in American Constitutional Law." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 5(2): 183–247.
- Malik, Kenan. 2002. "Against Multiculturalism." *New Humanist*, summer: 23–26.
- Marcuse, Peter. 2005. "Enclaves Yes, Ghettos No: Segregation and the State." Pp. 15–30 in David P. Varady (ed.), *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Marshall, T.H. 1964. *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Massey, Douglas S., Andrew B. Gross, and Kumiko Shibuya. 1994. "Migration, Segregation, and the Geographic Concentration of Poverty." *American Sociological Review*, 59(3): 425–445.
- Mishel, Lawrence, Jared Bernstein, and Heather Boushey. 2003. *The State of Working America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Modood, Tariq. 2005. "Rethinking Multiculturalism after 7/7." Open Democracy Forum. [www.openDemocracy.net/conflict-tension/multiculturalism\\_2879.jsp](http://www.openDemocracy.net/conflict-tension/multiculturalism_2879.jsp).
- Modood, Tariq. 2001. "Their Liberalism and Our Liberalism?" *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3: 245–257.
- Mullahy, John and Barbara L. Wolfe. 2001. "Health Policies for the Non-Elderly Poor." Pp. 278–313 in S. H. Danziger and R.H. Haveman (eds.), *Understanding Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1997. *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. New York: Routledge.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1986. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s*. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Orfield, Garg. 2004. *Brawn at 50: King's Dream or Plessy's Nightmare?* Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project.
- Parekh, Bhiku. 2000. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Parkin, Frank. 1979. *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Pearson, Dale. 1994. "'The Black Man: Health Issues and Implications for Clinical Practice.'" *Journal of Black Studies*, 25(1): 81–98.
- Pearson, David. 2001. *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Societies: States of Unease*. New York: Palgrave.
- Peña, Yesilernis, Jim Sidanius, and Mark Sawyer. 2004. "'Racial Democracy' in the Americas: A Latin and U.S. Comparison." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35(6): 749–762.
- Pierson, Donald. 1942. *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact in Bahia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24: 1–24.
- Ringer, Benjamin. 1983. *We the People and Others: Duality and America's Treatment of Its Racial Minorities*. New York: Tavistock.
- Roediger, David. 2005. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*. New York: Basic Books.
- Roediger, David. 1991. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. London: Verso.
- Saxton, Alexander. 1990. *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class, Politics, and Culture in the Nineteenth-Century America*. London: Verso.
- Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr. 1992. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Schneider, Dorothee. 2001. "Naturalization and United States Citizenship in Two Periods of Mass Migration, 1890–1930, 1965–2000." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 21(1): 50–82.
- Sciortino, Gioseppe. 2003. "From Homogeneity to Difference?" *Comparative Social Research*, 22: 263–285.
- Sheriff, Robin. 2001. *Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Shklar, Judith N. 1991. *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sniderman, Paul and Thomas Piazza. 1993. *The Scar of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Skinner, Quentin. 1998. *Liberty before Liberalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Skrenty, John D. 2002. *The Minority Rights Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sleeper, Jim. 1997. *Liberal Racism: How Fixating on Race Subverts the American Dream*. New York: Penguin.
- Spickard, Paul. 2005. "Race and Nation, Identity and Power: Thinking Comparatively about Ethnic Systems." Pp. 1–29 in Paul Spickard (ed.), *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World*. New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, Charles, with commentary by Amy Gutmann, Steve C. Rockefeller, Michael Walzer, and Susan Wolf. 1992. *Multiculturalism and the "Politics of Recognition."* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tichenor, Daniel J. 2002. *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tiryakian, Edward A. 2004. "Assessing Multiculturalism Theoretically: *E Pluribus Unum, Sic et Non*." Pp. 1–18 in John Rex and Gurharpal Singh (eds.), *Governance in Multicultural Societies*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

- Tully, James. 2002. "Reimagining Belonging in Circumstances of Cultural Diversity: A Citizen Approach." Pp. 152–177 in Ulf Hedetoft and Mette Hjort (eds.), *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Twine, France Winddance. 1998. *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Warren, Jonathan. 2002. *Racial Revolutions: Antiracism and Indian Resurgence in Brazil*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Wieviorka, Michel. 1998. "Is Multiculturalism the Solution?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21(5): 881–910.
- Wilentz, Sean. 2005. *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Wilson, William Julius. 2000. "Jobless Ghettos: The Social Implications of the Disappearance of Work in Segregated Neighborhoods." Pp. 85–94 in Ray Marshall (ed.), *Back to Shared Prosperity: The Growing Inequality of Wealth and Income in America*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Winant, Howard. 2001. *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy Since World War II*. New York: Basic Books.
- Winant, Howard. 1999. "Racial Democracy and Racial Identity: Comparing the United States and Brazil." Pp. 98–115 in Michael Hanchard (ed.), *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Xu, Wu and Ann Leffler. 1996. "Gender and Race Effects on Occupational Prestige, Segregation, and Earnings." Pp. 107–124 in E. Ngan-Ling Chow, D. Wilkinson, and M.B. Zinn (eds.), *Race, Class, and Gender: Common Bonds, Different Voices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

## CHAPTER 14

# Race and the Theatrical Mirror

SIDNEY HOMAN

The “normal” assumption is that the theatre is a good way to gain some perspective on the issues of race and ethnicity—or any issue or concern, for that matter. The world we see onstage, we know, is an illusion, but one with reference to the real world. More than any other medium, the theatre itself is “real”: actors are not projections on a screen, or the still figures of sculpture; the dialogue is delivered in actual space and time rather than being words on a page.

But in presenting an alternative to the “normal” assumptions about the theater as defined above, I am not trying to contradict as much as complement them, to suggest that the same theatre which serves as Hamlet’s “mirror” has another master, *itself*, the theatrical experience which coexists with whatever we may determined is the theme of the play at hand. A portrait in a play of, say, a black man or a Latino woman or an Eastern-European Jew—my point is—is by definition impure, “unrealistic,” not because the playwright lacks experience with such people, indeed, may even be African-American or Latino or Jewish himself or herself. Rather, such characters or such subject matter are, in the theatre, subsumed by the larger aesthetic principles of the medium and the craft: establishing a credible but unreal world, a convincing illusion, that, while it certainly may and should bear implications for the real world outside the theatre, is ultimately not a transcript of reality.

The theatre, as I am defining it, is thus a double-edge sword. It can help us see the issues of race and ethnicity as clearly as, if not more so than, any other medium. But we also must remember that the theatre also abides by the aesthetics of the medium itself. My assumption, however, is that providing that mirror, gaining a perspective on our world, is not an end in itself but the avenue toward action, results, the theoretical or illusory serving as the means to a practical end, that the goal of any inquiry is to help society understand and, in some cases, resolve its problems on the twin subjects of this book.

On the one hand, we would want to avoid sealing a performance hermetically from life as, say, the New Criticism once did in their argument that the “world” of art is unrelated to anything outside its confines, distinct even from the life of the artist. In the theatre, this New Critical argument has found an advocate in David Mamet, who contends that the play is no more, or less, than what is there on the stage, that the Method actor’s effort to create a life for the character beyond the lines violates that integrity.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See Shamrock McShane’s comments on Mamet’s theories of acting in “Playing Spooner / Directing *No Man’s Land*,” forthcoming in *The Pinter Review*.



On the other hand, I think too many studies of the theatre treat plays as if they were raw data, inseparable from the facts gathered by a newspaper reporter or the interviews conducted by the sociologist or psychologist. Erving Goffman argued years ago that the theatrical metaphor informs the way we look at, conceive of, and often act in the world.<sup>2</sup> But the assumption here is that there is a straight line from that portrait from life into the play's world and then back into life. The playwright as psychologist, or sociologist, or historian.

The theatre itself has sometimes been the source of this confusion. In the 1960s "happenings" might involve a group of people assembled on a busy street corner, waiting to see the first accident or mugging. The idea was that under these conditions the actual event, rather than being random, was converted to a play witnessed by the audience. But such happenings received a horrible extension in the Kitty Genovese case, where a young girl was brutally raped and murdered on a New York street while hundreds of people looked on from their apartments, an "audience" of which no one bothered to help her, let alone call the police. A gruesome crime had been transformed unwittingly into a theatrical event.

If I seem to be going in a negative direction, arguing against using the theatre as a mirror, I gladly reverse myself with the assumption that plays begin in the real world, in the real-life experience of both the author and the audience who come to see them, that such real-life "raw" material is then taken into the art form, metamorphosed into that hermetically sealed world of the New Critic, but that at length this fictive world itself dissolves and is one more time metamorphosed after the performance into the thoughts and hence experiences of the audience leaving the house. This interaction between audience and author, which predates and is subsequent to the performances, encircles whatever "world" exists onstage.

This fact was graphically demonstrated, for me, during a prison tour of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the quintessential play of the "Theatre of the Absurd" where two little men, Didi and Gogo, wait for a man named Godot, who not only doesn't appear but is not identified.<sup>3</sup> While waiting, they encounter two new characters, Pozzo and Lucky, the former once the student, now transformed into a cruel master, the latter once the teacher, now being led by Pozzo with a rope around his neck: Pozzo is tasking the ill-named Lucky to a carnival where he intends to sell him. Didi and Gogo come from the post-modern theatre, little men, like Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whose only function is to wait, for whom life is a process but without an ending; Pozzo and Lucky come from what Beckett views as the old-style theatre, one with a plot, a story line, a beginning and an ending, but here a tragi-comedy where master and servant have reversed roles, the servant being led to his humiliation.

We had performed *Godot* some 50 times before "straight" audience but never at a prison. Now, with a state grant in hand, we traveled to Raiford Prison in Starke, Florida, the state's maximum-security facility, where the "lifers" lived. Our audience, some 1,500 men, was mostly African-American and that, of course, is a comment in itself on our criminal justice system. Used to polite, "intellectual" silence from well-educated, comfortable audiences, we were shocked when, from the second line of the play onward, the inmate audience began shouting out questions and comments to the actors onstage. They were not being rude, but rather taking the play so literally, breaking down the barrier between the stage and themselves, that they were demanding to be let into the performance. (We were experiencing, I found out later, exactly what the Actors Workshop had experienced 20 years before when

<sup>2</sup> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> I speak of this prison tour at greater length in *Staging Modern Playwrights: From Director's Concept to Performance* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2003), pp. 115–17.

their director, Alan Schneider, had the inspired idea of staging a play about men waiting before an audience of men waiting—at Alcatraz.) Soon, we were performing two plays, the one we had carefully rehearsed and now this second one where the audience interacted with the characters, demanding of them what was “meant,” blasting another actor for “treating him that way.” The inmates insisted that we step out of character and discuss this line or that gesture with them, before resuming the performance.

At the end of the second act—the performance with all these productive interruptions ran almost four hours rather than the usual two—we were getting ready to head back to Gainesville, after soaking up the abundant applause, when the inmates, violating the warden’s order to move toward the back of the cafeteria, charged towards us onstage. The lead inmate of Raiford, a tall African-American, came up to me, squeezed me by the shoulders and then lifted me up so our faces were level, and said, “Listen, Sid, we want to talk to you all about this Godot guy, the guy who doesn’t appear. And we have some thoughts about the other characters, especially Pozzo and Lucky.” For 50 years, of course, directors and actors, students and scholars, have debated who Godot is—God, Death, all those things you wish for that never come. Beckett himself has said, “If I knew who Godot was, I would have said so in the play.”<sup>4</sup> After some quick negotiations with the warden, angry with me for fouling up the bed-check and the prison schedule, we sat down with inmates and had some of the most eloquent, intense discussions I have ever known as a teacher. Their text was not so much the play as a case history as it was their own experience watching *Godot* as audience. Each inmate fashioned his own private Godot, doing precisely I imagine the playwright would have wanted: taking the character from the performance into the fabric of his own life. What was fascinating was how much the inmates resented Lucky for buckling under Pozzo’s system, and how often they identified Pozzo with the warden who, in introducing the show, put down the inmates in the crudest, most obscene language I had ever heard in public. I heard the inmates use the “n” word liberally, in a joking, understanding way when applied to Didi and Gogo, who were clearly seen as onstage surrogates for the men, consigned to the meaningless routine of waiting, without hope, talking “to pass the time and keep silence away,” as one inmate put it. But that same “n” word was used in a derogatory way for Lucky, also branded “a slave” and “an Uncle Tom.”

Stimulated by this experience at Raiford, we subsequently took the production to nine other Florida state prisons, men’s and women’s, maximum- and minimum-security facilities, and at every one the reception was the same, this wonderful inability of the inmates to separate the play from their own lives, from themselves, and their subsequent reading into *Godot* their own waiting.

If the play can be a mirror for society, if, for our purpose, it can contribute to our study of race and ethnicity, it is important, therefore, that it be taken on its own terms, its differences from life recognized no less than its obligation to the real world, both before and after the performance. This said, I propose to examine the issue of race in five works, and I have purposely chosen plays very different in nature.<sup>5</sup> The only larger pattern is that they illustrate potential

<sup>4</sup> See Samuel Beckett, “Three Dialogues with George Duthuit,” in Martin Esslin, ed., *Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965): p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> The texts for the five plays are: Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* and *The Island* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976); Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, in *Modern Drama: Selected Plays from 1879 to the Present*, ed. Walter Levy (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999); William Shakespeare, *Othello*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, textual editor G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974); August Wilson, *Fences* in *Three Plays* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1994). *Black Voices*, ed. Sidney Homan, exists in manuscript and is the property of the Acrosstown Repertory Theatre, Gainesville, Florida.

approaches for playwrights, and hence ways of considering the issue of race in the theatre while being respectful of the peculiar demands of the medium. In order, I propose to look at:

Shakespeare's *Othello*, where the Moor's race is not an end in itself but functions symbolically in a world where Desdemona is as inclusive in her choice of an aged, pagan black man as her society is exclusive—and racist. In this sense, the villain Iago embodies the agenda and deepest neuroses of that racist society. All this from a playwright whose London of 1604 had perhaps two or three black men from Africa.

Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun* is a “conventional” play—and I mean that in the most positive sense of the word—where her allegorical black characters give a special meaning to a work that is otherwise driven by plot, the “causal events” that Aristotle praises in his *Poetics*.

August Wilson's *Fences*, I contend, is more a poem about race, or a symphony of motifs, than a plot-driven play in the way that I use that term when speaking about Hansberry's work. Wilson, of course, is this nation's most eminent and successful black playwright, and a man with very definite ideas about the racial qualifications of directors and actors performing his works.

Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, by a white South African, had its origins as an improvised performance piece where his fellow “playwrights” (as he credits them) were blacks oppressed by that country's apartheid government. The work is something of a paradox: on the one hand, it is a direct, political attack on the racist government; on the other hand, it is a highly theatrical piece where the issue of identity is enacted through the play's own metadramatic dimension rather than solely through the implicit political message.

Finally, I look at my own experience as co-director of *Black Voices*, an open, “Brechtian” examination of race where the material came from non-dramatic sources—poems, novels, speeches, interview, music, and dance by African-American artists over the last 200 years. The work was simultaneously a “study” of black culture—and subsequently the identify of America's African-Americans as they struggle in a white-dominated society—and a celebration of that culture and identity, performed by an all African-American cast, directed by white and African-American co-directors.

If this were a study of types of theatre, rather than race in the theatre, the immediate focus of the inquiry would be the symbolic, the allegorical, the poetic, the political and metadramatic, and the Brechtian or “open” alternatives of stage drama. But my focus here addresses the question announced earlier: how can we most profitably use the theatre as a mirror for the issue of race in this country?

## *OTHELLO*

By modern standards, Othello is not even “black”; he came from Morocco and his skin would have been dark olive, not black. But the Elizabethans had a fetish about being white; they applied a mixture of egg white and acid to their faces to bleach them as white as a sheet of paper. There were no black–white intermarriages in Elizabethan society, and so the union of Desdemona and Othello is what Shakespeare would call “fantastical,” out of the ordinary, not abiding by the laws of reason or even normalcy. The charges brought by the grieving father, Brabantio, that the black man must have won his daughter by “foul charms” (1.2.73), are dispelled when the supposed victim says in court that she “saw Othello's visage in his mind” (1.3.252); it was the quality of the man, not his race or physical appearance, that attracted her. Theirs, then, is an extraordinary union. Even Cassio, the young man Iago casts

as Desdemona's seducer, recognizes this: as he waits for the two ships, bearing husband and wife, respectively, to arrive, Cassio speaks of how Othello's ship will "bless this bay," his arrival giving "fire to our extincted spirits" (2.1.81).

Against this couple Shakespeare pits Iago, the racist. Why Iago despises Desdemona, and Othello for marrying her, admits a series of complementary interpretations. His motives, in effect, encompass the spectrum of modern racists. Iago claims that Othello has had sexual relations with Emilia, and he is angry for being passed up in promotion as lieutenant in favor of the younger Cassio. Perhaps in him we confront the irrational, the mad evangelist, as in his great speech to Roderigo in the third scene where he is reduced to a perverse prayer that Desdemona will abandon Othello, that the "unnatural" union by definition cannot last—"she must change for youth." His lines about Cassio's mistress, Bianca (or the white one), might in turn describe his own neurotic hope that the extraordinary couple will separate: "He hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly" (5.1.9–20). The motives Iago does offer are all suspect since he also says, early in the play, "I am not what I am" (1.1.65), a curious reversal of the Biblical pronouncement by God, "I am that am." Even here we spiral down a catch-22 cycle of contradictions: if he is not what he is, is never as he appears to be, then when he makes this claim, is this too a lie? As a result, we are left with Iago as a contradiction, or a creature, as the poet Coleridge brands him, "of motiveless malignancy."<sup>6</sup>

Iago seems to embody the racism, in all its dimensions, from the conscious to the unconscious, of Venetian society. Brabantio, hearing Iago's warning that "an old black ram / Is tupping [his] white ewe" (1.1.88–89), equates the news with an "Accident . . . not unlike my dream" (1.1.142): in his sleep Brabantio has been having a racist father's worse nightmare. The father voices the conscious but irrational racist doctrine: in marrying Desdemona's "nature [has] so preposterously . . . err[ed]" against itself (1.2.62), which Iago later echoes when he reminds Othello himself that Desdemona has acted unnaturally "not to affect many proposed matches / Of her known clime, complexion, and degree, / Whereto we see in all things nature tends" (3.3.229–231).

A Freudian interpretation might identify Iago with the Id, Desdemona the Superego, and Othello the resulting Ego, or the character who is the constant, changing negotiation between those two primal forces in the human psyche. Both cannot be in ascendancy, and Desdemona's marriage to Othello only excites, in a curious sense calls into being, Iago, or the Id. It is significant that the two are only together in dialogue for two short moments onstage, as if being antithetical forces they cannot occupy the same space. In the first (2.1.117–133), Iago waits with Desdemona for Othello's ship to arrive, and when, to pass the time, she innocently asks him to "praise" her (that is, to say something positive about her since he has just slandered his own wife, Emilia), Iago, normally adept with words, is rendered inarticulate. Her simple social request, designed to break the tension between a bickering husband and wife and to relieve her own anxieties about Othello's safety, throws him into a frenzy. He protests that he is "nothing if not critical" (that is, he will cease to be if he attempts to say something positive), that her request tears out his "brains and all." When she innocently presses him for a reply, he is reduced to a two-line couplet: "If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit, / The one's for use, the other useth it" (2.1.129–130): even fairness (beauty) and wit (intelligence, in the sense the word had in the Renaissance) must be turned

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Dent, 1960), pp. 110–111.

inside out, be made negatives so that men take advantage (“use”) attractive women for their beauty, while the fair (or white) woman, so used, deceives her husband by her “wit.” Iago’s fathomless racial program is to separate this mixed couple, even as the modern-day racist, perhaps content for a lifetime to allow blacks to live separately in relative peace, is driven to fury by the first racially mixed couple he sees. That couple challenges his absolute conviction of racial separation. The Othello who has married Desdemona is, from Iago’s perspective, unnatural and thus his line to Roderigo has a relevance that may be unintended: “Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago” (1.1.57). Othello perverts Iago’s sense of self. The Othello corrupted by marriage cannot co-exist with the memory of the bachelor soldier who once found Iago’s friendship sufficient.

Iago’s racial hatred is here at one with the inability of many men in Shakespeare, not all of them villains, who have enormous difficulty in admitting the “other,” almost always a woman, into their up-to-now circumscribed world. I think of Antonio’s jealousy over Bassanio’s courtship of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Mercutio’s disdain of Romeo for loving Juliet, even Benedict’s cynical dismissal of Claudio’s love for Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Shylock is the “other” who cannot be accommodated by a smug white racist society in *The Merchant of Venice*, and yet it takes a woman, the other “other,” to defeat him at the trial over the pound of flesh. If to some degree Shylock is the creation of the Venetian businessmen who greet us in the opening scene, the moneylender whom they suffer to handle their financial matters but deny a place in their society and friendship, then Portia, in effect, saves them from themselves, from the creature spun from their own Id of ethnic and religious prejudices. As a plea for Shylock’s humanity—we all know the famous line “Hath not a Jew eyes?”—*The Merchant of Venice* was as radical for Shakespeare’s audience as was *Othello*, for the spectators surely entered the Globe Theatre assuming that if a young white Christian girl married an old black pagan, the marriage could not last. Such a match would normally be the subject of a comedy of adultery: she marrying him to defy the father, or as some sort of “lark” or “racial kick,” he marrying her for her youth or her whiteness. There would also be a proper young white man, like Cassio, waiting in the wings. For Shakespeare’s white audience would assume that people of any other race would try by marriage to force themselves into the majority; he turns the table on this assumption in *The Merchant of Venice* when Shylock’s daughter Jessica marries the Christian Lorenzo. The audience for *Othello* holds a view like that of old Brabantio; the play then challenges it.

The third scene of Act 3 begins with what we might call Iago’s first direct campaign to win back Othello (3.3.94–116). Iago poses an innocent, seemingly irrelevant question: “Did Michael Cassio, when you woo’d my lady, / Know of your love?” When I played Othello,<sup>7</sup> I thought to myself, “What a silly question! What difference would that make? In point of fact, he did.” As Othello will disclose, Cassio not only knew of Desdemona but served as a go-between when the lovers were conducting what had to be a difficult courtship, given Brabantio’s racist attitudes. Faced with a silly question, Othello remains courteous, and instead of giving Iago the answer he deserves (such as “That’s irrelevant”), he replies, “He did.” At this my Iago made the very grimace Othello himself will describe in a few lines: “contract and purse thy brow together.” That grimace unsettles Othello, and so he volunteers more information than the question initially sought: “from first to last.” Still unsettled by

<sup>7</sup> I first played Othello in 1992 in a production called *Poets, Lovers, and Madmen* at the Center for the Performing Arts, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida; and later at the Thomas Center, Gainesville, Florida; and in Winter Park, Florida. I speak about this experience, and draw some of the comments in this section from my *Directing Shakespeare: A Scholar Onstage* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), pp. 112–117.

Iago's silence, he adds, "Why dost thou ask?" Othello cannot answer bluntly, cannot leave his initial "He did" alone. Under any normal circumstances, that would have been sufficient, but there is something in Othello, more than just courtesy I believe, driving him here.

A black actor once told me that, for him, Othello's lines "My [*Her* in the Second Quarto] name, that was as fresh / As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black / As mine own face" (3.3.386–388) were the saddest moment in the play. Othello now associates blackness, his blackness, with what is ugly, despised, while linking white, Desdemona's white, with the beautiful. He, the outsider, chosen by this extraordinary woman despite the protests of her father, loses in a moment of self-doubt, of heart-wrenching weakness, his defense against the community's racism. To paraphrase the slogan from the Civil Rights movement, for him "Black is [not] beautiful." The racism of Venice has infected Othello himself.

I tried to bring this same self-doubt to my Othello. Iago has tapped into something within him, that small voice, wrong, irrelevant, doubting Desdemona's love. For me, that sub-textual voice, nourished by the Iago within me, was saying, "Why would a young, Christian white woman love me, an old, pagan, black man? Wouldn't she normally pick someone like . . . like Cassio? With me is it something other than love? Defying her rigid old father? The 'thrill' of being with a black man?"

Like Dante's Satan, Iago does not overwhelm his prey, nor is he some irresistible force. Rather, he seeks out a weakness, something already within the victim; here Othello's self-doubts provide that opportunity. I have always read Iago's otherwise practical observation in the opening scene as, "In following him, I follow but myself [that is in him]" (1.1.58).

Perhaps this rare marriage of a black man and a white woman calls into doubt Iago's own constrictive world so that now he feels excluded. So long in the majority, Iago is becoming the minority. Inferior to Othello in position, at least in the past he could always feel racially superior.

Othello's latest fact, that Cassio was the go-between for the lovers, their messenger, provides its own unintentional sexual innuendo which Iago raises with "Indeed?" Iago can now say less and less as Othello begins to appropriate his speech, his role, with an "indeed" of his own. That exclamation is followed by a maddening silence from Iago, forcing Othello to repeat the word as an exclamation. Even questions turn on themselves; he greets Othello's "Is he not honest?" with "Honest?" He pushes Othello to define his terms, even as he pretends to be hesitant to label Cassio (or Desdemona, for that matter) as "dishonest," with its double sense of truth-telling and faithful. My image of Othello's situation here was of Iago's body horribly intertwined with my own, like invasive diseased cells that have become indistinguishable from the host tissue. Iago clings to that part of Othello which is himself, however diminished it may currently be because of the marriage.

Significantly, at the end of the play, when Othello knows the truth, that his wife has been faithful, that Iago has deceived him or—equally—that he has allowed himself to be deceived, he attempts to buff up his shattered image, this Colin Powell once so valued by Venice that, despite their racism, they hired him to defend the city state against the Turks (5.2.338–359). He recalls a time in Aleppo when he saw a "malignant and a turban'd Turk" who beat a Venetian citizen and "traduc'd" (take the name in vain) the state. On that occasion Othello "smote the circumcised dog," an action he then revisits as he takes his own life in atonement for doubting Desdemona. Here Othello, the black man, the Moor, identifies with the white Venetian citizen, and symbolically murders the dark or Iago part of himself, the "other" in the form of a Turk. This may be a far cry from Malcolm X's "black is beautiful," but now Othello, the object of racial hatred, the other, takes the one action elevating himself to the status of a Shakespearean tragic hero.

## A RAISIN IN THE SUN

First and foremost, *A Raisin in the Sun* has a story to tell, and it is like something you might find in a magazine article's account of the struggles of a black inner-city family. The Younger family await the \$10,000 payment from an life-insurance check as the means of lifting them out of poverty. In the crowded apartment live the grandmother Lena, the parents Ruth and Walter Lee, their son Travis, and Walter Lee's sister Beneatha. Walter, a chauffeur for a wealthy white man, wants to use the money to open a liquor store with his friend Bobo, a venture that Lena opposes on ethical grounds. Ruth discovers that she is pregnant but does not tell her husband. Travis displays all the impatience and need for identity of any young person. And Beneatha is confronted by two very different suitors: George Murchison, a successful black who has "assimilated" and now rejects his heritage, and his opposite, Joseph Asagai from Nigeria. When the check arrives, Lena pays a third as down payment on a house in an all-white development outside the city, and later, as a gesture of trust, gives the rest to Walter, asking that half be reserved for Beneatha's medical school education, the other half going into a bank account. Meanwhile, Karl Lindner, an agent from the Clybourne Park Homeowners' Association, visits the family, offering to pay them more than the house is worth if they do not move into the all-white neighborhood. He is promptly rebuffed by the Youngers, and they start packing for the move. But things turn sour when it is revealed that Walter has taken the \$6000 entrusted to him and given it to one Willy Harris to invest, and that Harris has run off with the money. Beneatha meanwhile has refused both suitors. When Lindner returns a second time, to make his final offer to the family, Walter is tempted to trick him by acting as if they had bought the house, thereby pocketing the Association's money. But at the last minute, inspired by his wife's own courage, her determination to "work twenty hours a day in all the kitchens in Chicago . . . [and to] strap [her] baby on [her] back" to pay for the move, he relents and a second time he refuses the offer. The play ends with their leaving the apartment, but anxious about their fate as the first black family in the new neighborhood.

The issue of race aside, the plot structure is a model of play construction: the initial problem (the family's discontent in the crumbling apartment), the expectation of a change (the insurance check), the ascending action (Lena's announcement about the down payment on a new house), the complications of the sub-plot (the twin courtship of Beneatha), the rising action (the family's refusal of the white man's offer), the downward action (the loss of the money), the resolution of the sub-plot (Beneatha's refusing of both suitors), the climax (Walter's decision to trick the white man when he comes back a second time with the offer), the reversal (his change of heart and subsequent finding of himself ["com[ing] into his manhood" as Lena calls it]), and the guarded but happy resolution (the family's moving out of the apartment for what promises to be a brave but also difficult new world).

If the issue were just the plot we would have a fairly literal, but—more important— isolated story, the potential setback and ultimate ethical victory of a black inner-city family, where human will (the grandmother's resolve, the wife's courage, the husband's change of heart, the son's and sister's decision to preserve the family unit) at very least holds at bay a world where race and economics conspire against the family (the present poverty, the offer from the homeowner's association, the wear and tear on the family because of a situation for which in large measure they are not responsible, the betrayal by the friend holding the insurance money).

However, what elevates *A Raisin in the Sun* above being just a story, a staged newspaper-like account of a situation all too familiar for black inner-city families, indeed one where the

resolution might be dismissed by some as overly optimistic, is the allegorical status that Ms. Hansberry confers on the characters. By allegory I do not mean the “this-equals-that” formula of the genre in which the reader knows that every character or event stands for something beyond its literal self, such as we might find in the Medieval tale, an early-Renaissance morality play like *Everyman*, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, or, for that matter, Spenser’s sophisticated allegory *The Fairie Queen*. Rather, I use the term to define the ways in which the Younger family call up personality and ethical types of individuals who are at once grounded and fleshed out in the performance by the real-life actors assigned the parts even as they reflect Hansberry’s own thoughts on the fate of being black, of her own status and, no less, her ethical imperatives.

Lorraine Hansberry was born in Chicago of a middle-class black family, her father a businessman who was also a civil rights activist and through whom she met the singer Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Dubois (her teacher at the New School for Social Research), and Langston Hughes (her model for the artist as activist).<sup>8</sup> Later, in 1953 she married Robert Nemiroff, a white man, whom she met on a pro-civil rights picket line at New York University. It was his success as a popular songwriter that allowed her to try her hand as a full-time playwright. While I am not suggesting a straight-line correspondence between the playwright’s life and the present work, the fact is that the family in *A Raisin in the Sun* aspires to middle-class status, and assumes the role of political activists in their decision to move to the white neighborhood. Like the playwright, Beneatha is the family intellectual, caught between two suitors, the negro who has blended into white society and the Nigerian. Hansberry studied African history under Dubois while in New York. Inevitably, the play bears implications and biographical parallels beyond its immediate plot.

Allegory is by definition a somewhat reductive art. The character or object presently before us exists for some larger, more philosophical reason, yet what saves *A Raisin in the Sun* from the fate of those discarded non-dramatic allegories of earlier ages is precisely the fact that it is a play, dependent on live actors. Any actor will invariably bring real-life experiences to the role. As a director, you do not tell an actor to move stage-left since that action represents, say, the existential despair of modern man. Rather, the actor will ask for or, more likely, want to devise some psychological, human-based, non-abstract reason for the cross: she moves stage-left since what a fellow character has just said touches something deep in her and she needs a little space to recover from the remark, as well as to hide her feelings from the speaker (but not the audience).

And so if I suggest the following allegorical types for the play’s characters, it must be understood that onstage they become more than mere representations. Ruth is the patient, ethical black woman, somewhat resigned to her fate, saddened but not bitter by life on Chicago’s South Side, but like her mother-in law still able to preserve her own ethical principles. She clearly sacrifices for others. Travis is the prototypical teenager, at once cleaving to his present life but also eager to strike out on his own, to find his own identity which, at present, remains undefined. Beneatha is the black intellectual, a bit adrift in her present situation, yet with a clear idea of what constitutes upward mobility, a would-be doctor for whom medicine is first of all a matter of principle rather than a money-making profession. She will even sacrifice love for that goal. Lena is the black woman of the older generation, the strong, self-reliant woman, at odds in her religion with the God-denying Beneatha, lovable but crusty, and,

---

<sup>8</sup> See the useful biography of Lorraine Hansberry by Walter Levy in *Modern Drama: Selected Plays from 1879 to the Present*, pp. 560–561.



despite her age, curiously modern, and very attuned to the needs of the family. She spans past and present. Joseph Asagai is the radical African, contemptuous of materialistic American society, proud of his African heritage, willing to sacrifice himself for the cause of freedom for his people, intense, desperately in love with Beneatha, but also demanding. George is, as the play calls him, the “assimilated” black man, whose rejection of black heritage is in one sense understandable (he too wants to be part of the dominant American society) but also a sign of his weakness: he is a snob of the worst order, especially on matters of black culture. Bobo is the loyal friend, cherished by Walter, but he represents that older, all-male society to which Walter can no longer belong exclusively. Karl Linder is the white racist, with a veneer of reason and decorum, but no more than that, a practical man, the advocate of separate and—most probably—equal, but regressive, and “conservative” in the pejorative sense that word has now acquired.

And Walter Younger has properly been linked not so much with an allegorical type as with Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. This man of complex, competing parts—lovable, tyrannical, self-serving and egotistic, pathetic, given to moments of nobility, a black man who stays with his family, just as willing to blame the world for his woes (and hence to rationalize his actions, such as cheating the homeowner’s association) as he is to find in himself and his actions a way out of a deplorable situation for which he is only partly responsible. His “renaissance” at the end, the decision not to cheat Lindner, is like the personal victory Lear achieves when he reunites with his daughter Cordelia, and thus throws away what Shakespeare call his “worser self.” Walter indeed has the makings of a tragic hero, the flawed man struggling in a hostile, implacable universe, who at the end is rescued from tragedy by his own decision, through his own will.

But this combination of what I have called a newspaper-like story with allegorical characterization allows what would otherwise be a very literal one to glow with meanings, implications, and thus to illuminate and enlarge Hansberry’s focus on the conditions and the aspirations of inner-city black Americans.

Unlike August Wilson, she is not given to poetic language; metaphors and similes are rare, and what few allusions there are—Walter is likened to Prometheus (p. 584) and the bar he frequents is appropriately called the Green Hat—appear somewhat forced. Her longish description of borrowing Willy Harris’s car and driving “way past south Chicago” and “way, way up to Wisconsin” where he “looked at the farms” (p. 588), a monologue that we might expect from Troy in Wilson’s *Fences*, seems a bit out of place, an aria that runs counter to the otherwise fast-paced dialogue. But the allegorical grid to the play is more than enough to deepen what would otherwise be simple, at worst prosaic dialogue. Hence, there is a larger context when a character speaks of doing “something different,” pushing “out and do[ing] something” (p. 587). Or when Walter announces, “I got to change my life” since he is “choking” (p. 584). Hansberry’s is the poetry of everyday speech. Even the spiritual is pressed into service for this larger motif of change, and the yearning for change: “I got wings . . . all God’s children got wings” (p. 593). Lena, who upholds the past and the Christian faith that Beneatha rejects, is peculiarly sensitive to change: “How different we done become” (p. 581). And Ruth’s final cry resonates beyond its immediate object that they leave the apartment quickly: “LET’S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE” (p. 602).

As the play’s most complex character, Walter appropriately draws the bulk of this language alive below its surface meaning. He recognizes that his life, and his hardships, “was give to me this way,” and his vow to get “down on [his] black knees” (p. 600) if necessary before the white man signals his own painful recognition that he has reached the low point of a life that is a “barrel of disappointments” (p. 572). Walter says more than he knows in

his otherwise brotherly reminder to Bobo that he has “put [his] life in [Bobo’s] hands” (p. 595). Lear’s “I am a man more sinned against than sinning” is here Walter’s “Will someone please listen to me today?” (p. 580). Lena puts his situation in a more forgiving Biblical perspective, insisting that the family “take into account what hills and valleys he come through” (p. 601).

The word “identity” circles about the play, as in Beneatha’s and Asagai’s debate on the issue (p. 577). Her favorite words are “cure” (p. 596) and “fix” (p. 571), as a means to reshape identity, and the “heritage” that George dismisses (p. 583) she embraces as part of her own self-image. Her would-be Nigerian lover spots her need for this larger role with the nickname he gives her, Alaiyo, which he translates as “One for Whom Bread—Food—is Not Enough” (p. 578)

Even the visual imagery of the play is invested with this allegory. Hansberry’s longish description of the set underscores the present life of the family who, while waiting for the insurance check, feel caught in an old apartment, passed on from Lena and her husband to the second generation but one which now seems more of a prison: “Now the once loved pattern of the couch upholstery has to fight to show itself from under acres of crocheted doilies and couch covers which have themselves finally come to be more important than the upholstery” (p. 565). And the final image we see is of the old woman standing “at last alone” in the living room, “her plant on the table before her.” Suddenly, “despite herself, a great heaving thing rises in her and she puts her fist to her mouth, takes a final desperate look, pulls her coat about her, pats her hat and goes out.” But at the last moment Lena comes back in and “grabs the plant” (p. 602).

The otherwise prosaic dialogue and commonplace visual imagery are thus enhanced by the allegory. That allegory suggests the journey, born from frustration and the concomitant need for change, of the poor urban black family, their attempt to retain their past, their heritage, and avoid the lure of total assimilation into white culture. They seek an identity even in the midst of change, balancing necessity with what the play calls in Walter’s reformation “manhood.” Watching *A Raisin in the Sun* we have a sense, as one of my actors says of the play, that “larger things are afoot.”

## FENCES

As Sandra Shannon reminds us in her excellent study *The Dramatic Vision of August Wilson*, Wilson began not as a playwright but as a poet.<sup>9</sup> And by the time he came to write *Fences* he was under pressure from friends and critics to improve on his “unfocused plots and shallow characters,” such as one finds in earlier plays like *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* and *Jitney!* *Fences* thus represents his efforts to “raise a single character to a much grander scale,” to combat the claim that his earlier characters were hurried and two-dimensional.<sup>10</sup> Yet when asked about the influence of his poetry on his plays, he calls it “the bedrock . . . primarily not so much in the language as it is in the approach and the thinking—thinking as a poet, one thinks differently than one thinks as a playwright.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Sandra G. Shannon, *The Dramatic Vision of August Wilson* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1995), p. 202.

<sup>10</sup> Shannon, *Dramatic Vision*, p. 90.

<sup>11</sup> See August Wilson’s interview with Sandra Shannon in *The Dramatic Vision*, p. 202.

There is a plot in *Fences*, more of an arc to the dialogue, where Troy struggles with his past, his present, his son, his wife, the pull between his loyalty to his family and some other unfocused identity, which he finds briefly in an affair with a young woman, and from which a child is born. That plot is resolved when, after the mother's death, his wife Rose agrees to take in the child, Raynell, and raise it as her own.

But I think the core organization of the play remains poetic, a series of layers of various sizes and hues, shifting levels of intensity, each with its own language although that language is subsumed under the larger style of the playwright. Wilson, in effect, approaches the issue of race, its definition and its conflict centered in his extraordinary central character Troy Maxon, through a series of interrelated poetic contemplations. To double the metaphor, the play is also like a jazz score, whose variations on the original melody form a logical, progressive series that sometimes leaps ahead, at others times doubles back on itself. This principle of poetic contemplation or—alternately—a musical score informs both the separate scenes and the overall structure of the play, with Act 1 having four, Act 2 five scenes.

Describing the elements of four of the scenes, two from each act, will give a more concrete picture of Wilson's poetic or jazz orientation.

Act 1, scene 1 starts lightly, with banter between Troy and his buddy Bobo about a tale involving a watermelon thief, before moving without a beat into Troy's early days when he courted Rose. When Rose appears, she and Troy reminisce about their meeting, but the reverie is cut short at the mention of the local A& P, where Troy refuses to shop since he is treated better at Bella's higher-priced small neighborhood store. And this first "complaint" (a word Rose uses frequently) by Troy broadens to his demand that his son Cory work at the A&P, rather than seek out a college sports scholarship, that demand a thinly disguised effort by Troy to hide his own anguish over being passed over by scouts in an era when the major leagues had no black players. These several segments are capped with Troy's first long speech about challenging Death to a fight, Death now superceding his other frustrations, whether they are with sports or his son. The coda to this first scene comes with appearance of Lyons, the son of an earlier affair. Appropriately in this most musical of plays, Lyons is a musician, and despite Troy's attempt to convince him to take a job as a garbage collector, his own "profession," he is kinder to Lyons than to Cory. The opening scene ends with Rose, as usual, lending Lyons money, but with no great objection voiced by his father. The structure of this opening scene, then, is A/B/A, the A's gentler, more comic, albeit not without some tension, the B setting the ground for darker motifs in subsequent scenes.

The final scene of Act 1 has a very different order—and, as a consequence, a very different mood. Here a tragic past and comic present come into conflict. Once Cory leaves for the game, Troy, Bono, and Ruth recall an old song about a dog name Blue that Troy's father used to sing, but the mention of the father will surface again, and in darker form, later in the same scene. The melody brightens with the news of Troy's promotion—he will now be the sole black driver of the garbage truck, although the news is qualified with Bobo's reminder that Troy lacks a driver's license. The motifs are disparate here. Lyons enters to pay back the loan, but the deranged brother Gabriel, whose insurance Troy has stolen to buy his present house, bursts out in speaking of hellhounds "snipping at everybody's heels" and of the coming Judgment Day (p. 144). The name of the father then resurfaces, as Troy recalls the old man's cruelty and indifference to his children, his sexual appetite; the father's fate then invokes Troy's own time in jails coupled with his depressing account of the poverty of rural blacks. Bono leaves to spend time with his own lover Lucille, and the first act ends with the revelation that Troy has gone to Cory's coach and told him not to let the recruiter contact his son. Troy now angrily tries to insist on his rights as a father, in effect, becoming the same tyrant his own

father was, and as the lights fade to black, he once again calls up a sports metaphor from his own aborted career: "See. You in the batter's box now. You swung and you missed. That's strike one. Don't you strike out!" (p. 153). Here the organization is a simpler one in two-parts. A light opening, or rather a seemingly light opening, which "begets" a darker second half, where Troy's past comes to the surface even as he, caught in that past, falls into the pattern set by his own father.

In the opening scene of the second act Rose's voice sounds more prominently. The watermelon story of Act 1 is replaced by the discussion Troy and Bono have about erecting the fence. For Troy, who has lagged behind in his promise to build it, the fence suggests restraint, the world that has suppressed him; for Rose, it is a positive way of defining and holding together the family. The earlier watermelon story centered on a character outside the play proper; now the fence touches home. After this opening sounding of the melody, Troy and Bono make a wager: if Troy finishes the fence, then Bono will buy a refrigerator for Lucille. Bono plays a counter-melody to Troy, generous and outgoing, functioning as Troy's conscience as he warns him about the affair with Alberta. A secondary motif enters with Troy's account of bailing Gabriel out of jail for \$50 where he was being held for disturbing the peace. The first half of this scene presents two motifs, the major one being Troy's affair with Alberta and the possible consequences (at one with Troy's inability to build the fence that Rose wants). The minor one involves the trouble with Gabriel, and the paradox of Troy's taking responsibility for the very man whose money he has stolen.

The scene's second half is given to an angry duet between the husband and wife and an aria, when Rose finds out about the mistress. Troy tries to justify the affair by claiming that Alberta gives him "a different idea . . . a different understanding about [himself] . . . [a refuge] from the pressures and problems" (p. 163), while Ruth, in simpler fashion, has a single melody, that of reminding Troy of his obligations. If Ruth has been mostly passive so far in the play and the object of some critic's complaint that Wilson does not draw women characters with the same depth as he does males like Troy, she now launches into a sustained aria, whose theme is that she has given everything to her husband, suppressed her own needs: "I planted myself inside you and waited to bloom. And it didn't take me no eighteen years to find out the soil was hard and rocky and it wasn't never gonna bloom" (p. 165). Her earnest poetry here rivals that of Troy in his several speeches about death. His basic metaphor is sports, baseball or boxing; Rose's is that of the garden. The scene ends with Troy's striking Cory, invoking once again the now discredited baseball metaphor, and then exiting "out the yard as the light goes down" (p. 166).

The play's final scene takes place on the day of Troy's funeral; Troy's child with Alberta, Raynell, is now seven years old. The melody here is sustained and domestic, as Cory enters and is introduced to his "sister." When Rose and Raynell exit into the house, Cory and Lyons, the "brothers," call up their bittersweet memories of their father. After Lyons exits into the house to eat the breakfast Rose has prepared, Raynell comes back out, followed by Rose. Cory announces that he won't attend his father's funeral. In this home without a husband, Rose now takes charge, and delivers a moving eulogy for Troy, not minimizing his faults, yet also recognizing his stature: "Here is a man that can fill all them empty spaces you been tipping around the edges of . . . When your daddy walked through the house he was so big he filled it up" (p. 189). She admits he left no room for her but she is now resigned: Raynell becomes the child to replace Troy. When Rose exits, Raynell comes back out and the two children, of different generations and different mothers, join together in singing the song about the dog Blue. Again, the organization is in three parts: a domestic motif at the start and near the end of the scene, and a middle section underscoring the tension between fathers and sons, which is then relieved by Rose's speech: Cory agrees to attend the funeral.

To this three-part melody, Wilson adds a coda (p. 192). Gabriel appears, announcing it is “time to tell St. Peter to open the gates” for Troy. Then, with “great fanfare” he picks up his trumpet to blow as did his name’s sake. But the trumpet has no mouthpiece, and three times Gabriel blows in vain. Wilson comments in the stage direction that “There is a weight of impossible description that falls away and leaves him [Gabriel] bare and exposed to a frightful realization. It is a trauma that a sane and normal mind would be unable to withstand.” Then, brushing aside his failure, Gabriel begins a frenzied dance, even pushing Lyons away when he tries to embrace him. “He begins to howl in what is an attempt at song, or perhaps a song turning back into itself in an attempt at speech.” As Gabriel finishes the dance and “the gates of heaven [from his perspective] stand open as wide as God’s closet,” he cries out “That the way that go!” as the lights go down.

The coda is not without controversy. Wilson himself defends it by praising Gabriel as a “self-sufficient character . . . [who] gets up and goes to work every day,” and hence his final appearance shows the resiliency of this man, his optimism.<sup>12</sup> However, one critic complained that the ending was “so silly that it was ridiculous.” A producer, without Wilson’s permission, even deleted the ending from the New York production. Still, one of the actors in that show defended the ending, saying it “drew laughter from the audience and raised their spirits just before the curtain fell.”<sup>13</sup> Sandra Shannon likewise justifies Wilson’s choice by suggesting that Gabriel can look “beyond the literal” and this is his “means of negotiating in an indifferent world.”<sup>14</sup> A “flawed icon” of African-American’s cultural past, he is something of a “cultural paradox.” His mind ruined by a metal plate in his head, the result of a wound during the war, Gabriel is dismissed by the other characters as crazy. Still, he conveys “in his distorted sensibilities the cultural bedrock of generations past and to come.” In the terms with which I have been analyzing *Fences*, Gabriel’s final visual image and his inarticulate cries are inseparable from the play’s own poetic organization, its approach to the issue of race.

Balanced against the flawed, tragic hero Troy, and the concomitant tragedy of his wife Rose, is the affirmation of a newly reconstituted black family at the end, one brought together by the child Raynell and the need to pay respects to Troy. The African-American, caught between failure essentially not of his or her own making and the faith, religious or otherwise, in a better world, is made manifest in what happens to Gabriel. His trumpet fails him, but when he dances, however impossible or deluded his vision, for him the gates of heaven open—for Troy no less than himself.

## SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD

*Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* is unique for our discussion in several ways. A liberal white South African, Athol Fugard, is responsible for its conception, but he is quick to admit that two black actor friends, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, were his collaborators for the final script (as well as the two actors in its premier performance in 1971 at The Space in Cape Town). That is, the play is in part a transcript of an improvisation. In a country where racism took the extreme form of apartheid, that it was performed at all is something of a miracle, given the

<sup>12</sup> See Wilson in Shannon, *Dramatic Vision*, p. 111.

<sup>13</sup> Shannon, *Dramatic Vision*, pp. 113–114.

<sup>14</sup> Shannon, *Dramatic Vision*, p. 114.

suppressive attitude then of the South African government toward black theatre, let alone collaboration between the races on any project. While its authors are careful to appease, and at time to skirt the censors, the work is also the most overtly political black play examined so far, even as it is also the most self-consciously theatrical. At the same time, it is as close to the epic or open theatre championed by Bertolt Brecht we have yet encountered, until the forthcoming discussion of *Black Voices*.

In terms of structure, *Sizwe Bansi* might be considered either loose or intricate in its use of the techniques of theatrical presentation. The play opens with a monologue delivered to the audience by Styles, the owner of a photographer shop, who recounts his life first as an employee of a local Ford factory and then, after realizing that he was little more than the “bloody monkey” (p. 9) of rapacious capitalists, his leaving Ford and opening up “Styles Photographic Studio. Reference Books; Passports; Weddings; Engagements; Birthday Parties and Parties. Proprietor: Styles” (p. 12). After some humorous tales of his work as a photographer, and excursions into his philosophy as a dispenser of happiness and memory, Styles moves into the play itself, with the arrival of a character first known simply as “Man,” the former Sizwe Bansi, who, as we learn later, has taken over the identity of a dead man, Robert Zwelinzima, since as Bansi he lacked a work permit and was threatened by the authorities with exile back to his township. From the moment Styles snaps Zwelinzima/Bansi’s photo, the play changes radically, in the form of a letter-monologue which Bansi writes to his wife Nowetu. Here he recounts living with one Buntu, their visit to Sky’s Place (a local nightclub), and, on leaving after a few drinks, coming upon a dead man, Zwelinzima, in the street. After heated discussion about what they ought to do, Buntu hits on the idea of Bansi’s swamping papers and identities with Zwelinzima. The conflict here is between Bansi’s sense of self and his survival; he chooses the latter, after some interesting play-acting where Buntu impersonates the authorities. It is, of course, this man who has “died” only to be reborn as Robert Zwelinzima, who had come to the photographer’s shop for a picture of his new self, an employee of Feltex Corporation, to send to his wife.

The play, at this level, becomes a display, even a celebration, of modes of presentation in the theatre, with its collage of monologues, flashbacks, its circular structure, the use of playacting or plays-within-the play, the combination of realism and direct addresses to the audience. No less, its theme has theatre as one of the base metaphors. An actor plays Bansi, who in the play itself impersonates, actor-like, a dead man. Bansi’s play-acting suggests that, for Fugard and others, both black and white, playing, the theatre, becomes a way of surviving.

In his edition of *The Township Plays* Dennis Walder points out the vital role that the South African theatre played as a way of releasing tensions and at times covertly attacking the government.<sup>15</sup> With his wife, Fugard founded the African Theatre Workshop for this very purpose. They were later joined by Zakes Mokae, whom Fugard cast in *No-Good Friday*, in establishing the Union of South African Artists, or Union Artists as it became known. There, in Dorkay House, a factory warehouse, township talent was presented before mainly white audiences in Johannesburg during the late 1950s. Later, Union Artists initiated an African Music and Drama Association which sponsored the Rehearsal Room, a private, experimental theatre space in Dorkey House where plays were staged exploring South African issues of race, such as *The Blood Knot*. When Fugard’s passport was taken away in 1967 “for reasons

<sup>15</sup> See Dennis Walder’s introduction to *The Township Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. xvi–xxiii, and for his comments on acting as a “means of survival” p. xxviii.

of safety and security,” he found new theatre opportunities in England; for example, the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs staged *Sizwe Bansi* in 1971.

Fugard’s collaborator John Kami doubled in the roles of Styles and Buntu, and thus the practical Bantu, who first suggests that Bansi impersonate a dead man, is also the artist/photographer, a surrogate for the play’s trinity of creators who likewise champions his profession as a force for survival. For Styles, the studio is

a strong-room of dreams. The dreamers? My people. The simple people who you never find mentioned in the history books, who never get statues erected to them . . . people who would be forgotten, and their dreams with them if it wasn’t for Styles. That’s what I do, friends. Put down in my way on paper the dreams and hopes of my people so that even their children’s children will remember a man. (pp. 12–13)

Styles’s art doubles back here on the political situation, the “dream” of black South Africans for independence, to be realized later under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. Buntu. Styles’s doppelgänger knows well that freedom for Bansi will mean sacrifice, even of his pride, not to mention self-identity. And it is Buntu who does the actual switching of the photos on the documents of Bansi and Zwelinzima. Nor will Bansi’s new life be easy, for if he gets in any trouble with the authorities, they will look into his registration and, in comparing his fingerprints with those on file in Pretoria to check on previous convictions, will inevitably expose his ruse. Or, as Buntu tells Bansi, “when they do that . . . Siswe Bansi will live again and you will have had it” (p. 43). The play ends with Bansi realizing that it may be “impossible” to stay out of trouble since “our skin is trouble,” yet Buntu insists it is worth a “try” (p. 44).

If the structure of the play is loose, there remains this tight link, really an inseparable bond, between theatre and the political/racial situation. The play is no blunt manifesto on the aspirations of black South Africans; rather, its politics are muted, disguised under clever self-conscious theatrics. In this way it harks back to a very old tradition of the theatre as a means of social protest that slips under the censor’s radar. One thinks of the self-effacing titles of Shakespeare’s plays: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (which also mocks authority figures such as Theseus and the patriarchal system embodied by old Egeus), or the alternate title of *Twelfth Night, What You Will* (where in a homophobic society Shakespeare plays with gender bending), or *As You Like It* (which presents a cynical picture of a repressive court juxtaposed with the liberating atmosphere of the country). Fugard and his collaborators are in this tradition.

The open style of the play thus allows the audience to make these connections between theatre and the current racial situation. And whereas an apolitical existentialist might discourse on the concept of changing places with the dead, or a theologian on the fact that the dead here aid the living, for that South African audience at the original production surely Bansi’s loss of identity, his death, would also be taken as a desperate, sad, but yet necessary way of staying alive under a system for which the slightest infraction could result in imprisonment or death.

At times, a more direct political commentary slips through, or, to be more accurate, is not so subtly encased by the play’s insistent theatrics. Styles’s opening monologue is delivered as he pours over a newspaper, glancing at events in the world outside South African, even raising the question of China’s motives in opening talks with the apartheid government (p. 3). The description of the lengths to which the factory bosses go to impress the visiting Ford executives touches on issues of plant safety, employer-employee relations, basic sanity conditions for the workers (the new overalls they are to wear solely for the visit are handed them wrapped in plastic). And Styles has a field day mistranslating the boss’s words to the workers in a language foreign to him. The boss’s “Tell them Mr. Ford is the big Baas. He owns the plant and everything in it” becomes “Gentlemen, old Bradley says this Ford is a big bastard. He owns everything in this building, which means you as well” (p. 7). Thus,

the anguished voice of the South African black breaks through the humor. Collapsing in a chair, an “exhausted” Styles cries out, “You must understand one thing. We own nothing except ourselves. This world and its laws allows us nothing, except ourselves. There is nothing we can leave behind when we die, except the memory of ourselves” (p. 16). When Sizwe hesitates in playing the dead man, Buntu uses a rare swear word in his reply: “Shit on names, man! To hell with them if in exchange you can get a piece of bread for your stomach and a blanket in winter.” He even prefaces this outburst with the names of the very actors involved in the production: “John, Athol, Winston.” Caught between his pride and his need for survival, Siswe is mocked by Buntu as “a fool who is not taking his chance” (p. 37).

The shortest of the plays examined so far, *Siswe Bansi Is Dead*, paradoxically, has the widest canvas in this juxtaposition and blending of politics and theatre. And it is at one with the most Brechtian of the plays we will now examine.

## BLACK VOICES

Bertolt Brecht has championed his “epic” theatre at the expense of what he dismisses as the outdated “illusionist” theatre where the audience, in the darkness, forget themselves and are content to be entertained by a convincing stage illusion of reality.<sup>16</sup> A theatre of pretend, whose world, while orderly and logical, has only the most tangential relation to life outside the theatre. After the performance, each audience member may make connections with what has just transpired, but those connections remain individual, idiosyncratic. In contrast, Brecht’s theatre invites the audience, as well as the actor, to think along with the production. Constantly calling attention to itself—through direct addresses to the audience and Brecht’s “Z effect” by which the spectator is never allowed to become comfortable with, to get a “fix” on a character—his is a theatre acknowledging the political, economic, and historical factors of the everyday world that determine character. In this “open theatre,” the audience is lit as well as the actors onstage, rather than remaining anonymous in the darkness of the house. The stage makes no pretense at illusion, and the play itself serves as the stimulus for thought. Similarly, the Brechtian actor never gets lost in a role but rather is simultaneously in and outside the character, seeing the person impersonated within the larger context of real life.

If an important topic for the theatre is race, if the theatre has a special contribution to make in the inquiry, then this Brechtian theatre poses real advantages. I have had the experience of directing Brecht’s *Galileo* and, more recently, *The Threepenny Opera* which he wrote with Kurt Weill. But my most immediate encounter with Brecht was the production of *Black Voices*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For Brecht’s views on the theatre, see Brecht’s comments in *Brecht on Art and Politics*, Tom Kuhn and Steve Giles, eds. (London: Methuen, 2003). For Brecht’s dramatic theory, see Ronald Gray, *Brecht the Dramatist* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1978); Werner Hecht, “The Development of Brecht’s Theory of Epic Theater: 1918–1933,” *Tulane Drama Review* 6 (1961): 94–96; Jan R. Needle and Peter Thompson, *Brecht* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Walter H. Sokel, “Brecht’s Concept of Character,” *Comparative Drama* 3 (1971): 177–192; W. A. J. Steer, “Brecht’s Epic Theatre: Theory and Practice,” *Modern Language Review* 63 (1968): 637.

<sup>17</sup> Production of *Black Voices* at the Acrosstown Repertory Theatre, March–April, 2005—a restaging of the original production from 2003. **Co-Directors:** Sidney Homan and L’Tanya Van Hamersveld. **Cast:** Cynthia Allen, Quintina Crawford, Gladys Ellis, Kamili, Francis Kennedy, Kevin Mack, L’Tanya Van Hamersveld, Joice Webster. **Choir:** Gloria Ashley, Ardinece Caudle, LaKenya Ellis, Angela Newsome, Marissa Noel, Edwina Ross. **Accompanist:** Michelle Lamb. **Set and Lighting Designer:** Michael McShane. **Stage Manager:** Lamar Griffin. **Musical Consultant:** Royal Colbert. All citations are from the text as prepared for *Black Voices* by Sidney Homan. **Literary Consultant:** Mildred Hill-Lubin.



An original work for the stage, described by one newspaper critic as a “Harlem nightclub review with bite and passion,” *Black Voices* is a collage of writings (prose, poetry, speeches, diaries), music, and dance by African-Americans over the last 200 years. Its cast was all African-Americans; as co-director, I was the sole white member of the company.

*Black Voices* was clearly a show about race, about racial pride, about African-American culture, and there was no disguising the fact of this country’s sad history of slavery and the persistence of discrimination to this day. While not overtly political—we did not, for example, argue for affirmative action—still, on a more general level the show *was* political. With public figures like Frederick Douglass and Richard Wright, the early feminist Sojourner Truth and radicals like Malcolm X, the searing, emotional insights of the poets of the Harlem Renaissance and the “theatre of protest” of the 1960s, how could the show be otherwise? Surrounded by an African-American cast and crew, I was quickly and lovingly dubbed the show’s “token white.”

*Black Voices* was divided into nine sections, “scenes” in effect: Good Mornin’, Black Heroes, Portraits of Women and Men, Slave Diaries, Malcolm and Dr. King, the Harlem Renaissance, What Is It Like to Be Black?, A History of Black Music, and a Finale which included a section from Ntozake Shange’s choreo-poem *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*, a dance called “Free Woman,” and Margaret’s Webster’s “For My People.” Below, I offer an account of four of those sections with an eye toward both content and the staging, especially the ways in which such open theatre served as a mirror for issues of race and ethnicity.

### “Good Mornin’ Blues”

There were five white cubes arranged at various angles onstage, four of them near the front rows of the house on two sides of the otherwise black stage. The piano was in the upstage-right corner; along the upstage wall was a platform with seats for the choir members. Under the pre-show lighting, the audience thereby saw a formal, even stark stage set, the stage confined to the two poles of the color spectrum. Simple, “tentative,” as one audience member called it; another saw it as “waiting to be peopled.” As the house lights went out, the choir, dressed as they would for a Sunday service, could be heard from a corridor behind the audience-left section singing the spiritual “This Joy That I Have” as they made their way onto the stage, shaking hands with members of the audience on the front rows, before taking their place on an upstage platform. Their entrance from downstage was followed by that of the eight-person cast from a door upstage-right, near the piano. In contrast, the cast entered singing the old Fats Waller song “Black and Blue,” where the singer laments the fact that, even though he is “white inside,” his or her black skin brings only sadness and alienation: “Life’s like a thorn, / My heart is torn, / Why was I born? / What did I do to be so black and blue?” The cast was not a single chorus, but purposely eight distinct individuals, each interpreting the song in a highly personal fashion. A beat after the last note from the Waller song, one of the actors—in real life, one of the leading gospel singers in Florida—broke into that old ballad “Good Mornin’ Blues,” where the blues are so pervasive she finds them even in her “bread.” Though assigned to a single actor, this song, as well as others, was also soon shared by fellow cast members and the chorus, singing along, clapping, making comments on the lyrics.

In effect, this was very much an ensemble production, rather than one of clearly individual performances. Two poems announced by members of the choir (for we did not want the audience looking at programs and thereby taking their focus from the stage) followed these two opening songs: one from Haki Madhubuti’s 1967 *Think Blood*, where the poet

laments the menial, stereotypical jobs given Negroes; the other, Jackie Earley's "Got Up This Morning," where, after rejoicing in her "black room," "black thoughts," "black record," and "black clothes," the poet is alarmed to discover, when she opens her "black door," that outside "white snow" is falling. A combination of angry and then comic complaints about the African-Americans' position in the dominant white society, this "wake-up" section, as we sometimes called it, concluded with two miniature plays: the popular ballad "The Sinking of the Titanic," where the clever black-man Shine swims away while the helpless white ship's captain perishes with the vessel; and the folk ballad "Why the Sister in Black Works Hardest," an early feminist piece which equates the white man's black slave with the black man's wife, forced to do his bidding. These two pieces were clearly staged. Shine mimed swimming away from the sinking ship, the captain clinging to the wheel and then losing control when the iceberg hit, with Shine at length tipping an imaginary whiskey to his lips as he finds "salvation" on land. One of the cubes served as the box "full of hard work" that the wife, expecting a pleasant surprise, discovers to her dismay.

Except for the pieces by Madhubuti, this opening section was purposely "light," or *seemingly* light, with its mixture of ironic poems and comic dramatizations about racial inequality. Given the heterogeneous, racially diverse audience we knew to expect for *Black Voices*, we decided to ease everyone—actors included—into what at times would be an evening of anguish and protests.

## Black Men and Women

This section, introduced by the cast's and choir's breaking into a spirited "Down by the Riverside" (during which the cast moved close to the audience, encouraging them to clap and sing along), balanced the historical perspective of the previous section with "portraits of African-American women and men," the order of the gender here purposeful since a not-so-secret agenda of the evening was, to quote the modest demand of Ms. Truth: "if woman have a pint and a man a quart—why can't she have her little pint full?" This third section was dominated by "portraits," snap-shots or cameos revealing a soul such as you might find in a Chekhov short-story.

After the excitement and energy of the spiritual had died down, we opened with Jean Toomer's description of a woman named Fern, from his 1923 work *Cane*. Abused by men when she was young, then tiring of them and finding in herself a private soul quite separate from her society, Fern cultivates an aloofness that rechristened her as a "virgin, in effect." Fern's speech was delivered by the actress sitting perfectly still on a cube at the very downstage edge of the audience, speaking directly to the audience, with the light catching only her face, the body itself dissolved in darkness. Then we radically altered the mood with Lucille Clifton's hymn to the liberated woman, "Homage to My Hips," where her subject, metamorphosed into a cry for women's liberation ("these hips have never been enslaved, / they go where they want to go"), was graphically, even erotically illustrated by the women members of the cast as they danced about the stage. Clifton's poem was quickly followed by a lusty tribute to "Beautiful Black Men" by Nikki Giovanni. The two antithetical moods once established by Toomer's prose piece and the two poems, the remaining selections in section three alternated between those poles. On one side were comic and satiric works: Langston Hughes "Sylvester's Dying Bed," where a lady's-man loses his "hundred pretty mamas" as death approaches, and Nikki Giovanni's sarcastic "For Sandra," in which she chooses revolution over poetry, opting to "clean [her] gun / and check [her] kerosene supply" rather than composing a more conventional ode to a tree or the sky. On the other hand, there were somber, lyrical

pieces like Hughes's "I Too Sing America" (with its threat of black uprising coupled with an appeal to the white majority who, realizing how "beautiful" African-Americans are, will be "ashamed") and Alice Walker's ode to black "Women" of the older generation who, while unable to read, could still bat down the doors of segregated schools to let their children "discover books" and "desks." The focal piece in this third section was Quincy Troupe's "In Texas Grass." Four actors, walking slowly as if hindered by age and a lifetime of hard labor, described a figure eight on the stage. Troupe paints a bleak picture of unemployed men, like "old race horses who've been put out to pasture" or "photos fading / in grandma's picture book," dreaming of "the master and his long forgotten /promise of 40 acres and a male," waiting, "for rusted trains in Texas grass."

## Slave Diaries

Here in "Slave Diaries" we used the entire cast, portraying slaves working at various jobs about the plantation—washing windows, picking cotton, digging ditches, hoeing, dicing carrots, hanging clothes. The texts were the actual words of former slaves, most in their nineties, interviewed during the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers Project of the Roosevelt Administration which hired black writers for the project. The slaves spoke of markets where entire families were divided up and then sold to separate bidders, those rare instances when a slave rose up against a cruel field boss, a man who ferried runaways across the river as part of the underground railroad and, though he had chances to escape himself, worked for four years, and the moment of liberation, how they greeted the good news, the plantation owner forced into the fields to announce that his workers were free. In the final speech, a young woman recalled that some left the plantation immediately while others stayed behind to harvest the crops, but on her final line—"One and all they dey had a good strong notion ter see what it was like to own our own body"—she threw down a sack of potatoes, as the other slaves followed suit, hurling to the floor rakes and hoes, cleaning buckets, the various tools of their labor, and then stomped off the stage to freedom, making their way between the two sections of the audience.

## What Is It Like to Be Black?

In the second act, after the cast and choir had re-entered with "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" (the spiritual rather than the military song), a choir member raised the question of "What is it like to be black? How does it feel?" We were now going to focus almost exclusively on the issue of color—skin, features, the mythology, good and bad, of race. Three short pieces got right to the issue: Gwendolyn Bennet's lyrical account of "Lithe Negro Girls" who dance to the rhythms of "a strange black race," though on their faces they have pasted "a minstrel-smile"; Langston Hughes's "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," where the connection is made between the "deep," "muddy," and "dusky" rivers of both the present and antiquity with the soul of the narrator; and Card Coulee Culler's "Incident," the story of a young boy on the receiving end of a racial slur. There were also three pieces by Richard Wright of a childhood fight where the black children's cinders proved inadequate in the face of their white opponents' bottles and broken glass, taking out a library book by using the card of a white man, and the author's mixed impressions of the Garveyites. The center piece of this section was the opening paragraph of Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*; here the cast played people on the street

indifferent to the invisible man as he describes his condition where “people refuse to see me.” When he assaults a stranger who called him an insulting name, the other actors scurried to the upstage-right corner to watch the fight and it was into that crowd the actor disappeared as he tells of reading about the fight in the next day’s paper, pitying the “poor fool, poor blind fool [who was] mugged by an invisible man.”

The other pieces in this section ran the gamut from the sarcastic (Mari Evans “Status Symbol,” where the token black employee is given the key to “the / White / Locked / JOHN”) to the romantic (two poems about Negro men by Helene Johnson, the ode to a “little brown boy” simply titled “Poem” and “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem” with his “dark eyes flashing solemnly with hate”), from teenage anxiety about becoming an adult (“Gwendolyn Brooks’s “A Song in the Front Yard”) to Maya Angelou’s tribute to an elegant elderly black woman, Mrs. Bertha Flowers, in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. There were also two poems about present-day life in the big city: Ms. Brooks’s portrait of the brief life of teenage gangsters in “We Real Cool” and Esse Hempbill’s indictment in *Conditions* of black men who abuse women. This section ended with a dramatic vignette carved out of April Sinclair’s *Coffee Will Make You Black*, where the mother tries to get her daughter to use bleaching cream to make her skin whiter. The daughter’s reaction recasts the famous line by Malcolm X: “Mama, where have you been? Don’t you know that black is beautiful?”

As the cast and choir sang “Change Is Gonna Come,” the section ended with four cast members delivering passages from Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, where the country preacher encourages the congregation to love their flesh: “This is flesh I’m talking about here. Flesh that needs to be loved. Feet that need to rest and to dance; backs that need support; shoulders that need arms, strong arms I’m telling you.”

### Coda: A Minority of One

During the rehearsals for *Black Voices* the cast had a good laugh at my expense. I had only one line in the show. In an excerpt from Zora Neal Hurston’s 1942 autobiography *Dust Tracks in the Road*, she describes going to a black jazz club in New York with a white friend. Ms. Hurston is deeply moved by the performance. Becoming one with the music, she imagines herself transported back to her roots in Africa—“living in the jungle . . . [her] face painted red and yellow . . . [her] pulse . . . throbbing like a war drum,” a transformation halted only when the piece ends and she returns “to the veneer we call civilization.” Sitting “motionless in his seat, smoking calmly,” the white friend observes in measured, uninspired words, “Good music they have here.” This sends Ms. Hurston into a frenzy for she realizes he has only “heard what [she] felt,” “the great blobs of purple and red emotion [not having] touched him.” At this moment she feels the immeasurable distance separating them, dividing the two races: “He is so pale with his whiteness then and I am so colored.” I would take a step onto the stage, to deliver my one line, “Good music they have here,” and then return to my usual spot at the back of the house. One night at rehearsal, after my co-director and I had finished giving notes to the cast, one of the actors announced that he had a note for me. What a setup! With all the actors in on the joke, he said sternly, “Sid, I’m afraid we aren’t entirely convinced by your performance, even though you have only one line.” “What did I do wrong? What’s missing?” I said defensively. “I hate to say this, Sid, but when you deliver your line, your *one and only* line, we don’t think you’re *white* enough!”

With tears of joy running from my eyes, it was then I realized that his minority of one, the play’s “token white,” had been accepted.

## CHAPTER 15

# Race and Ethnicity in the Labor Market; Employer Practices and Worker Strategies<sup>1</sup>

ROBERTA SPALTER-ROTH

### INTRODUCTION

The labor market is a set of arrangements in which employers rank workers in terms of preferences and characteristics and workers try to obtain the best jobs they can. In a perfectly competitive labor market, according to neo-classical economic theory, those who buy labor and those who offer their labor for sale would have perfect information, employers would find the employee they want at the wages they want to pay, and all workers would find jobs at the wages they are willing to accept. Unemployment would be inconsequential. In theory, this ideal market is “race blind” because it is costly for employers to discriminate, at least in the long run (Becker 1971).

This ideal model does not explain the racial dynamics of a complex ranking and sorting process. The sorting and ranking process is not race, ethnicity, or gender blind as employers (and secondarily, employees) bring a set of assumptions, stereotypes, preferences, and discriminatory practices to the process (Bobo and Suh 2000; Feagin and Sikes 1994). Nor is it the result of an unseen hand that determines which workers get jobs and whether they move ahead with their careers. Instead, the labor market consists of a set of social practices of hiring or firing, promoting or demoting, and mentoring or marginalizing. Workers bring a multiplicity of different kinds of attributes, skills, credentials, preferences, networks, and

---

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based upon the working papers of 45 social scientists produced for a conference held by the American Sociological Association on “Race, Racism, and Race Relations: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know?” supported by generous grants from the Ford Foundation and the W.G. Kellogg Foundation. All of the original working papers concerning the labor market are cited here. The original materials have been updated, synthesized, and developed for this chapter. Along with these original participants, the author wishes to thank William Erskine, ASA Research Associate, for developing tables and assisting with the editing of this paper, Terri Ann Lowenthal, an independent consultant, my co-author on an ASA research brief on this topic, and Sylvia Posciask for her help with the references. The views in this chapter are solely the authors.

information to the process. Employers prefer some of these attributes, skills, and credentials to others, because they are considered to be proxies for productivity or ability to fit in. Key indicators and studies show that race and ethnicity play significant roles in determining job placement and career opportunities (Spalter-Roth and Lowenthal 2005). Employers also discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, and gender, even when other factors such as education are similar. Whether a person is looking for a job, seeking a promotion, or considering a new line of work, race and ethnicity constrain individual choices and affect chances of success.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the workings of the labor market, employer practices, worker efforts, and why African American and Hispanic workers so often end up at the bottom. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first describes the outcomes of the ranking and sorting process in terms of several key indicators. These indicators are position in the labor force (including employment and unemployment), occupational segregation, job quality, and earnings. The second part of the chapter explains these outcomes by examining how employer practices and worker efforts affect position in the labor market or lack of position. The conclusion briefly discusses government policies that have changed workers' rank in the labor market.

## HOW IT WORKS

The results of the ranking and sorting process have been described in metaphorical terms as a "job queue"—a line in which jobs are ranked from best to worst and in which workers stand, revealing their relative success or failure in the sorting process. Which workers go to the front of the queue and which stay at the back is based largely on employers' views as to who is the best available or a "good enough" employee (Reskin 1998; Reskin and Roos 1990). These practices stratify workers of different races, ethnicities, and genders, workers with a wide variety of skills and credentials, and workers with differential access to information and better or worse networking connections.

Recent research suggests that, as a result of the shift from a manufacturing-based economy, employers increasingly prefer both cognitive skills and soft skills to physical skills (Holzer and Ihlanfeldt 1996; Moss and Tilly 1995; Murnane et al. 1995). Other desirable factors such as perceptions of compatibility, looks, ability to fit in as a team player, ability to socialize, manners, star power, and place of residence are mediated by race, ethnicity, and gender and are taken into account (Boushey and Cherry 2000; Glass Ceiling Commission 1995; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Kirshenman and Neckerman, 1991; Moss and Tilly, 1995; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). Employers often have the power to decide what counts as skills for a given job and which skills they prefer.

On their side, workers try to get the best jobs they can. Relatively few adults have the option of not offering their labor to the market, although the offer can be refused. Resources from other family members may allow them to have some control over hours of work, if such flexibility is available from employers. Job characteristics that most workers look for include pay, benefits, promotion opportunities, compatible hours, harassment-free workplace, and amiable fellow workers (Reskin and Roos 1990; Waldinger 1996; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). The erosion of job privileges, control over work, and pay pushes a job lower down the scale while high rates of unemployment may make previously spurned jobs more desirable. If positions at the top increase, preferred groups gain, but they leave positions below for others to fill. If jobs at the top vanish, then preferred groups can have "bumping rights" while those at

the bottom are more likely to face unemployment (Darity and Williams, 1985; King 1992; Lichter and Oliver 2000; Reskin and Roos 1990; Waldinger 1996).

Some picture the queue as diamond in shape with white men at the top, who have the greatest bumping rights, white women and minority men at either side of the diamond, and minority women at the bottom point of the diamond. This is because white women or minority men are more likely to be able to succeed white men than are minority women (King 1992). Often the ranking of people and jobs is a joint process. As African Americans, Hispanics, or immigrants fill jobs, the jobs may become lower ranked. Nonetheless, particular groups may gain a niche in these less desirable jobs as information about job openings are passed on through ethnic networks (Hum 2000; Lim 2001; Portes and Manning 1986; Waldinger 1996). Although skills are important in this process, some qualified workers are unemployed or have a “future of lousy jobs” (Burtless 1990) because they never hear about the good jobs, and some unqualified workers get good jobs because they know the boss or because of parental contacts (DiThomaso 1998; Massey et. al 2003; O’Regan and Quigley 1993). Whites are the most likely to have contacts, although they frequently deny that they are hired on grounds other than merit (DiThomaso 1998).

The ranking and sorting process occurs within a constantly changing, constantly mobile economy. Changes occur as industries decline and grow, as firms search the globe for profits often in the form of cheaper, more flexible workforces, as workers migrate for better job opportunities, as new technology is adapted that requires fewer skilled or less skilled workers in an industry, and as regulations requiring safe conditions increase or decrease. Depending on the state of the economy and the tightness of the labor market, employers fight to keep hold over their preferred workers and workers fight to keep control over preferred jobs (Kalleberg et al. 2000, 1997; Reich 1992; Sassen 1990). As we will see, African Americans are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed. This gap narrows slightly in good times and increases slightly in bad times, but generally remains relatively invariant (Spriggs and Williams 2000).

### **OUTCOMES OF THE QUEUEING PROCESS: THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND EARNINGS BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER**

The effects of the queuing process are reflected in national employment statistics. These statistics show who is employed, who is unemployed, who works in what occupations, who has standard or non-standard jobs, and who earns how much pay. These measures are surrogates for higher or lower status, greater or lesser control over their own and others’ work, better or worse opportunities for upward mobility and job security, and higher or lower wages for different racial and ethnic groups (Spalter-Roth and Lowenthal 2005).

Several key economic indicators suggest that not everyone who wants to work can find a satisfactory job (see Table 15.1).<sup>2</sup> White men have the highest labor force participation and employment rates, and the lowest unemployment rates, of all measured demographic groups; data for Asian men differ only slightly. A somewhat smaller share of African American men

---

<sup>2</sup> The *labor force participation rate* represents the percentage of the adult population that is employed or actively seeking work. The *employment rate* is the percentage of the adult population that is employed, while the *unemployment rate* is the percentage of the adult population that is not working but is actively seeking work.

**TABLE 15.1. Labor Force Participation, Employment, and Unemployment Rates, by Race Ethnicity, and Sex, 2000**

Race or Ethnicity*	Employment Status for Population Aged 16 and Over (percentage)		
	In Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed
<b>White</b>	64.6	61.1	3.0
Male	72.2	68.0	3.3
Female	57.5	54.7	2.6
<b>Black, African American</b>	60.2	52.5	6.9
Male	60.9	52.5	7.3
Female	59.6	52.8	6.5
<b>Asian</b>	63.3	59.7	3.2
Male	71.0	66.8	3.5
Female	56.4	53.3	3.0
<b>Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander</b>	66.2	57.7	7.0
Male	71.5	61.5	7.4
Female	60.9	53.8	6.6
<b>American Indian, Alaska Native</b>	61.1	53.0	7.5
Male	65.6	56.1	8.4
Female	56.8	50.0	6.6
<b>Two or More Races</b>	64.1	57.9	5.5
Male	70.2	63.2	5.8
Female	58.2	52.7	5.2
<b>Hispanic**</b>	61.4	55.2	5.7
Male	69.4	62.8	5.7
Female	53.0	47.2	5.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. "Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics." Census 2000, Summary File 4, DP-3.

is in the workforce, nearly one-half of whom do not have jobs. The proportion of Hispanic men in the labor force is closer to that of white men than African American men, although a smaller share (compared to white men) is employed.

Slightly less than three fifths of white women are both in the labor force and employed; their unemployment rate is the lowest of all measured groups. A higher proportion of African American women are in the labor force, but the gap is greater between their participation and employment rates, and they are more than twice as likely as white women to be unemployed. Both the share of Hispanic women in the labor force and their employment rate are substantially below that of white and African American women, although their unemployment rate is lower than that of African American women.

These statistics indicate that, in a robust economy, the supply of white and Asian workers may not meet employer demand, but the supply of African Americans and Hispanics who want to work outstrips the demand for these workers. For example, one analysis shows that

\* Data reflect only those who selected a single race category (e.g., white). In the 2000 U.S. Census, 2.1 percent of the population selected two or more races.

\*\* Hispanics may be of any race.



the ratio of job applicants to job hires is significantly higher for African Americans than for whites in Detroit (Farley et al. 2000). The result is lower unemployment for whites and higher unemployment for African Americans. As noted, the roughly two-to-one ratio in unemployment rates between African Americans and whites (for both men and women) has been constant throughout economic expansions and recessions, despite a shrinking gap in educational differences between the two groups. Unemployment gaps between whites and Hispanics have generally been smaller than between whites and African Americans. Hispanics and African Americans also are more likely than whites to be unemployed for longer periods of time. African American men, especially those with limited education, suffer higher rates of long-term joblessness than white men with similar education (Lichter and Oliver 2000).

Occupational data are another indicator of racial and ethnic labor market disparities (see Table 15.2). One third of white men and nearly one half of Asian men are employed in

**TABLE 15.2. Selected Occupational Data, by Race, Ethnicity, and Sex, 2000**

Race or Ethnicity*	Selected Occupations for Employed Civilian Population aged 16 and Over (Percentage)				
	Management, Professional, and Related	Service	Sales or Office	Construction, Extraction, or Maintenance	Production, Transportation, or Materials Moving
<b>White</b>	35.6	13.4	27.0	9.8	13.6
Male	33.6	10.6	18.0	17.5	19.3
Female	38.0	16.5	37.5	0.7	6.9
<b>Black, African American</b>	25.2	22.0	27.3	6.5	18.6
Male	20.0	19.4	18.3	13.3	28.3
Female	29.7	24.2	34.8	0.8	10.4
<b>Asian</b>	44.6	14.1	24.0	3.6	13.4
Male	47.1	12.4	19.0	6.4	14.8
Female	41.7	16.1	29.6	0.5	11.9
<b>Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander</b>	23.3	20.8	28.8	9.6	16.5
Male	20.7	19.8	18.0	17.2	23.1
Female	26.4	21.9	41.4	0.9	8.9
<b>American Indian, Alaska Native</b>	24.3	20.6	24.0	12.9	16.8
Male	19.9	17.1	13.7	23.7	23.5
Female	29.1	24.5	35.1	1.3	9.5
<b>Two or more races</b>	26.7	19.8	27.1	9.8	15.7
Male	24.1	16.5	19.0	17.5	21.6
Female	29.6	23.6	36.7	0.9	8.8
<b>Hispanic**</b>	18.1	21.8	23.1	13.1	21.2
Male	14.6	19.0	14.8	21.9	26.1
Female	22.9	25.6	34.8	0.9	14.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. "Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics." Census 2000, Summary File 4, QT-P28.

\* Data reflect only those who selected a single race category (e.g., white). In the 2000 U.S. Census, 2.1 percent of the population selected two or more races.

\*\* Hispanics may be of any race.

managerial, professional, and related occupations compared with only one fifth of African American men and one seventh of Hispanic men. White men are also likely to hold relatively more skilled blue-collar occupations such as carpenters, and precision production workers, as well as less skilled jobs such as truckers and construction laborers, along with moderate-status occupations such as wholesale sales representative. Conversely, more than one quarter of both African American and Hispanic men hold jobs in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, compared with less than one fifth of white men and less than one seventh of Asian men.

Women, regardless of race and ethnic group, are distributed across a narrower array of occupations than are men, especially white men (Reskin and Padavic 1988; Padavic and Reskin 2002). For example, black women are far more likely to be under-represented in a given job niche than are black men; they are under-represented in nearly half of job categories (King 1992). Gender has a huge impact on occupational distribution. Women of all groups are most likely to be employed in sales and clerical occupations. Over the last few decades the percentage of women, especially white women, moved into managerial and administrative occupations as well as some of the higher-status professions (such as law, medicine, higher education). Yet teaching and nursing are still major women's professions, across race and ethnic groups, despite movement into nontraditionally female professions. A disproportionately high percentage of African American and Hispanic women, compared with white and Asian women, are employed in service occupations such as food preparation, cleaning, and personal care. These occupations are often in work environments characterized by poor pay, few benefits, and little career mobility (Conrad 2001).

Occupational segregation helps explain persistent wage gaps between whites and both African Americans and Hispanics, especially between white men and black or Hispanic women (Boushey and Cherry 2000; Padavic and Reskin 2002). The wage gap has narrowed somewhat as African Americans have moved into a wider range of occupations in the 1960s and 1970s, boosted by affirmative action, equal employment opportunity laws, and higher education levels. The relative earnings of African Americans stagnated in the 1980s, although wages did increase for African Americans and Hispanics in the strong economy of the late 1990s (Holzer 2001; Reimers 2000). Overall, wages do not rise for any occupation characterized by the presence of African American women (Jacobs and Blair-Loy 2001). Along with occupational segregation, work arrangements also affect earnings. For example, African American and Hispanic men and women are concentrated in nonstandard work positions, such as temporary and on-call work, that yield lower pay and benefits (Kalleberg et. al 2000; 1997).

During the 1990s, white women's earnings surpassed those of Hispanic and black males but were still only 74 percent of white male earnings in 1996. As with black and white men, the earnings gap between black and white women narrowed in the 1960s and 1970s, but has widened since the early 1980s. Similar to the growing differences among black and white college-educated men, the gap between black and white college-educated women also increased by 10 percent (Council of Economic Advisors 1998).

### **JOB QUEUE PROCESSES: EMPLOYER PRACTICES AND WORKER STRATEGIES**

The data reveal a stratified labor force with substantial differences in unemployment rates, occupational participation, earnings, and job quality. These patterns are not the result of an unseen hand. In this next section we examine the employer practices and worker strategies

that lead to positions in the queue. Employers use practices they think will provide the most desirable workers at the price they want to pay, while workers use strategies to attempt to get and keep the best jobs they can.

## Employer Practices

Many employers prefer white men for jobs that have high prestige and power over other workers and that provide career ladders, higher earnings, and skill training (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). Likewise employers shun black men from inner cities for unskilled jobs, as immigrants take over these niches in cities with large immigrant populations (Bound and Holzer 1993; Howell and Mueller 1997; Johnson et al. 2000; Waldinger 1996; Wilson 1996; Young 2004). These preferences have been executed through a variety of practices over time, starting with de jure segregation.

**EMPLOYER TASTE FOR DISCRIMINATION.** This next section shows the preferences and practices by which employers maintain their “taste for discrimination” (Becker 1971). It explains why economists’ predictions that competition in the market will wipe out discrimination because it is unprofitable have not come to pass. These preferences and practices range from the most coercive discrimination of de jure (legal) segregation to the more everyday practices such as restructuring, skill preferences, hiring procedures, and creation of hostile workplaces.

*Legal Discrimination.* Prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there were widespread and blatant barriers and systematic and coercive sanctions to participation by African Americans in entire sets of occupations and firms. These barriers were not alleviated by market forces. Most blacks were systematically denied access to opportunities and were not allowed to apply for certain positions or for jobs in certain firms (Darity and Mason 1998). Under Jim Crow legislation many workplaces were legally segregated (Jaynes and Williams 1989). The great majority of Americans agreed with the statement, “whites should have the first chance at any kind of job” (Bobo 1987 cited in Jaynes and Williams 1989). Hispanic, Asian, and Native American as well as black workers were systematically denied access to a wide array of job opportunities. One exclusionary technique was licensure requirements. For example, a late-19th-century San Francisco law used race-neutral language in requiring the licensing of laundries. Of all applications submitted by Chinese immigrants, not one was accepted. In contrast, all but one of the Caucasian applicants was approved (McClain and McClain 1991).

In the South, Jim Crow laws kept work places segregated and denied training or education that allowed access to these opportunities. Barriers were so deeply embedded and coercively sanctioned that the “Great Migration” to the north was a major pre-civil rights strategy to move out of a narrow band of marginal, ill-paying, degrading, and often-dangerous agricultural and private household service jobs (Jaynes and Williams 1989).

Prior to 1964 it was legal for employers to discriminate. Although there were direct exclusionary laws, in most cases, occupational segregation was kept in place because of a powerful system of norms and practices, often internalized, but coercively sanctioned through violence and intimidation when violated (Jaynes and Williams 1989). Newspapers daily printed advertisements requesting applicants of specific race or gender groups (Darity and Mason 1998). They broadcast the demand for white waitresses, tow truck drivers, doormen, painters, and housekeepers and a sprinkling of “Negro cooks” and “colored men.”

*De Facto Segregation.* With the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, racially based discrimination or “pure discrimination” became illegal (Darity and Mason 1998). The result was not integration in the labor market. In a race-conscious society, employers may continue to use strategies that rank entire groups of workers in terms of their race and ethnic characteristics (Waldinger 1996).

A series of recent studies in Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Boston found that many employers will report racial preferences and are willing to admit that they discriminate especially against inner-city black males in hiring and promotion (Bobo et al. 2000; Farelly et al. 2000; Holzer 1996; Kirshenman et al. 1995; Moss and Tilly 1997, 1996b). Widespread publicity emphasizing poor schools, drug use, crime, and welfare dependency shapes employers’ perceptions of inner-city black workers and leads discrimination (Neckerman and Kirshenman 1991). Many blacks live in racially segregated neighborhoods with high rates of unemployment, few social networks, and deep isolation (Wilson 1996; Young 2004). The only employment for young black men may be the drug trade (Young 2004). Participation in crime has negative long-term effects on the employment prospects of the participants (Holzer 1998). Reports of high crime rates may make employers less willing to hire less-educated young black males overall (Kirshenman and Neckerman 1991). These stereotypes are reflected in the narratives of black workers who claim that they are the last hired and the first fired and that employers do not give them a chance to prove that they can do more (Bonilla-Silva 2003).

Audit studies<sup>3</sup> have found that African American men with identical qualifications as white men are denied job opportunities in a significant portion of test cases (Fix et al. 1993) and that Hispanics with better credentials than whites are significantly less likely to move beyond their initial inquiries when applying both by telephone and (to a lesser extent) by mail. Audit studies also have shown that hiring discrimination occurs more often in central cities and, for jobs in sales and service industries, than for positions requiring a college education (Benedick et al. 1997, 1992). This is not to say that employment of professionals and managers is race blind. Interviews with black professionals and managers tell of the creation of hostile workplaces with “concrete ceilings” (Feagin and Sikes 1994).

Several studies provide compelling evidence that color or skin shade plays a decisive role in determining economic outcomes. Where interviewers reported the skin tone of respondents, researchers found that dark-skinned blacks do worse on all social and economic dimensions (Seltzer and Smith 1991; Keith and Herring 1991). In a study done in greater Los Angeles, dark-skinned black males had half the chance of finding employment than lighter-complexioned black males after controlling for schooling, age, and criminal record (Johnson et al. 2000). Likewise, studies using the 1979 National Chicano Survey report that Chicanos with lighter skin color and more European features have higher earnings, higher socioeconomic status, and face less in-market discrimination (Arce et al. 1987; Telles and Murguia 1990).

A series of specific employer strategies such as restructuring, recruiting, hiring, and promotion practices result in de facto discrimination against minority, and especially, but not exclusively, black workers.

---

<sup>3</sup> According to Benedick et al. (1992), discrimination in hiring can be difficult to detect and measure because job applicants who are told that vacancies have been filled generally cannot check whether or not this is true. Employment testing or employment auditing is an alternative technique for measuring discrimination. Two job candidates (one white, one a member of a racial minority) who have been provided with similar resumes both answer published job vacancies. If the white applicant is treated more favorably than her/his paired partner, the differential treatment is considered a direct measure of discrimination.

**RESTRUCTURING.** In the post-Civil Rights Act era, economic restructuring has had a significant effect on the placement of a group in the job queue. The sharp decline in manufacturing in the United States and the movement of jobs “offshore” to cheaper workforces in the 1970s and 1980s had racially differential consequences for blue-collar workers, precipitating a persistent wage gap between more and less educated men (Wilson 1996, 1987). Many relatively well-paying, unionized manufacturing jobs in the steel, auto, and durable goods industries were eliminated, reducing job opportunities and relatively high wages for less educated men (Darden et al. 1989; Kalleberg et al. 1997). White men without post-secondary education suffered the greatest wage losses (because their wages were higher to begin with). But African American men were particularly hard hit by job losses; their unemployment rate hit 20 percent during the recession in 1983, again lowering their placement in the job queue. Hispanic men fared somewhat better in the wake of the industrial downturn, keeping a larger share of the remaining manufacturing jobs (Wilson 1996). For example, as service-oriented industries replaced manufacturing jobs in Chicago, employment increased for Hispanic men with limited education or skills, but decreased for African-American men, primarily as a result of employer preferences (Tienda 1998). Corporate downsizing and restructuring continued even during the 1990s’ economic boom. Displacement and job losses among managerial and professional employees, as well as blue-collar workers, were unevenly distributed by race, ethnicity, and gender (Kletzer 1998; Spalter-Roth and Deitch 1998). White men are the most likely group to be re-employed a year after displacement.

In contrast, black men and Hispanic women were the least likely to be re-employed. Black men did not regain jobs, because they were concentrated in routine manufacturing operatives jobs, which suffered the highest casualties during restructuring (Darden et al., 1989; Kletzer 1991; Wilson 1992). The proportion of inner-city black males in the higher-paying blue-collar positions declined far more sharply than that of Hispanics (Wilson 1996). Among Hispanics, Puerto Ricans endured a dramatic decline in economic well-being during the period of economic restructuring, the result of their concentration in Northeastern central cities experiencing intense economic dislocation, their overrepresentation in job sectors most adversely affected by such restructurings, and their vulnerable position at the bottom of ethnic hiring queues (Borjas and Tienda 1985; Rodriguez 1998; Tienda 1998). Hispanic women were more likely than other groups to drop out of the labor force. Educational and occupational advantages did not protect displaced workers against gender and racial inequities in re-employment after downsizing (Spalter-Roth and Deitch 1998).

In the United States, the shift away from manufacturing was accompanied by the shift to service work. Although service work includes skills ranging from the brain surgeon to the hospital orderly, from the Wall Street broker to the Wal-Mart clerk, from the four-star chef to the short-order cook, in general, it is a lower-wage industry than manufacture. Although the United States is often described as a “post-industrial society,” the majority of the work force is employed in relatively low-skilled jobs, as we have seen in Table 1. There are still beds to be made, floors to be swept, goods to be rung up (Waldinger 1996). During the period of manufacturing decline in cities such as Chicago, there was a growth in service jobs in numbers of central cities and just around them.

**PREFERENCE FOR IMMIGRANT LABOR.** The loss of manufacturing jobs and the stagnation of wages among African American men (and other low-income workers) occurred at the same time as the largest surge in immigration since the early part of the 20th century

(Bean and Stevens 2003; Frey 1995; Howell and Mueller 1997). In contrast to resource-rich whites, African Americans do not benefit from immigration. First, most benefits from hiring immigrants are received by firms, and blacks own a relative small share of firms in the United States, and, second, blacks are more likely than whites to exhibit relatively similar skills distributions to immigrants. As a result, immigrants have a negative effect on the per capita income of native blacks (Borjas 1998).

Many employers prefer to hire immigrants, believing that they have a stronger work ethic than native-born blacks (Moss and Tilly 1996b). In Chicago, for example, men of Mexican origin, who might be predicted to fare poorly given the increased rewards to education, in fact, enjoyed increases in employment rates compared to black men. By 1990, black men were twice as likely to be unemployed as men of Mexican origin. The positive outcomes for the latter group, in spite of their limited education, suggests that there are jobs for the unskilled and that “achieved characteristics” such as education may be confounded by “ascribed characteristics” such as race in the ranking of workers by employers (Tienda 1998). A similar situation occurred in New York City.

In New York City, for example, foreign-born workers substantially increased their share of employment in every male and female African American niche during the 1980s (Howell and Mueller 1997). White workers as well as industrial jobs left the city in the 1970s and 1980s, but some of these industrial jobs remained. During the 1980s service industries such as hotel and restaurants grew (Waldinger 1996). Immigrants were employed in the lowest-level jobs and created ethnic niches—a topic that we’ll discuss in more detail under “Worker Strategies.” African Americans, who were long excluded from getting skilled jobs in manufacturing industries such as the garment industry and “front of the house jobs” in service industries such as hotels, witnessed an erosion of their share of low-skilled jobs (Johnson and Oliver 1992). This declining share of jobs resulted from native-born black New Yorkers’ desires for better jobs, employer preferences for immigrant labor, and immigrants’ abilities to use networks to gain some control over the dispersion of jobs (Waldinger 1996).

**EMPLOYER DEMAND FOR SOFT SKILLS.** The changes in the organization of manufacturing to just-in-time, flexible production and the growth of the service industries that emphasize “customer satisfaction” resulted in increased emphasis on what some researchers have labeled as “soft skills.” Soft skills are based on employers’ desire for workers with particular attitudes and ways of interacting that, in employers’ view, demonstrate enthusiasm, a positive work attitude, a lack of a “chip” on one’s shoulder; including smiling, making eye contact, and not “talking back” (Moss and Tilly 1997, 1996a). Soft skills are highly subjective. In jobs such as maid, cleaner, or waiter, for example, one employer’s view of soft skills can be another employer’s definition of “brown-nosing”.

Many employers rely on their “gut feelings” in selecting job applicants during hiring interviews. This usual business practice is likely to capture employers’ feelings of who will fit in and with whom they are comfortable. When employees are selected for low-skilled jobs, black men are at a disadvantage because of a generalized fear of black men and because their body language and interview skills do not reinforce notions of politeness, motivation, and enthusiasm (Kirshenman et al. 1995; Moss and Tilly 1996b).

Negative views of black men’s soft skills are lower in cities without other competing minority groups (in Detroit compared to Los Angeles), in firms outside the inner city, in larger firms, and in minority-owned firms (Farley et al. 2000; Moss and Tilly 1996a). For employers

interviewed in this study, black women are preferred to black men, even if they are welfare recipients, in terms of their motivation to work hard because they are considered to be the sole source of their families' support (Holzer and Stoll 2001). Hispanic recruits are seen as trying to support families, as having a stronger work ethic than blacks, and of complaining less (Moss and Tilly 1997). These findings indicate that the demand for soft skills is associated with greater employer stereotyping and with more subjective methods of screening job applicants (Kirshenman et al. 1995).

**RELYING ON NETWORKS.** Widely accepted recruitment practices, including “cronyism” and “business as usual,” also contribute to unequal access to employment and advancement opportunities for minority job seekers (Reskin 1998). Access to desirable jobs can be constrained by exclusionary social and professional networks, racially segregated social circles, and new groups of job seekers possessing less information about job openings, especially when employers rely on informal workplace and social networks to recruit new workers (Di Thomaso 1998; O’Reagan and Quigley 1993; Reskin 1998; Neckerman and Kirshenman 1991).

Methods of job recruitment have a significant effect on who applies for and who gets a job. Word-of-mouth recruiting—where employers ask for recommendations from their current workers or from other employers, or from members of their social networks—is the most prevalent form of filling jobs (Reskin 1998) and tends to reinforce the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of the workforce. Formal job advertisements in selected newspapers often fail to attract black and Hispanic job seekers because the publications are primarily circulated in predominantly white suburbs. For example, Chicago employers reported that they advertised in suburban newspapers and developed relationships with guidance counselors in largely white Catholic schools rather than largely black public schools to obtain employees who will “fit in” and have the soft skills that they desire (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991). Employers believe that race matching between employees and customers is a legitimate reason to recruit selectively (Moss and Tilly 1996b).

**CREATING GLASS CEILINGS.** Research has shown that race and ethnicity can also influence chances for promotion, because most high-level managers are white men who feel most comfortable with those like themselves (Maume 1999). Indirect barriers to promotion for minorities include limited opportunities for mentoring relationships and fewer or less effective training opportunities, as well as employer and supervisor bias in evaluation procedures. The 1995 Glass Ceiling Commission report cited one study in which supervisors rated African American managers in a high-prestige firm are significantly lower in potential for promotion and overall corporate “fit” than white managers who had matching personal and work profiles. Other studies found that African American corporate executives have a sense of always being watched, like “strangers in a hostile territory” (Anderson 2001). They tell vivid stories of white hostility, of receiving lower salaries, and of knowing that there are levels to which they will never be promoted (Feagin and Sikes 1994). Even Asian Americans, viewed as a model minority—hard working, highly educated, non-confrontational, detail-oriented, and good at science and technology—reported that these characteristics are not translated into access to senior decision-making positions. In focus groups they reported perceiving themselves as smarter and harder working than their white colleagues but feeling that they are perceived as not fitting into a corporate culture viewed as valuing male aggression and socializing (Glass Ceiling Commission 1995).

## Worker Strategies

While employers are carrying out these ranking and sorting processes, workers are also carrying out strategies to obtain and keep the best jobs that they can. The characteristics of good jobs include high wages, good benefits, tenure, stability in work hours, availability of training, career opportunities, access to resources, control over work environment, amiable colleagues, fair treatment, and lack of harassment. Many workers struggle to gain access to these kinds of jobs. Other workers attempt to keep better jobs for themselves and for their social groups. The share of jobs with at least some of these characteristics, especially benefits, tenure, stability, and opportunities, is thought to be declining (Kalleberg et al. 1997). To get the best jobs that they can, job seekers and workers employ various strategies to secure and retain stable jobs, gain promotions, and improve their standing in the job queue. Tactics include improving education and skills, using inherited contacts and networks, creating ethnic niches, bringing legal cases, and using collective bargaining techniques. Some of these approaches aggravate existing racial and ethnic inequalities in the workplace. For example, young, white job seekers benefit the most from family history and social connections, which give them access to employment networks and more prestigious jobs (Di Thomaso 1998; Oliver and Shapiro 1995).

**GETTING MORE EDUCATION.** The pursuit of human capital in the form of higher education degrees and credentials is a widely used strategy to improve positions in the queue. This strategy is not equally available to all, nor is it a strategy that all groups benefit from equally (Bernstein 1995). Since the 1940s African Americans have decreased the education gap between themselves and their white counterparts, although significant gaps still remain in the share of each graduating from college and gaining post-graduate education. Blacks have gone a long way toward closing the gap, especially at the high school level, and the median years of education of these groups are now similar (12.8 years for white men 25 years and over in 1990 and 12.6 years for black men). While especially notable in the South, this closing of the educational gap has not been equally reflected in the closing of the wage gap between blacks and whites (Bernstein 1995). Since the early 1970s the pay gap among black and white men remained stable (at 75 cents for each \$1.00), and the pay gap between black and white women actually increased (from 92 cents to 89 cents for every \$1.00). A California study, which examined black and Hispanic as well as white youth, found absolute increases in the number of blacks and Hispanics who graduated from high school, attended “some college,” and were awarded bachelor’s degrees as well as relative increases compared to whites. Relative test scores also improved. Yet the wage gap moved in the opposite direction of the skills gap. More educationally qualified minority workers in their late 20s and early 30s found their wages were lower relative to those of comparably educated white workers than they were for previous cohorts (Carnoy and Rothstein 1996). These findings suggest that for blacks and Hispanics increased educational credentials mean increased earning power, but not when compared to whites.

**FAMILY INHERITANCE.** Although the United States is frequently described as a meritocracy (Jencks and Phillips 1998), in fact, family background, family connections, and other ascribed characteristics are strong predictors of access to good jobs. Researchers have long known the power of white parents’ education and a father’s occupation in predicting a son’s occupational prestige (Blau and Duncan 1967 cited in Sewell et al. 1969). White Americans’ greater ability to pass along occupational status to their children is still true, where access to networks



with better contacts increases the opportunity of obtaining better jobs, with greater pay, better benefits, and more job security, and greater ability to amass assets (Oliver and Shapiro 1995). This ability is especially true when the contacts are white and male (Di Thomaso 1998; O'Regan and Quigley 1993).

White male parents are especially important in facilitating employment likely because they have more contacts and their recommendations are more authoritative and more likely to be taken seriously. Whites more often identify employment opportunities through referrals from relatives, friends, and employment agencies, avenues more likely to produce higher-paying positions, while African Americans tend to pursue jobs by directly visiting prospective employers and submitting applications, a practice associated more often with lower-paying positions (Farley et al. 2000; Johnson et al. 2000). Blacks are less likely to be able to benefit from what have been called alumni effects or the intergeneration transmission of advantage of social resources (Oliver and Shapiro 1995; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). Yet those whites who have access to contacts and networks tend not to see the results as discriminatory (Di Thomaro 1998).

**DEVELOPING AND PROTECTING NICHES.** As noted, immigrants may be preferred for certain jobs, based on previous skills, stereotypes of their characteristics, and willingness to accept a lower wage. The result can be the growth of ethnic niches that gain some control over the dispersal of jobs. These groups may gain relative control over these jobs because they are recommended by their friends and relatives. The result can be ethnic niches that go on to protect jobs against outsiders (Waldinger 1996; Waldinger and Lichter 2003). Existing ethnic networks funnel newcomers into specialized economic activities, such as restaurants, laundries, taxi-driving, gardening, and construction. For example, Chinese and Dominican immigrants in New York have gained niches in the apparel industry, despite low human capital. There is a debate as to whether staying in ethnic niches results in lower wages than moving into the mainstream (Zhou 1992; Sanders and Nee 1987). Another trend is the rising growth of the Latino population in rural areas of the Midwest due to the restructuring of the meat-packing and poultry-processing industries. As these industries sought to restructure and cut costs in the 1980s, plants increasingly made their way to rural communities, which continue to serve as magnets attracting Hispanics and other minorities in search of steady employment outside large urban centers (Stull et al. 1995; Saenz 1998). Success in the queueing process involves finding a good niche, dominating it, and keeping resources "within the tribe" (Waldinger 1996; Darity 1998). White ethnics have been especially successful at this effort, moving from niches at the bottom of the queue such as clothing manufacture to positions at the top, such as municipal government or professional services in the private sector.

The distinctive history of African Americans from slavery through ghettoization has limited their success in pursuing this strategy (Waldinger 1996). When sizeable numbers of African Americans migrated north in the 1940s, white ethnics were already entrenched in many niches from low to high skill. By the 1970s, when whites, as well as manufacturing jobs, were exiting the cities, African American efforts to move up the ladder were only moderately successful. They established gains in the public sector, but not in other industries. As a result, they have no niches in lesser-skilled jobs and are largely detached from the private sector (Waldinger 1996). Efforts to decrease the size of the public sector through privatization have especially negative consequences for African Americans. Efforts by blacks and their supporters to use the tools of affirmative action to break into niches held by whites are objectionable to the majority of who emphasize that they never owned slaves and should not be forced to abide by affirmative action because it constitutes unfair reparations and "reverse discrimination" against whites (Bonilla-Silva 2003).

**LEGAL AND POLITICAL STRUGGLES.** White ethnics and varying minority groups have used an array of tactics in the competition over jobs. In New York City, for example, these tactics included mobilizing political power to either contest or reinforce the status quo of the civil service system; organizing strikes; using lawsuits—such as the NAACP efforts to decrease the white ethnic hold over fire-fighting jobs; and demanding advertising in minority newspapers. Conflict and organized struggle have been especially crucial in African American efforts to open up white niches in manufacturing and municipal employment. Blacks have been more likely than other non-white groups to use strategies such as suing under civil rights or equal opportunity laws, boycotts, and demonstrations (Waldinger 1996).

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.** Collective bargaining is another historic method for controlling the competition for jobs and improving their quality. Occupational unions strive for control over hiring through union shops, seniority rules, employee training, and union-run employment exchanges. The purpose of these strategies is to ensure a supply of better wage jobs by decreasing cut-throat competition among employers to hire at ever lower wages (Cobble 1993). For minority groups, union-controlled hiring and promotion procedures were often exclusionary. For example, in the construction industry, union locals often refused to accept blacks as members and many white workers refused to sponsor them, feeling that blacks would lower the status and the pay of the industry. Over time, there was an increased effort to overcome race, ethnic, and gender divisions (especially in newer unions in service and public sectors). Although wage levels of white men were highest, union membership provided greater wage increases to black and Hispanic men and women and increased their job tenure (Spalter-Roth and Hartmann 1994). In addition, higher rates of unionization correlate with higher rates of black employment (Moss and Tilly 1996a). With the decline of union membership in the United States, wage levels have decreased among less skilled workers, regardless of race (Bluestone and Harrison 1990; Bound and Freeman 1992; Bound and Holzer 1993; Bernstein 1995).

## CONCLUSIONS

The labor market is described as a set of queuing processes and practices in which employers rank workers in terms of their views of who is likely to be productive, who they can pay the least, who they know, and who is likely to fit in. Workers rank jobs in terms of wages, benefits, autonomy, and comfortable workplaces. The labor market and the workplace are neither race neutral nor color blind despite laws that prohibit deliberate discrimination. Employers are likely to be white, and as a result of their perceptions, decisions, and rankings, workers are concentrated by race and ethnicity among industries and occupations, work arrangements and positions, and pay levels. Statistical data and sociological research suggest that not everyone who is qualified has an equal opportunity to work in an equally wide range of fields and positions. Differences in education, experience, and skills explain some, but not all, labor market disparities. Race is a key factor in employment decisions. Black and Hispanic workers tend to be at the back of queues, with employers justifying their decisions in terms of lack of proper attitudes, ability to fit in, or management potential.

Under legal segregation, employers could advertise for the race, ethnicity, or gender group they preferred for particular occupations. Laws, coercion, and tradition constrained blacks, Hispanics, and Asians to a narrow range of occupations with the lowest wages, the least security,

and the worst conditions. Federal labor policies have played an important role in the sorting and ranking process. Some have had the effect of pushing particular groups further up the hiring queue by increasing their value to employers and increasing employers' demand for these employees. For example, with the end of World War II, the passage of the GI Bill subsidized higher education for veterans, increased the skilled labor force, and allowed employers to substitute more for less skilled workers. This policy was especially beneficial to white men, since at the time of passage legally segregated school systems excluded black veterans for higher education and training. The GI Bill had a negative impact on unskilled workers, and especially black unskilled workers, in terms of reduced wages and higher rates of unemployment, because of additional competition at the low end of the labor market (Schwartzman 1997).

With the end of legal discrimination, employers now use a set of practices including restructuring, emphasizing soft skills, creating glass ceilings, and relying on cronyism in order to obtain workers with preferred characteristics. The results have been de facto segregation in workplaces and occupations. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibited discrimination in employment was the key legislation in ending de jure employment segregation. To prevent de facto discrimination, individuals and groups (through class action suits) can sue employers on the basis of discriminatory job advertisements, recruitment, pay, layoffs, job classification, and promotions. They can obtain jobs and monetary damages (as a result of the 1991 Civil Rights Act) by filing charges with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Between 1992 and 2002, about 330,000 cases were filed. Only about two thirds of these cases were found to be of merit and were resolved either through conciliation or settlements or referred to court, because intentional discrimination is hard to prove. These laws had limited effects on the ways organizations went about recruiting, screening, and evaluating workers. In continuing their customary practices, establishments continued to exclude groups of workers from many lines of work (Reskin 1998).

Affirmative action, though hotly debated, is a policy that has had modest effects in opening up niches and networks to white women and black men. There are four sources of affirmative action policy. The first is designed for federal contractors and subcontractors with contracts over \$50,000 (based on Executive Order 11246). Contractors must eliminate any discriminatory policies or practices and take proactive measures such as recruitment, training, and outreach to ensure more equitable use of qualified minorities and women. A second source of law is directed at federal agencies. The 1972 Equal Opportunity Act required federal agencies to take steps to encourage equal employment opportunity (DiPrete 1987, as cited in Reskin 1998). These policies appear to have had moderate effects. A third source is court-ordered. Because they are remedial rather than preventive, court-ordered affirmative action may require employers to employ or promote (or unions to admit) set proportions or numbers of minorities or women. But the entrenched nature of discriminatory practices and organizational inertia have meant that even firms and industries under court order take a long time to achieve even modest gains (Reskin 1998).

A fourth source of affirmative action is voluntary programs instituted by firms (Edelman 1992; Badgett and Hartmann 1995). These firms claimed moderate success. For example, firms in Detroit, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Boston were 10 percent more likely to hire white women and 20 percent more likely to hire African American men, net of other factors that affected hiring decision, than were firms that did not practice affirmative action (Holzer and Neumark 1998, as cited in Reskin 1998). These researchers found no significant differences in gains for African American women and Hispanics, however.

In their turn, workers pursue the best jobs they can get, often at the expense of other workers. Inheritance networks and niches may help protect jobs for some but result in bias

against others. Research suggests that white ethnics were the best at protecting jobs, but these groups usually deny that they are discriminating or are prejudiced. Attitude surveys, stories, and narratives suggest that whites are opposed to affirmative action policies, because they see “leveling the playing field” as reverse discrimination (Bonilla-Silva 2003). In contrast, African Americans, because of slavery, Jim Crow, and ghettoization have had limited success in doing so. More than other groups, African Americans have employed legal and political struggles to move out of jobs at the back of the queue.

Over the course of the last decade, there has been increase in the demand for policies that have been described as “race blind.” The argument for these policies is that race is no longer an important characteristic in the modern-day United States and that policies that pay attention to race cause divisions in society. Ostensibly race-blind policies such as hiring practices that rely on informal networks or advertising in suburban newspapers will continue to have discriminatory consequences. Only with conscious policies and collective efforts, not blindness, can we expect behavioral and structural changes that promote workplace equality.

## PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Elijah. 2001. “The Social Situation of the Black Executive: Black and White Identities in the Corporate World.” Pp. 405–436 in *Problem of the Century: Racial Stratification in the United States*, edited by Elijah Anderson and Douglas S. Massey. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Arce, Carlos H., Edward Murguía, and W. Parker Frisbe. 1987. “Phenotype and Life Chances Among Chicanos.” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Studies*. Vol. 9(1): 19–33.
- Badgett, M. V. Lee and Heidi Hartmann. 1995. “The Effectiveness of Equal Employment Opportunity Policies.” Pp. 55–97 in *Economic Perspectives on Affirmative Action*, edited by M. C. Simms. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
- Bean, Frank D. and Gillian Stevens. 2003. *America’s Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Becker, Gary S. 1971. *A Theory of Discrimination*. 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Bendick, Marc, Jr. 1997. Declaration. Statement Submitted to the Supreme Court of California in Response to Proposition 209, September 26.
- Bendick, Marc, Jr., Charles W. Jackson, and Victor A. Reinoso. 1997. “Measuring Employment Discrimination Through Controlled Experiments.” Pp. 77–100 in James Steward (ed.), *African-American and Post Industrial Labor Markets*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Bendick, Marc, Jr., Charles W. Jackson, Victor A. Reinoso, and Laura E. Hodges. 1992. “Discrimination Against Latino Job Applicants: A Controlled Experiment.” Washington, DC: Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington, Inc.
- Bernstein, Jared. 1995. “Where’s the Payoff?: The Gap Between Black Academic Progress and Economic Gains.” Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Bluestone, Barry and Bennett Harrison. 1990. *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bobo, Lawrence D. and Susan A. Suh. 2000. “Surveying Racial Discrimination: Analyses from a Multiethnic Labor Market.” Pp. 523–560 in *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*, edited by Lawrence D. Bobo, Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela Jr. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bobo, Lawrence D., Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela Jr. 2000. *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2003. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Borjas, George. 1998. “Do Blacks Gain or Lose from Immigration?” Pp. 51–74 in *Help or Hindrance?: The Economic Implications of Immigration for African Americans*, edited by Daniel S. Hamermesh and Frank D. Bean. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Borjas, George and Marta Tienda (eds). 1985. *Hispanics in the U.S. Economy*. New York: Academic Press.
- Bound, John and Richard B. Freeman. 1992. “What Went Wrong? The Erosion of the Relative Earnings and Employment of Young Black Men in the 1980s.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 107(1): 201–232.

- Bound, John and Harry Holzer. 1993. "Industrial Shifts, Skills Levels, and the Labor Market for White and Black Males." *Review of Economics and Statistics*. Vol. LXXV(3): 387–396.
- Boushey, Heather and Robert Cherry. 2000. "Exclusionary Practices and Glass-Ceiling Effects Across Regions: What Does the Current Expansion Tell Us?" Pp. 160–187 in *Prosperity for All? The Economic Boom and African Americans*, edited by Robert Cherry and William M. Rodgers III. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Burtless, Gary. 1990. "Earnings Inequality over the Business and Demographic Cycles." Pp. 77–117 in *A Future of Lousy Jobs?: The Changing Structure of U.S. Wages*, edited by Gary Burtless. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Carnoy, Martin and Richard Rothstein. 1996. *Hard Lessons*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Cobble, Dorothy. 1993. "Introduction: Remaking Unions for the New Majority." Pp. 3–23 in *Women and Unions: Forging a Partnership*, edited by Dorothy Sue Cobble. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
- Conrad, Cecilia. 2001. "Racial Trends in Labor Market Access and Wages: Women." Pp.124–151 in *American Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences*, edited by Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Conrad, Cecilia. 2000. "In Good Times and Bad: Discrimination and Unemployment." Pp. 208–213 in *Prosperity for All? The Economic Boom and African Americans*, edited by Robert Cherry and William M. Rodgers III. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Conrad, Cecelia. 1998. "The Economic Cost of Affirmative Action." Prepared for the American Sociological Association's Conference entitled "Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations," April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Council of Economic Advisers. 1998. "Changing America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin." For the President's Race Initiative. September.
- Darden, H., R. Hill, J. Thomas, and R. Thomas. 1989. *Detroit: Race and Uneven Development*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Darity, William J. 1998. "Memorandum on Social Science Evidence on Intergroup Disparity and Discrimination." Prepared for the American Sociological Association's Conference entitled "Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations," April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Darity, William J., Jason Dietrich and David K. Guilkey. 1997. "Racial and Ethnic Inequality in the United States: A Secular Perspective." *American Economic Review*. Vol. 87(2): 301–305.
- Darity, William and Patrick L. Mason. 1998. *Evidence on Discrimination in Employment: Codes of Color, Codes of Gender*. Unpublished.
- Darity, William L. and Rhonda M. Williams. 1985. "Peddlers Forever?: Culture, Competition, and Discrimination." *Human Capital and Culture*. Vol. 75(2): 256–261.
- Darity, William, Jr., David Guilkey, and William Winfrey. 1996. "Explaining Differences in Economic Performance Among Racial and Ethnic Groups in the USA: the Data Examined." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. Vol. 55(4): 411–426.
- DiPrete, Thomas. 1987. "The Professionalization of Administration and Equal Opportunity in the U.S. Federal Government." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 93: 119–140.
- DiTomaso, Nancy. 1998. "The American Non-Dilemma: The Social Reproduction of Racial Inequality without Racism." Presented at a conference of the American Sociological Association, April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Dobbin, Frank, John Sutton, John Meyer, and W. Richard Scott. 1993. "Equal Opportunity Law and the Construction of Internal Labor Markets." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 99: 396–427.
- Duncan, Greg J. and Saul Hoffman. 1979. "On-the-Job Training and Earnings Differences by Race and Sex." *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. Vol. LXI, No. 4.
- Edelman, Lauren B. 1992. "Legal Ambiguity and Symbolic Structures: Organizational Mediation of Civil Rights Law." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 97: 1531–1576.
- Edelman, Lauren B. and Stephen Petterson. 1993. "Symbols and Substance in Organizational Response to Civil Rights Law." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, August 13–17, Miami Beach, FL.
- Edelman, Lauren B., Stephen Petterson, Elizabeth Chambliss, and Howard S. Erlanger. 1991. "Legal Ambiguity and the Politics of Compliance: Affirmative Action Officers' Dilemma." *Law and Policy* 13:73–97.
- Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein. 1997. *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Farley, Reynolds, Sheldon Danziger, and Harry J. Holzer. 2000. *Detroit Divided*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Silkes. 1994. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fix, Michael, George C. Galster, and Raymond J. Struyk. 1993. "An Overview of Auditing for Discrimination." Pp. 1–68 in *Clear and Convincing Evidence: Measurement of Discrimination in America*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

- Freeman, Richard B. 1982. "Black Economic Progress after 1964: Who Has Gained and Why?" Cambridge, MA: Working Paper No 282, National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Frey, William. 1995. "Immigration and Internal Migration for the United States: 1990 Census Findings by Poverty Status and Race." *International Journal of Population Geography*, September: 51–67.
- Glass Ceiling Commission. 1995. See U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Glass Ceiling Commission.
- Gottschalk, Peter. 1997. "Inequality, Income Growth and Mobility: The Basic Facts." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol. 11(2): 21–40.
- Greenhaus, J. H. and S. Parasuraman. 1991. "Job Performance Attributions and Career Advancement Prospects: An Examination of Gender and Race Effects." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. Vol. 55: 273–297.
- Harris, Kathleen Mullins. 1997. Chapel Hill, NC: Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Unpublished Calculations.
- Heckman, James and Brook Payner. 1989. "Determining the Impact of Federal Antidiscrimination Policy on the Economic Status of Blacks." *American Economic Review*. Vol. 65: 158–168.
- Holzer, Harry. 2001. "Racial Differences in Labor Market Outcomes Among Men." Pp. 98–123 in *American Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences*, edited by Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Holzer, Harry. 1998. Race and Labor Markets: What We Know. Memorandum prepared for the American Sociological Association's Conference "Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations," April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Holzer, Harry. 1996. "Why Do Small Firms Hire Fewer Blacks Than Large Ones?" Institute for Research on Poverty. Working paper.
- Holzer, Harry and Keith Ihlanfeldt. 1996. "Customer Discrimination and Employment Outcomes of Minorities." Institute for Research on Poverty. Working paper.
- Holzer, Harry and Michael A. Stoll. 2001. *Employers and Welfare Recipients: The Effect of Welfare Reform in the Workplace*. San Francisco: California Public Policy Institute.
- Howell, David R. and Elizabeth J. Mueller. 1997. "The Effects of Immigrants on African-Americans Earnings: A Jobs-Level Analysis of the New York City Labor Market, 1979–89." Working Paper No. 210, The Jerome Levy Economics Institute, New York.
- Hum, Tarry. 2000. "A Protected Niche? Immigrant Ethnic Economics and Labor Market Segmentation." Pp. 279–314 in *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*, edited by Lawrence D. Bobo, Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela Jr. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Jacobs, Jerry A. and Mary Blair-Loy. 2001. "Gender, Race, Local Labor Markets, and Occupational Devaluation." Pp. 347–374 in *Problem of the Century: Racial Stratification in the United States*, edited by Elijah Anderson and Douglas S. Massey. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Jaynes, Gerald David and Robin M. Williams, Jr. 1989. *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Jencks, Christopher and Meredith Phillips. 1998. "The Black-White Test Score Gap: An Introduction." Pp. 1–51 in *The Black-White Test Score Gap* edited by Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.
- Johnson, James H. Jr. and Melvin L. Oliver. 1992. "Structural changes in the U.S. Economy and Black Male Joblessness: A Reassessment." Pp. 113–147 in *Urban Labor Markets and Job Opportunity*, edited by George E. Peterson and Wayne Vroman. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- Johnson, James H., Jr., Walter C. Farrell Jr., and Jennifer A. Stoloff. 2000. "African American Males in Decline: A Los Angeles Case Study." Pp. 315–337 in *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*, edited by Lawrence D. Bobo, Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela Jr. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Johnson, William R. and Derek Neal. 1998. "Basic Skills and the Black-White Earnings Gap." Pp. 480–500 in *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Kalleberg, Arne L., Barbara F. Reskin, and Ken Hudson. 2000. "Bad Jobs in America: Standard and Nonstandard Employment Relations and Job Quality in the United States." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 65(2): 256–278.
- Kalleberg, Arne L., Edith Rasell, Ken Hudson, David Webster, Barbara Reskin, Naomi Cassirer, Eileen Appelbaum, and Roberta Spalter-Roth. 1997. "Nonstandard Work, Substandard Jobs: Flexible Work Arrangements in the U.S." Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute Women's Research and Education Institute.
- Kammeyer, Kenneth C.W., George Ritzer, and Norman R. Yetman. 1997. *Sociology; Experiencing Changing Societies*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Keith, Verna M. and Cedrick Herring. 1991. "Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 97: 760–778.
- King, Mary C. 1992. "Occupational Segregation by Race and Sex, 1940–1988." *Monthly Labor Review* (April).
- Kirschenman, Joleen, Philip Moss, and Chris Tilly. 1995. "Employer Screening Methods and Racial Exclusion: Evidence from New In-Depth Interviews with Employers." Russell Sage Foundation (<http://epn.org/sage/rstikm.html>).
- Kirschenman, Joleen and Kathryn M. Neckerman. 1991. "'We'd Love to Hire Them But . . .': The Meaning of Race for Employers." Pp. 203–234 in *The Urban Underclass*, edited by C. Jencks and P. Peterson. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Kletzer, Lori. 1998. "Job Displacement." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol. 12: 115–136.
- Kletzer, Lori. 1991. "Job Displacement, 1979–1986: How Blacks Fared Relative to Whites." *Monthly Labor Review*. Vol. 114: 17–25.
- Kodras, Janet. 1998. "Race and Poverty in an Era of Economic and Political Restructuring." Prepared for the American Sociological Association's Conference on The Social Science Knowledge of Race, Racism, and Race Relations, April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Konrad, Alison M. and Frank Linnehan. 1995. "Formalized HRM Structures: Coordinating Equal Employment Opportunity or Concealing Organizational Practices?" *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 38: 787–820.
- Leonard, Jonathan S. 1990. "The Impact of Affirmative Action Regulation and Equal Employment Law on Black Employment." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol. 4: 47–63.
- Lichter, Michael I. and Melvin Oliver. 2000. "Racial Differences in Labor Force Participation and Long-Term Joblessness among Less-Educated Men." Pp. 220–248 in *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles*, edited by Lawrence D. Bobo, Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela Jr. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lim, Nelson. 2001. "On the Back of Blacks: Immigrants and the Fortunes of African Americans." Pp. 186–227 in *Strangers at the Gates: New Immigrants in Urban America*, edited by Roger Waldinger. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Loprest, Pamela, Stefanie Schmidt, and Ann Dryden Witte. 2000. "Welfare Reform under PRWORA: Aid to Children with Working Families." *Tax Policy and the Economy*, National Bureau of Economic Research, Vol. 14: 157–203.
- Mason, Patrick L. and Rhonda Williams. 1997. *The Janus-Face of Race Relations on Economic Theory: Race, Markets and Social Outcomes*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Massey, Douglas S., Camille Z. Charles, Garvey F. Lundy, and Mary J. Fischer. 2003. *The Source of the River: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Selective Colleges and Universities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Maume, David J. 1999. "Glass Ceilings and Glass Escalators: Occupational Segregation and Race and Sex Differences in Managerial Promotions." *Work and Occupations*. Vol. 26(4): 483–509.
- McClain, Charles J. and Laurene Wu McClain. 1991. "The Chinese Contribution to the Development of American Law." Pp. 3–24 in *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943*, edited by Sucheng Chan. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Moss, Philip and Chris Tilly. 1997. "Why Opportunity Isn't Knocking: Racial Inequality and the Demand for Labor." Department of Regional Economic and Social Development, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA. Unpublished manuscript.
- Moss, Philip and Chris Tilly. 1996a. "Informal Hiring Practices, Racial Exclusion, and Public Policy." Prepared for presentation at the meetings of the Association of Public Policy and Management, Pittsburgh, PA, October 31–November 2, 1996.
- Moss, Philip and Chris Tilly. 1996b. "'Soft' Skills and Race." *Work and Occupations*. Vol. 23: 252–276.
- Moss, Philip and Chris Tilly. 1995. *Raised Hurdles for Black Men: Evidence from Interviews with Employers*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Retrieved October 19, 2005 (<http://epn.org/sage/rstimo.html>).
- Murnane, Richard J., John B. Willet, and Frank Levy. 1995. "The Growing Importance of Cognitive Skills in Wage Determination." *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. Vol. 77(2): 251–266.
- Neal, Derek and William Johnson. 1996. "The Role of Pre-Market Factors in Black-White Wage Differences." *Journal of Political Economy* (October).
- Neckerman, Kathryn M. and Joleen Kirschenman. 1991. "Hiring Strategies, Racial Bias, and Inner-City Workers." *Social Problems*. Vol. 38(4): 433–447.
- Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1995. *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. New York: Routledge.

- O'Regan, Katherine M. and John M. Quigley. 1993. "Family Networks and Youth Access to Jobs." *Journal of Urban Economics*. Vol. 34: 230–248.
- Padavic, Irene and Barbara Reksin. 2002. *Women and Men at Work*, 2d ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Parvez, Z. Fareen. 2002. "Women, Poverty, and Welfare Reform" (Social Activism Fact Sheets) Akron, OH: Sociologists for Women in Society. Retrieved October 19, 2005 (<http://newmedia.colorado.edu/usocwomen/socialactivism/socialactivism.html>).
- Portes, Alejandro and Robert Manning. 1986. "The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Examples." Pp. 47–68 in *Competitive Ethnic Relations*, edited by Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel. New York: Academic Press.
- Regenstein, Marsha, Jack A. Meyer, and Jennifer Dickemper Hicks. 1998. "Job Prospects for Welfare Recipients: Employers Speak Out." Occasional Paper No. 10, New York: The Urban Institute.
- Reich, Robert. 1992. *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for the 21st Century Capitalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Reimers, Cordelia. 2000. "The Effects of Tighter Labor Markets on Unemployment of Hispanics and African Americans." Pp. 3–49 in *Prosperity for All: The Economic Boom and African Americans*, edited by Robert Cherry and William M. Rodgers III. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Reimers, Cordelia. 1998. "Unskilled Immigration and Changes in the Wage Distribution of Black, Mexican American, and Non-Hispanic White Male Dropouts." Pp. 107–148 in *Help or Hindrance? The Economic Implications of Immigration for African Americans*, edited by Daniel S. Hamermesh and Frank D. Bean. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Reskin, Barbara F. 1998. *The Realities of Affirmative Action in Employment*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.
- Reskin, Barbara F. and Irene A. Padavic. 1988. "Supervisors as Gatekeepers: Male Supervisors' Response to Women's Integration in Plant Jobs." *Social Problems*. Vol. 35: 401–415.
- Reskin, Barbara F. and Patricia Roos. 1990. *Job Queues, Gender Queues*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Rodgers, William and William E. Spriggs. 1996a. "What Does the AFQT Really Measure: Race, Wages, Schooling and the AFQT Score." *The Review of Black Political Economy (Spring)*: 13–45.
- Rodgers, William and William E. Spriggs. 1996b. "The Effects of Federal Contractor Status on Racial Differences in Establishment-Level Employment Shares: 1979–1992." *American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings*. Vol. 86: 290–293.
- Rodriguez, Carla E. 1998. "Research Roundup for a Working Memorandum." Presented at the American Sociological Association Conference on Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations, April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Rose, Stephen. 1993. "Declining Family Incomes in the 1980s: New Evidence from Longitudinal Data." *Challenge* (November/December).
- Saenz, Rogelio. 1998. "Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations." Prepared for the American Sociological Association's Conference for Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations, April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Sanders, Jimmy M. and Victor Nee. 1987. "Limits of Ethnic Solidarity in the Enclave Economy." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 52: 745–773.
- Sassen, Saskia. 1990. *The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schwartzman, David. 1997. *Black Unemployment: Part of Unskilled Unemployment*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Seltzer, Sandra and Robert C. Smith. 1991. "Color Differences in the Afro-American Community and the Differences They Make." *Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 21(3): 279–286.
- Sewell, William H., Archibald O. Haller, and Alejandro Portes. 1969. "The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 34: 82–92.
- Spalter-Roth, Roberta, Beverly Burr, Heidi Hartmann, and Louise Shaw. 1995. "Welfare That Works: The Working Lives of AFDC Recipients." Report to the Ford Foundation. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- Spalter-Roth, Roberta and Cynthia Deitch. 1998. "'I Don't Feel Right-Sized—I Feel Out-of-Work Sized': The Unequal Effects of Downsizing on Women in the Workforce." Paper presented at the session on Employment Equality and Restructuring, co-sponsored by the Sex and Gender Section, for the 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August 21–25.
- Spalter-Roth, Roberta and Heidi I. Hartmann. 1994. "What Do Unions Do for Women?" In *Restoring the Promise of American Labor Law*, edited by Sheldon Friedman, Richard W. Hurd, Rudolph A. Oswald, and Ronald Seebor. New York: ILR Press.



- Spalter-Roth, Roberta and Terri Ann Lowenthal. 2005. "Race, Ethnicity, and the American Labor Market: What's at Work." Washington, DC: American Sociological Association Research Brief. Retrieved October 19, 2005 ([http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/RaceEthnicity\\_LaborMarket.pdf](http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/RaceEthnicity_LaborMarket.pdf)).
- Spriggs, William. 1998. "The State of Economics and Race." Prepared for the American Sociological Association Conference on Social Science Knowledge on Race, Racism, and Race Relations, April 26–28, McLean, VA.
- Spriggs, William E. and Rhonda M. Williams. 2000. "What Do We Need to Explain About African American Unemployment?" Pp. 188–207 in *Prosperity for All? The Economic Boom and African Americans*, edited by Robert Cherry and William M. Rodgers III. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Stull, Donald D., Michael J. Broadway, and David Griffith. 1995. *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Telles, Edward E. and Edward Murguia. 1990. "Phenotypic Discrimination and Income Differences among Mexican Americans." *Social Science Quarterly*. Vol. 71(4): 682–694.
- Tienda, Marta. 1998. "Immigration and Native Minority Workers: Is There Bad News After All?" Pp. 345–352 in *Help or Hindrance?: The Economic Implications of Immigration for African Americans*, edited by Daniel Hamermesh and Frank D. Bean. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, Donald. 1993. *Gender and Racial Inequality at Work: The Sources and Consequences of Job Segregation*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
- Turner, Margery Austin, Michael Fix, and Raymon J. Struyk. 1991. *Opportunities Denied, Opportunities Dismissed: Racial Discrimination in Hiring*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. "Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics." Census 2000, Summary File 4, DP-3.
- Vernon-Gerstenfeld, Susan and Edmund Burke. 1985. "Affirmative Action in Nine Large C Companies: A Field Study." *Personnel*. Vol. 62: 54–60.
- Waldinger, Roger. 1996. *Still the Promised City?: African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Waldinger, Roger and Michael I. Litcher. 2003. *How the Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social Organization of Labor*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wilson, C. 1992. "Restructuring and the Growth of Concentrated Poverty in Detroit." *Urban Affairs Quarterly*. Vol. 28: 187–205.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Young, Jr., Alford A. 2004. *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zhou, Min. 1992. *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

## CHAPTER 16

# UNITED STATESIANs: The Nationalism of Empire

MELANIE E. L. BUSH

### INTRODUCTION

Events at the turn of the 21st century have led to heightened contestation about the meaning and parameters of U.S. nationalism, patriotism, and loyalty. At a time when the oft-heard phrase “Support the Troops” signifies interpretations both of sending more soldiers to war and bringing home those already in combat, when questioning and dissent are viewed as matters of social responsibility among at least some public officials and as criminal acts by others, when this “nation of immigrants” spawns a new generation of “minutemen” to defend national borders, we can easily say that “notions of nation” and who “belongs” are in transition. With a growing foreign-born population, the issue has been raised about whether the United States as a nation ever was or can truly ever be a veritable multicultural union. Does claiming national allegiance provide a vantage point from which to stand for peace, justice, and equality (Nussbaum 1996, 136) or does it divide us within and from people of other nations? What functions do nationalism, patriotism, and citizenship serve in today’s interconnected world in a nation founded and built upon the presumption of empire?<sup>1</sup>

With these questions in mind, this entry addresses the origins and development of the U.S. nation and empire; the founding principles and their lived reality; the belief in exceptionalism and the creation of patriotism; the issue of “belonging”; the “American” Dream and the corresponding portrait of a “nation of immigrants.”

---

<sup>1</sup> In a fascinating discussion entitled “Citizenship Destabilized,” Saskia Sassen explores these questions and others, such as whether current changes in the socio-politics of today’s world may signal an “emerging political subjectivity that partly lodges itself outside the national, but also changes the meaning of the national.” She asserts that the functionality of citizenship relates to issues such as budget allocation but that our current system needs reformulation, in the direction of being “partly denationalized” (2003, 14–21).

## “AMERICA” THE BEAUTIFUL: THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION AND EMPIRE

Is the United States a meritocracy—how frequently does hard work lead to success? Do those who work at the hardest jobs with the longest hours reap the greatest rewards? Portrayed as the perfect democracy, what are the origin and development myths of this nation and empire?<sup>2</sup> Bacon’s Rebellion, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, institution of slavery, legislations such as the Dred Scott decision, *People v. Hall*, the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo, Jim Crow, and the ruling in *Brown v. The Board Education* provide markers in the history of how nation, white supremacy, and empire have been intrinsically linked in the development of the U.S. nation. The story of “America” is entrenched with and built upon numerous presumptions of exceptionalism and superiority. From the early years of European conquest, enslavement, and expansion, “nation” has been equated with a white racial portrait, contradicting earlier notions of enlightenment, common unity, and belonging. Has “all” ever meant ALL, did “men” ever mean “human,” and did “equal” ever really mean equal opportunity, treatment or outcome?

This equation (of nation, white supremacy, and Eurocentrism) became the foundational justification for trespass, genocide, domination, exploitation, and entitlements of land, labor, and wealth. As the colonies and then the nation were created, struggles occurred about whose interests would be served, and who could claim what rights. The nation and its laws were established (however contested) with ideas about who would be protected. Subsequently in the 19th and 20th centuries, the demand made of European immigrants was to become like “us,” like it or not, but for peoples from other parts of the globe it was that you will never be like “us” (Smedley 1993, 32) The case was built about who belonged and who did not, who was “same” and who was “different,” “civil,” and “savage”—who could own land, who could read, who could be in charge of and exploit other people’s labor and who could not. These questions were resolved in the naturalized hierarchies of race, language, culture, and gender and through an ambiguous concept of national belonging, whereby core values such as “democracy,” “equality,” “freedom,” and “justice” were evoked on behalf of “all” and implemented on behalf of “some.”

Patriotism in this context has demanded unquestioning loyalty, presumed European superiority, and the equation of might and right. This ideology of nation has disallowed discussion of the structuring of society and put forth an elusive notion of national identity evoked as needed to enlist complicity with the whims of the dominant elite. The question of who belongs and the corresponding entitlements vacillates between tangible notions of naturalization and citizenship, unambiguous birthrights, and the ambiguous notion that being “American” corresponds to a particular belief system.

The controversy over belonging and inclusion was embedded in the Declaration of Independence and the early years of the U.S. nation as described by William J. Wilson, in 1860, “. . . they the white people and they alone, find its boundaries too circumscribed for their greedy grasp. Possessing acres by the millions, yet they would elbow us and all others off of what we possess, to give them room for what they cannot occupy” (Roediger 1998, 65); Frederick Douglass in his famous speech, “What to the Slave Is Your Fourth of July?” (Douglass 1970, 349); and Harriet Jacobs (1861) in her discussion of the annual practice of

---

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Martinez speaks of the origin narratives that every society creates “to explain that society to itself and the world with a set of mythologized stories and symbols.” She explores the “American” origin narrative in detail (1996) and attributes this labeling to Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz.

“muster,” a time when armed whites terrorized the enslaved population in anticipation of revolts. She suggests that this institution served to unite whites across class lines (Roediger 1998, 336); by so doing, it also defined the parameters of citizenship.

These examples of the centering and privileging of the European experience have been endemic “not just a by-product of white supremacy but an imperative of racial domination” (Roediger 1998, 6). The new nation of the United States was built using the labor of Africans, Chinese, and new immigrants, exploiting the land and natural resources of indigenous peoples and Mexican territories, simultaneously excluding most of these groups from citizenship and the benefits of “belonging.” Immigrants from Europe in the 19th century were integrated into the expanding industrial economy where there was opportunity for upward mobility. Through this economic assignment, and the policies and programs of the early 20th century that provided further opportunities and supports for upward mobility such as the G.I. Bill and FHA loans, they were enlisted in a panethnic racial “club” and “became party to strategies of social closure that maintained others’ exclusion” (Waldinger 2001, 20). Hence national identification in the United States has always been inherently tied to racial status.

The initial emergence of the notion of European racial superiority and racial exploitation corresponded to the appearance of capitalism over 600 years ago (Cox 1948, 322). While contact and interaction across geographically distinct populations occurred during earlier times, there is no evidence of race prejudice even in the Hellenistic empire, which had extended further into Africa than any other European empire (Cox 1948, 322). St. Clair Drake describes the 16th century as “a historic watershed in global relations between Black and white people” and states that neither racial slavery nor systemic white racism existed prior to this, although color prejudice was present in some places (Drake 1987, xxiii). While interethnic interactions endure a long history, in the past they did not necessarily reflect inevitable conflict, competition, or struggle (Smedley 1998, 690). Identities were constructed by a wide range of characteristics including, but not limited to, place of birth, language, kinship, religion, or occupation. They were generally context-specific and malleable up to the 17th century (Smedley 1998, 691, 2). Drake found that, up to the 17th century, Blackness was not a stigma, nor was race essentialized in the way that it later came to be (Harrison 1998, 620, 621).

With the emergence of capitalism, the colonial exploration of the globe, and the beginning of the slave trade between Africa and parts of the “new” world, racial notions were used to justify the subordination and exploitation of large numbers of people who formed a labor pool for building settlements and cultivating agriculture. During the earliest period in the development of capitalism, “The white man had no conception of himself as being capable of developing the superior culture of the world—the concept ‘white man’ had not yet its significant social definition—the Anglo-Saxon, the modern master race, was then not even in the picture” (Cox 1948, 327). Racial dynamics, however, quickly developed within the context of the expansion of capitalism and colonial settlements. This process initially took the form of a European center with Euro-dominated colonies. The link between national development under capitalism and white supremacy was forged at this time.

Ultimately, the British settler colony of North America evolved into the United States, which then became the new center (Drake 1987). A vivid example of this process of racial development was the fateful Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676 in Virginia, which established early boundaries distinguishing Africans, Europeans, and native peoples (Zinn 1995, 37–59). This event is generally portrayed solely as a response to common exploitation and oppression, as African and European bond-laborers rebelled to demand an end to servitude. However, another key component of this struggle was an orchestrated attempt by the dominant elites to drive a wedge between these groups and the native population. Any combination of these

forces was a tremendous threat to the white planters, whose wealth was great compared to that of the general white population. Poor Europeans had much more in common with enslaved Africans, and a potential alliance could have been disastrous for those in power. "In the early years of slavery, especially, before racism as a way of thinking was firmly ingrained, while white indentured servants were often treated as badly as Black slaves, there was a possibility of cooperation" (Zinn 1995, 37). The plantation bourgeoisie responded to the threat of coalition by offering European laborers a variety of previously denied benefits, such as amnesty for those who rebelled, corn, cash, and muskets for those finishing their servitude, the right to bear arms, and the opportunity to join slave patrol militias and receive monetary awards.

They constituted the police patrol who could ride with planters, and now and then exercise unlimited force upon recalcitrant or runaway slaves; and then, too, there was always a chance that they themselves might also become planters by saving money, by investment, by the power of good luck; the only heaven that attracted them was the life of the great Southern planter. (Du Bois 1979, 27)

This may be viewed as the nation's first "affirmative action" policy (Harrison 1998, 621). These actions were taken to quell this potentially dangerous alliance and as a means for control. Racism on the part of poor whites became a practical matter (Zinn 1995, 56). The explicit use of race and white supremacy was implemented as a tool to divide and conquer and framed the development of nation from the very beginning. Prior to this period, there was little advantage and therefore little motivation for poor whites to ally themselves with the ruling powers. At this time, though, they were accorded "social, psychological and political advantages" calculated to alienate them from their fellow African bondsmen (Morgan 1975, 331–333, 344; Du Bois 1979, 700).

Racism was implemented as a means of control to establish and then maintain the structure of social organization in the "new" world. Racial domination became encoded in the process of nation-state building for the United States as "Blacks were sold out to encourage white unity and nationalist loyalty to the state" (Marx 1998, 267). Slavery, therefore, played a critical role in providing a justification for the unification of whites racially as a nation (Marx 1998, 267), a pattern that continues to impact national identity, notions of whiteness, and formulations of race in society today. Whites were told that their whiteness rendered them "superior," and to maintain this status they needed to place their allegiances with those in power who had the resources and could divvy up benefits.

"During America's colonial era the ideal of white identity was male, English, Protestant, and privileged. Over time this ideal evolved into free, white, male, Christian, propertied and franchised. These characteristics developed into a norm that subsequently became synonymous with American." (Davis 2005, 155, citing Babb 1998). This identity was also intertwined with notions of freedom, thereby reinforcing the relationship between whiteness and American-ness (Davis, 2005, 155). "There were perfectly strategic reasons to allow the identity of American to evolve in opposition to blackness—exploitation, appropriation and subordination of Blacks and Black labor (Davis 2005, 156).

While particularly applied as a black-white polarization, this ideological formulation of race was also flexible. A stigma of racial inferiority could be invoked as needed to maintain divisions and enforce a social hierarchy. For example, during the mid-19th century, Chinese workers were used as the primary labor force in building California's railroads. Their subsequent brutalization, subjugation, and exclusion were framed overwhelmingly in racial terms (Smedley 1993, 268). This stigma was similarly applied to native and Mexican peoples who were characterized as savages, unfit to own and govern their land "coincidentally" at the time that those lands were desired by the wealthy elite justified by the narrative of manifest destiny. The "Trail of Tears" and the annexation of one third of Mexican land are brutal testaments to this history of internal colonization, land appropriation, and genocide.

Throughout the 18th and the early 19th centuries, the formation and consolidation of working-class whiteness (Roediger 1999, 14) and “American” identity were founded not just on economic exploitation but also on racial folklore (Du Bois 1970). Du Bois describes this dynamic eloquently:

*It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them. (Du Bois 1979, 700, 701)*

Also during this period, various theoretical trends emerged in the social and biological sciences to further justify this ordering of the world. “These models created a new form of social identity as the concept of ‘race’ developed as a way to rationalize the conquest and brutal treatment of native populations and the institution of slavery” (Smedley 1998, 697). Another dimension was the emergence of “American English” during the early part of the 19th century.

When the new nation formed, British culture was still dominant, and it was not yet clear what it meant to be American. (Noah) Webster thought it was vital to shake off “foreign manners” and build an independent national culture. . . . Webster’s political purpose in writing his dictionaries was promoting national unity. . . . He believed that a “federal language” could be a “band of national union.” (Cohen 2006)

This perspective played a significant role in the much later emergence of the “English-only” movement and the depiction of those speaking languages other than English as less “American” and worthy despite the fact that the United States does not have an officially declared language.

By the mid-19th century this arbitrary ranking of peoples and racial ideology had diffused around much of the world (Smedley 1998, 695), which reinforced the emerging notions of who was “American.” A vivid example of this was the 1903 “World’s Fair” where being “American” and being “white” were explicitly viewed as superior in stark contrast to the ancestors and inhabitants of the colonized world of those considered lesser beings, for example, Filipinos and Africans.<sup>3</sup>

The end of the 19th century and first half of the 20th were marked by two significant U.S. Supreme Court decisions concerning the Fourteenth Amendment,<sup>4</sup> signifying important shifts in the racial order within the United States (Baker 1998, 2). In 1896, *Plessy v. Ferguson* codified the practice of “separate but equal,” and in 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling overturned it.

The social context from which turn-of-the-century constructs of race emerged—industrialization, poll taxes, public lynching, unsafe working conditions, and Jim Crow segregation—at the same time gave rise to a professional anthropology that espoused racial inferiority and, as a consequence, supported and validated the status quo. (Baker 1998, 3)

Much of this applies to other scholarly disciplines and state policy as well. The legitimacy of the racial order was thereby validated and inscribed in “science” and in a social practice that reinforced the concepts of race, hierarchy, and nation. Simultaneously, many of the symbolic representations now referred to as the epitome of US patriotism emerged.

<sup>3</sup> A thorough exploration of this can be found in the California Newsreel Film “Race: The Power of an Illusion, Part II: The Stories We Tell” 2003. <http://www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc = CN0149>.

<sup>4</sup> The Fourteenth Amendment “enshrined in the Constitution the ideas of birthright citizenship and equal rights for all Americans” (Foner 1998, 105).

Like the idea of the American Dream and democracy, the American flag has come to symbolize the elevated status of the United States in the global order. The flag's symbolic meaning has been traced initially to the period after the First Reconstruction and through World War I (O'Leary 1999, 7–9) with many legal and political struggles over the definitions of loyal or disloyal citizens. During the period from 1870 to 1920, there was disagreement and conflict over which icons, heroes, events, and identities constituted the national memory and the historical narrative. The "Pledge of Allegiance" was written in 1891; the "Star-Spangled Banner" was taken as the national anthem in 1931 with points of contradiction and ambivalence about American ideals throughout (O'Leary 1999).

The turn of the 20th century marked a period of contestation about who was to be designated "white," as a huge influx of immigrants from Europe and other parts of the globe tested the boundaries of citizenry and racial identity. Paralleling the pace of immigration at the end of the century, the first decade of the 20th century witnessed the largest number of immigrants (8.8 million) admitted into the United States (Kraly and Miyares 2001, 47). The vast majority (92 percent) of these people originated from Europe.<sup>5</sup> At issue was the question of how they would be integrated and racially designated in U.S. society. The nation's expanding industries needed labor; mass immigration made cheap labor easily available. Immigrants were exploited but also "used as an instrument for more effective exploitation of others, whether native or immigrant. For this reason, immigrant workers were sometimes compelled to put aside their ethnic loyalties" (Steinberg 2001, 38). African, Asian, and Mexican workers were used as low-paid labor source for the least skilled jobs and sectors and established the infrastructure for industrialization and modernization. European immigrants worked primarily within the modern industrial sector that strategically provided them with opportunities for upward mobility (Blauner 1972, 62). This reality challenges the popular notion that "all Americans 'start at the bottom'" and work their way up the ladder. The racial labor principle designated a different bottom for different groups (Blauner 1972, 62, 63). The slogan "nation of immigrants" therefore describes most predominantly the European experience despite the fact that Jews, Italians, and Irish were not fully accepted as whites.

During this period Du Bois significantly contributed to a paradigm shift in the social sciences toward recognition of the connection between race and the concept of culture, united in an understanding of economics and politics (Baker 1998, 107–110). He described race as a social relationship, integral to capitalism, and the ultimate paradox of democracy constructed to reinforce and reproduce patterns of systemic inequality (Du Bois 1986 [1903], 372). "Back of the problem of race and color, lies a greater problem which both obscures and implements it: and that is the fact that so many civilized persons are willing to live in comfort even if the price of this is poverty, ignorance, and disease of the majority of their fellowmen: That to maintain this privilege men have waged war until today" (Du Bois 1953, xiv). In this way too, race and nation have been intrinsically linked.

During the first half of the 20th century, an ethnicity-based paradigm was often used to understand social relations in the United States emerging as an extension of challenges made to biologicistic and social Darwinist conceptions of race (Omi and Winant 1994, 12). Ethnicity was offered as a description of group formation that focused on culture and descent rather than biology and on the process of migration and the adaptation of immigrants in the United States. In 1913, Robert Park of the University of Chicago, a leading theorist within this group, asserted

---

<sup>5</sup> During the last decade of the 20th century, 7.6 million people immigrated to the United States: from Europe, 17.4 percent; from Asia, 38.9 percent; from North America, 33.4 percent; from South America, 6.6 percent; from Africa, 4.0 percent; and from Oceania, .7 percent (Kraly and Miyares 2001, 49).

that by their second generation, Poles, Lithuanians, and Norwegians were indistinguishable from native-born Americans (Schaefer 1995, 111). Park projected that ethnicity would dissolve as immigrants assimilated into society reflecting a pattern of integration into U.S. society, which he labeled the “race relations cycle.” This involved stages of contact, accommodation, assimilation, and amalgamation achieved through intermarriage (Steinberg 2001, 47). Park considered all modern nationalities to be a mixture of several groups. According to this idea, ethnicity was expected to disappear into a new American culture.

This period marked a new stage in the consolidation of whiteness as a racialized category such that European Americans were transformed into a panethnicity that represented the distancing of individuals from their national origin, heritage, and language, and being grouped as “white” (Alba 1990, 312) and American. Hence, too, white classification was clearly linked to national identity.

Two books in particular drew attention to the primacy of race within U.S. society and signaled a paradigm shift from the belief in biological to cultural explanations of racial difference. In *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (1945), M. F. Ashley Montagu, a physical anthropologist, asserted:

The idea of “race” was not so much the deliberate creation of a caste seeking to defend its privileges against what was regarded as an inferior social caste as it was the strategic elaboration of erroneous notions, which had long been held by many slaveholders. What was once a social difference was now turned into a biological difference, which would serve, it was hoped, to justify and maintain the social difference. (1945, 20)

Gunnar Myrdal’s *American Dilemma* (1944) put forth a call for racial democratization, emphasizing the need for the assimilation of African Americans:

*If America in actual practice could show the world a progressive trend by which the Negro finally became integrated into modern democracy, all mankind would be given faith again—it would have reason to believe that peace, progress and order are feasible. America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity.* (Myrdal 1964, 1021–1022)<sup>6</sup>

Here again, the racial order was embedded into the question of national identity.

Myrdal’s study became “the blueprint for state-based racial reform in the postwar era, strongly influencing debates about segregation and the runner-up to the Brown decision” (Winant 2001, 158). His suggestion that racism revealed a contradiction between American ideals and practice was considered a major advance at the time it was written. It later became apparent that this work marked a shift in emphasis from a biological to cultural focus still evident today (Steinberg 2001, 265). Less discussed was how his work illuminated tensions within the prevailing image of nation. How would the United States reconcile the embeddedness of white supremacy in its structure with the rhetoric of democracy and justice?

In *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963), Glazer and Moynihan asserted that immigrant groups do not “melt” into U.S. society but are transformed into new social forms based on political interests rather than on culture or heritage (Omi and Winant 1994, 18). New communities were unlike each other and unlike those from where they migrated. Moynihan and Glazer argued that the United States had developed a pluralist model that acknowledged differences but emphasized cooperation. By the 1970s, they spoke of ethnicity as a social category that

---

<sup>6</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois originally came up with the idea for this comprehensive study of race relations; however, his proposal was turned down. Subsequently the General Education Board (GEB)-connected Carnegie Corporation decided to fund Myrdal and not Du Bois with the implicit explanation that, despite his expertise, Du Bois was too involved with the subject (Donate et al. 2002, 227).



allowed contemporary forms of group expression based on distinctiveness and, in turn, provided an opening to demand rights based on the group's character and self-perceived needs (Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 3). Ethnicity was presented in the abstract, decontextualized from the historical and structural implications of embedded hierarchies. *Beyond the Melting Pot* examined five ethnic groups in New York City and implied (sometimes explicitly) that the American commitment to progress and achievement was justly and equally apportioned. The book asserted that inherent cultural norms, ideology, and values led to the success and progress of one group but not another. Structural relations of the social system were neither considered nor deemed significant in their analysis (Mullings 1978, 11). National identity was normalized and centered in the experience of European immigrants whose upward mobility was deemed the outcome of their particular cultures and values as opposed to social policies that paved the way for their integration into mainstream white society. National identification came much more fluidly to those who reaped the benefits of "belonging."

Moynihan and Glazer equated the histories and rationalized the social inequities of Jewish, Italian, and Irish immigrants ("ethnics"), Puerto Ricans, and African Americans. While the concept of the "undeserving poor" had long been established, deriving from period of early capitalism when pauperism was the fate of large number of people who forfeited their land and were displaced to the city, it was during the period of the 1960s that the concept of the "culture of poverty" emerged. In formulating this framework, Oscar Lewis compared groups of people who are poor, and whom he characterized as having negative traits, values, and norms, to those who were poor but do not appear to have such negative attributes. He wrote: "The culture or subculture of poverty comes into being in a variety of historical contexts. Most commonly it develops when a stratified social and economic system is breaking down or is being replaced by another, as in the case of the transition from feudalism to capitalism or during the industrial revolution" (Lewis 1961, xxv). Lewis elsewhere states that the causes and consequences of poverty are a direct result of the total social system, in particular, industrial capitalism (Lewis 1969, 190–191). He asserts that the structure of society is the most important factor in the perpetuation of poverty. Lewis's description of the characteristics of what he called the "culture of poverty" included a high degree of family disintegration, disorganization, resignation, and fatalism. Unfortunately, his work was used as a justification to blame individuals and groups exhibiting these characteristics and to justify inequality through an explanation of the inherent cultural weakness of the poor (Lewis 1969, 191) rather than as a means to critique the system within which these characteristics appear.

This (mis)interpretation of Lewis's work parallels the underlying assumptions, particularly about the weakness of the African American culture, in Moynihan and Glazer's writings (1963) as indicated above and in Moynihan's later writings (1965) about a "tangle of pathology" characterizing Black families as having negative, self-perpetuating values. These theories bolstered popular rhetoric that continued to emphasize the superiority of whites and white (ethnic) culture and the inferiority of African Americans and Latinos in particular. This period also brought the development of the narrative of Asians as "model minorities" despite the stark segmentation in economic circumstances within different communities as well as the brutal history of tentative belonging experienced by this group as symbolized by the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. With the increasing predominance of discourse depicting the United States as a meritocracy, the culture-of-poverty framework provided an explanation for why certain groups received benefits such as access to better jobs, education, higher incomes, and more wealth and why others did not.

The dynamics shaping mainstream discourse from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s were complex. Many groups and individuals were calling for a new vision of society based on social equality and justice for all and concern for the common good. This led to the characterization

of this period as a “Second Reconstruction.” The prevalence of the culture-of-poverty framework reflected a conservative influence that sought to command the parameters of thinking about the poor in an attempt to limit the power of a vision of society concerned with the common good, so well articulated by many popular movements of this period (DiLeonardo 1999, 59; Steinberg 1999, 222). The ruling elite was clear about what was at stake should structural factors responsible for the unequal organization of society become revealed.<sup>7</sup> The image of the United States as the land of opportunity and locus of democracy epitomized what would be vulnerable. As options expanded for white ethnics, allowing for significant upward mobility, justifications were needed to explain persistent inequality evident relative to all other groups.

During the late 1960s, “momentum built within white ethnic neighborhoods to the extent that their concerns and grievances demanded the attention of the society at large” (Ryan 1973, 1).

Partly it [was] a consequence of the growing discontent among white ethnics with their socio-economic position in America, partly it was one facet of the broader movement toward self-definition on behalf of many groups within American society. . . . It is in part a reaction to the social and political upheavals of the 1960s compounded by the inflationary economic spirals which followed. (Ryan 1973, 1)

The white ethnic position accepted the civil rights demand for outlawing discrimination, but not if it called for proactive or affirmative measures (Glazer and Moynihan 1963, 17; Omi and Winant 1994, 19). This perspective asserted that, “through hard work, patience and delayed gratification, etc. Blacks could carve out their own rightful place in American society” (Omi and Winant 1994, 19) and thereby echoed the culture-of-poverty argument from the perspective of white panethnicity. Ethnic identification by whites was constituted in a form of “white backlash” against the social programs that were set up as part of or as a result of the Civil Rights Act (1964), Voters Rights Act (1965), Immigration Act (1965), War on Poverty, and the Welfare Rights and nationalist movements of the 1960s. White ethnics (partially funded by the government as Heritage Societies) asserted that they too, suffered, and should be the recipients of social programs to address inequality in the United States.

Rather than the disappearance of ethnicity, there was resurgence and a demand for the recognition and acceptance of white ethnic groups as a political force. It is ironic that, although the antipoverty and civil rights programs and policies were portrayed as benefiting Blacks and Latinos exclusively, in fact, many white ethnics (particularly women) also benefited. For example, 75 percent of students initially admitted through the Open Admission Policy in the City University of New York were white ethnics who were the first in their family to attend college (Ryan 1973, 164; Lavin et al. 1979, 69). Information such as this was muted in the public arena as the “new ethnicity” movement took strong stands against such programs and demanded resources for their own groups. Emphasis was placed on ethnicity as the primary classification for discussing groups as carriers of culture. These ideas then influenced the discourse about rights, equality, democracy, community self-definition, and resistance.

By the mid-1970s, Moynihan and Glazer had reevaluated some of their own earlier thinking and put forth what is known as a “bootstraps model” (Omi and Winant 1994, 21). While this model recognized the injustice of slavery and racism, it articulated the idea that successes and failures of specific groups are a result of different norms that they brought to bear in dealing with

---

<sup>7</sup> Gil Scott-Heron describes this period, “Civil rights, women’s rights, gay rights; it’s all wrong. Call in the cavalry to disrupt this perception of freedom gone wild. First one wants freedom, then the whole damn world wants freedom” (Scott-Heron 1992). I owe thanks to Roderick D. Bush, professor of sociology, St. John’s University, for a clarifying discussion on this topic, 5 January 2002 (Bush 1999).

circumstances they faced. Little else is deemed relevant, including the economic climate, the reigning ideological stance of benign neglect, or the existing social structures within which all groups exist (Omi and Winant 1994, 22). Black, Latino, and Asian ethnic or national categories are not viewed as notable (e.g., whether someone's family is from Haiti or Ethiopia; Peru or the Dominican Republic; China or India), whereas a white ethnic classification is considered significant (Omi and Winant 1994, 22). Ethnicity generally asserts an upward distinction in status, whereas race signifies a downward distinction since whiteness is assumed to be "natural," and not "raced." By this time, national identity was very much infused with the presumptions of European belonging and marginalization of everyone else. ". . . Englishmen used science, literature and culture to transform themselves into Americans, and to fabricate a past that enabled them to emerge as the only people with a legacy, a culture and a history" (Davis 2005, 153).<sup>8</sup>

In *Ethnic Dilemma, 1964–1982*, Nathan Glazer writes that while the 1960s' legislation intended to lead us to a colorblind society, it actually increased color consciousness in the United States and forced institutions to pay an increasingly high level of attention to race and ethnicity (Glazer 1983, 3). His writings signaled another political shift to the right and a further attack on measures intended to equalize resources such as through school integration, affirmative action, and various social welfare programs. This trend has continued throughout the past two decades, with continuing consolidation of the conservative agenda articulated, for example, by the Project for a New American Century and polarization of wealth worldwide. The foundation and legitimacy of more recent waves of anti-immigration legislations throughout the country emanates from this ideological perspective. The U.S. nation should be protected for those who "belong," especially its wealth. The painful irony is that for many immigrants, particularly those from Latin and South America, their journeys have been precipitated by U.S. intervention and destabilization within their nations of origin (Gonzalez, 2000). Similarly, the existence of minutemen established "to bring attention to the national crisis of illegal immigration" as "our nation was founded as a nation governed by the 'rule of law', not by the whims of mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders"<sup>9</sup> provides harsh reminder of the hypocrisy in protecting Mexican land from Mexicans.

Theoretical notions of the culture of poverty have remained a central part of public discourse. In the 1990s this concept was utilized in attacks on the public sector and debates about welfare and higher education. Issues of standards and merit have been raised without the language of race yet implying cultural deficits of Black and Latino communities and implicitly presuming white superiority. Another explanation for group differences that reemerged during the 1970s is the concept of ethnicity. While previously employed in discussions about the process of assimilation, this notion had not been consolidated as an explanation for differences in social position between "white ethnics" and people of color. This marked the emergence of oblique coding of race in literature, media, and discourse, allowing racialized policies and practices to function without the bluntness of explicit language. After all, who would argue against upholding "standards" for education or measures to make our communities "safe," or disagree with the need for "family values"?

This section briefly provided an overview of the history and development of the United States as a nation with identity firmly rooted in the European experience. The next explores the founding principles and their lived incarnations.

<sup>8</sup> Davis references Valerie Babb, 1998. *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture*. New York: New York University Press.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.minutemanproject.com/> and <http://www.minutemanproject.com/AboutMMP.html>.

## DEMOCRACY, EQUALITY, FREEDOM AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE U.S. FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Deeply rooted in the concept of American identity is the notion of uniquely democratic values, idealized principles of freedom, equality and individualism and the belief that nowhere around the globe do people care so much about justice.<sup>10</sup> Popular discourse conveys implicit beliefs and contradictory interpretation of these ideals. For example, democracy is often taken to mean very ordinary things for example being able to “say what you want to say, when you want to say it”<sup>11</sup> yet recent evidence of governmental surveillance outside legal constraints lays this commonplace “truth” to rest. Similarly a recent *New York Times* article posed, “Is Freedom Just Another Word for Many Things to Buy? That Depends on Your Class Status” (Schwartz et al. 2006, 14). For millions of Americans without health insurance, jobs, or housing, freedom means being free to be sick, unemployed, or homeless.

The United States is believed to be unique—built on a democratic foundation and supported with inspirational mottos such as “all men are created equal” and “for the people, by the people.” The *New York Times* asserts that “American Idealism . . . has always existed in a paradoxical linkage with greed, an alarming tolerance for social injustices and the racial blindness that allowed the same mind that shaped the Declaration of Independence to condone slavery” (Editorial, 31 December 1999).

Founded as it was by people fleeing religious and political persecution, the Bill of Rights explicitly stands for freedom of speech, including the right to dissent. Meanwhile such rights have been parceled out to those considered “deserving,” in contrast to those who are not, throughout U.S. history. “‘Us versus them’ thinking easily becomes a general call for American supremacy, the humiliation of ‘the other’” (Nussbaum 2001, 11). After September 11th, many who called for historical analysis were labeled seditious anti-American traitors.

In *An American Dilemma*, Gunnar Myrdal articulated the moral contradiction whereby the United States ideology professes an allegiance to democratic and egalitarian ideals while allowing the reality of racial discrimination to exist within its boundaries (1964 [1944]). This contradiction points to the answer as to who is considered deserving, who counts, who belongs, who is visible, who matters, through whose eyes is policy set. Tax rebates to the rich that occur simultaneously with budget cuts to education, health, and welfare. While this signifies that white supremacy is not the only factor operating, because the concentrations of whites and people of color correspond to the spectrum of economic well-being, or lack thereof, in fact these policies clearly demonstrate the racial order and how it is embedded in the national policy.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, because the overwhelming majority of whites in the United States deny the existence of racial inequality and uphold the idea that we live in a meritocracy, it is they who support the status quo by accepting dominant explanations for poverty as being culturally based rather than structural and systemic. The nation and empire built upon white supremacy are thereby protected.

---

<sup>10</sup> In an interesting examination of “American Values,” Gerda Lerner explores the dyads of equality and racism; open access vs. elitism; federalism vs. imperialism; individualism vs. community; pluralism versus nativism, among others (1997, 74–92).

<sup>11</sup> Jacob, white male (Bush 2004, 113).

<sup>12</sup> Other observations of the difference between the ideal and the practice of democracy in the United States appear in the works of, for example, Frederick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper, and David Walker (Blassingame 1982; Wiltse 1965; Lemert and Bhan 1998).

Simultaneously due to the dramatic and growing polarization of wealth throughout the last decades of the 20th century, the population at large has become increasingly aware of big business's control. However, most people have been persuaded that this is good for the community at large. Movements for equality, representation, and justice are viewed as clamoring for power, ultimately leading to the demise of unity and the "republic."<sup>13</sup> Immigration patterns are portrayed as proof that the United States is "God blessed" (why else would everyone want to come here) and rarely is the question of how wealth accumulated in this part of the world discussed. The "hidden" history of imperialism is not part of the national psyche despite over 100 interventions in the last century.<sup>14</sup> In *Harvest of Empire*, Juan Gonzalez writes of the complicity of the United States in the generation of immigrants by supporting reactionary political regimes and protecting corporate interests that displace small farmers, but this story is never part of discussions of migration. The question "why" people migrate is not addressed in mainstream discourse—only that "America" is the place to be.

There exists a presumption that having a political structure presumably elected by the populous and a system of "checks" and "balances" in the governmental organization ensures democratic process and representation. However, when the class interests of both the "checks" and the "balances" are similar, there actually can be no real accountability to the population at large. Additionally, in recent elections (aside from the issue of alleged election fraud), roughly 40 percent of the eligible population did not vote, of those who voted, just 51 percent supported the winning candidate.<sup>15</sup> Between 1970 and 2000, the number of 18- to 29-year-olds who voted in presidential elections dropped from about one half to one third, and from one third to less than one fifth for congressional elections (Galston 2001, B16). Furthermore, the United States ranks 139th internationally in voter turnout in national elections since 1945. In the 2000 presidential election, less than 50 percent of the voting-age population voted (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2003a, b), with 38 percent of U.S. voting age citizens who had not completed high school voting compared to 77 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or higher (Livingston et al. 2003, VI).

Also significant that nearly a third of the members of the House and Senate, but only 1 percent of the population they represent, is millionaires (Sklar 2003, 58). In contrast, about

[O]ne in fifty adults has currently or permanently lost the ability to vote because of a felony conviction. . . . The racial impact of ex-felon disenfranchisement . . . is truly astonishing. In Alabama and Florida 31 percent of all black men are permanently disenfranchised. In five other states—Iowa, Mississippi, New Mexico, Virginia and Wyoming—the number is one in four. . . . In effect, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which guaranteed millions of African Americans the right to the electoral franchise is gradually being repealed by state restrictions on ex-felons from voting. A people who are imprisoned in disproportionately higher numbers, and then systematically denied the right to vote, can in no way claim to live under a democracy." (Marable 2002)

Additionally, as of August 2004 only one member of Congress had a child in the Iraq,<sup>16</sup> with fewer than a dozen with children in the military anywhere (Dickinson 2005). Furthermore,

<sup>13</sup> This is similar to the trend articulated in the bestseller by Allen Bloom (1987) in which he decries the decline of American common values.

<sup>14</sup> For a partial list of U.S. military interventions from 1890 to 1999, including approximately 100 incidents, see Zoltan Grossman, "A Century of U.S. Military Interventions: From Wounded Knee to Afghanistan," *Znet*, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> United States Election Project. "2004 Voting-Age and Voting-Eligible Population Estimates and Voter Turnout." [http://elections.gmu.edu/Voter\\_Turnout\\_2004.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/Voter_Turnout_2004.htm).

<sup>16</sup> Kirsten B. Mitchell, Media General News Service, Few lawmakers have children in military (November 16, 2003). Members of Congress with children in Iraq, <http://www.newsac.com/f911chap7-8.html>.

there are significant racial disparities between the percent of people in the armed forces compared to the civilian population. African-Americans, who are roughly 13 percent of the population overall, account for 22 percent of the armed forces. “The Defense Department acknowledges that recruits are drawn primarily from families in the middle and lower-middle socioeconomic strata” (Dickinson 2005). It then comes as little surprise that the policies this government endorses do not correspond to the needs, concerns, and dreams of the average American despite the demand for national allegiance even from those people who are rendered “disposable.” Government policies resulting in massive displacement of people from the Gulf Region serve as a vivid and painful example.

That the general public knows so little about the structure and status of nations, peoples, and societies outside the United States further reinforces the sense of exceptionalism. This imparts the sense of being special, different, and the need to protect the treasured commodity of “American” democracy and benevolent image of the United States: The government directs, the police protect, the schools educate, and individuals are responsible for the course of their lives. If one is not successful it is due to lack of motivation or hard work, an explanation reminiscent of the culture-of-poverty framework so often called upon to justify the disproportionate concentrations of poverty within certain populations, in particular communities of color. Another explanation points to differing abilities: “Not everybody is created equal. You can’t ask everybody on the street what they think about something, and then implement that idea. Not everybody is as smart as everybody else. Not everybody has the same opportunities. Everybody feels equal, but not everybody is.”<sup>17</sup>

However, are those people in positions of power there because they’re smarter (or better educated) than the rest of us? Why can’t we involve everyone in the important decisions— isn’t that the definition of democracy? Connections are drawn between economic, social, and political power, but explanations of the evolution of various patterns remain individualized. Are “they” in positions of power for the benefit of society or for themselves? How did they get there anyway? There is ambivalence and uncertainty about the origin of the nation and the ideals associated with U.S. exceptionalism:

The idea of America had good intentions, but it left a lot of people out who were not WASPs. The founding fathers thought they were doing something revolutionary and good but they were not. Their intentions were good, like the Constitution and the formation of democracy. Opportunity is there but everybody can’t achieve it. A lot of people work really hard but they won’t achieve their actual dreams. Yet there is that potential.<sup>18</sup>

I don’t think it was at all a democracy. Not one bit, when you think about it, what was the first thing they did when they came here? They killed all the natives and abused the slaves! What was the country built on? It was built on slavery, and that’s not democratic at all. You don’t have slaves now, or if you do, they’re called below-minimum-wage workers. It’s more democratic now; you don’t have slaves.<sup>19</sup>

The people who made the Declaration of Independence, they were upper-class rich people, right? They made it. These weren’t middle-class regular working people. Now you have the right to vote, back then it was a democracy for the elite only.<sup>20</sup>

While many people do acknowledge inequality, there is ambivalence about its source. Lack of success is considered individual failure. Ambiguity about whether the ideals of the U.S. nation

<sup>17</sup> Sam, white male (Bush 2004, 115).

<sup>18</sup> Shalom, white male (Ibid.).

<sup>19</sup> Catherine, white female (Ibid.).

<sup>20</sup> John, white male (op. cit. 116).

have been actualized perpetuates the exceptionalism, patriotism, and nationalism but also provides an opportunity to question the status quo. The uncertainty about structural responsibility reinforces mainstream narratives about the ways that the “American” society is superior, but they simultaneously function as openings because—as the statements above demonstrate—incongruencies create opportunities to discuss ways that the ideals are, in fact, realities and myths simultaneously.

This contradictory nature of the character of the U.S. nation underlies notions of “American” identity. When it comes to perceptions about whether as a society, the United States has achieved equality particularly between whites and Blacks, a recent study conducted by the *Washington Post*, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University found that 40 to 60 percent of all whites say that the average Black American fares equally or better in terms of jobs, incomes, schooling, and health care than the average white person. However, government statistics show that while the gap has narrowed, Blacks continue to lag behind significantly in many or most categories. Blacks are more than twice as likely as whites to be unemployed, and the poverty rate for Blacks is more than double the rate for whites (Morin 2001, A1). Such perceptions by whites are indeed misperceptions (Morin 2001, A1; Freeman 2001, C3). These mistaken beliefs lead to political positions that oppose measures to equalize opportunity that have significant implications for addressing historical patterns for if one does not believe that inequality exists, why support actions aimed at making things more fair? This certainly has implications for the group experience of belonging or marginalization as combined with culture-of-poverty rhetoric establishes who really matters in this society.

In an analysis of the “White Fairness Understanding Gap” Paul Street cites six factors that he feels contribute to these misunderstandings. These include an American educational curriculum notoriously conservative on questions of social, racial, and economic justice; the lack of exposure of whites to the everyday realities of African Americans; media distortions that exaggerate affluence among Blacks; neighborhood and school segregation; pragmatic reasons for denying structural causes for inequality; and the general weakness of the political left such that progressive politics is viewed as a zero-sum game (2001, 9) with advances made by one group detracting from those of another. In contrast to the national self-portrait and generous, concerned with freedom, equality and democracy, the lived reality evidences deep divides. The narrative of nationhood and exceptionalism places the blame for poverty on those who are poor; of those who are poor, communities of color receive the brunt not just of the beliefs about lazy individuals but of generalized profiling that designates whole groups as unworthy.<sup>21</sup>

In national surveys approximately 17 percent of respondents indicate they believe in Black genetic inferiority. That comprises 34 million white Americans, approximately the size of the entire U.S. Black population (Wise 2000)—quite a sizable number, not to be dismissed. However, this perspective does not seem unusual in an environment in which President Francis Lawrence of Rutgers University in 1995 could state that he supported affirmative action because disadvantaged Blacks didn’t have the “genetic, hereditary background” to score well on tests (www.Tolerance.org 2001b) and in which *The Bell Curve* could become a bestseller.

While most people agree that there is unequal treatment of different groups, they still say that everyone can be assimilated. This infers that people can be assimilated but only unequally. While 8.9 percent of all survey respondents felt that people of color are treated equally to whites when applying for jobs and housing and when approached by the police, however, 42.8 percent believed that all people, regardless of color, can be assimilated into

---

<sup>21</sup> [See Appendix I for Table 1: Beliefs about Factors Contributing to Racial Inequality (Bush 2004, 183).]

U.S. mainstream society.<sup>22</sup> Assimilation is viewed as an assumed and accessible goal for anyone who tries hard enough. If this is not true, then what would that say about the image of U.S. society? Clear distinctions are made between those who believe all people should be given a fair chance to succeed and those who believe that if people don't have equal access to resources, measures should be taken to equalize opportunity.<sup>23</sup> While many people may be willing to acknowledge specific inequalities or injustices, viewing them as a systemic problem is less acceptable. People may agree in principle with universal equality, but they worry that measures to equalize resources inevitably lead to having to give something up oneself.

"Our society generally worships the symbols of authority, and power. We applaud those who are wealthy, and despise the poor. Individuals are all too often judged by their market value, rather than by their character as human beings" (Marable 2002). While the ideal of equality is generally supported, measures to level opportunities are viewed as benefiting people of color and discriminating against whites. Significantly fewer people are willing to support proactive measures, perhaps because they fear it means having to give something up. Struggles about multiculturalism and diversity can distract people from talking about structures of inequality that keep patterns and structures of racialization in place all over the world.

"Ours is a society that routinely generates destitution—and then, perversely, relieves its conscience by vilifying the destitute" (Ehrenreich 2002, 9). If people are ideologically prepared with an understanding of economic forces and how they influence politics, they may be more willing to understand race as a smokescreen for the elites who manipulate whites into believing that Blacks are to blame.<sup>24</sup>

### WHAT IS AN "AMERICAN"? THE SYSTEM AND ITS SYMBOLS

Who IS an American? Someone born in the United States . . . a citizen . . . someone who believes in the "American" dream? Canadians? Mexicans? Ambiguity about what it means to be "American" and how you become one and/or a citizen allows underlying constructs race to both reinforce structured inequality. For most people of European descent there is no question about what it means to be "American"; they just "are." Similar to being white, being American and a U.S. citizen is an assumed state of being from which all "others" depart. This status can be bestowed by birth, through inheritance or naturalization, by association, or through a belief system, but it can also be retracted, especially for people of color. Recent discrimination against the Arab American population, many of whom were born in the United States, testifies to their vulnerability, regardless of their place of birth or citizenship. A political cartoon that circulated soon after the events of September 11 showed one man, who appeared to be white, angrily shaking his finger at a man who appeared to be Arab and saying, "Go back to where you where you were born." To this, the man asks, "Chicago?"

During the fall of 2001, this issue became acutely visible when, for example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation summoned hundreds of men with Arab surnames for interviews about terrorism. The government justified this blatant racial profiling in the name of "homeland security."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> [See Appendix II for Table 2: Assimilation and Equal Treatment (Bush 2004, 187).]

<sup>23</sup> [See Appendix III Table 3: Evaluation of Equal Opportunity (Bush 2004, 209).]

<sup>24</sup> Thanks to Dr. Donald Robotham for a clarifying discussion about this topic on 4 December 2000.

<sup>25</sup> This is reminiscent of the period when Japanese Americans were rounded up and placed in internment camps.



One might wonder why the government has not rounded up microbiologists, given significant evidence that multiple envelopes of anthrax were sent to various individuals by an American microbiologist (Blackhurst 2001). If the reasoning is that perpetrators of mass murder should be swiftly and summarily executed, why not call upon tobacco industry executives? (Williams 2001, 11)

“Black incorporation is difficult because the dominant culture relies on a narrow conception of who is and can be ‘American’. Black people are considered unfit for membership because cultural representations of American identity have been shaped and defined as not-Black. . . . American identity is directly associated with (and defined as white)” (Davis 2005, 154). “The value-laden identities of American and Black are crucial mechanisms in the apparatus of white supremacy, and are used relentlessly to maintain white cultural hegemony in America using “science” and attitudes to produce and reproduce systemic white hegemony (Davis 2005, 154).

This ambiguous and value-laden nature of being “American” means that the label may refer to someone with citizenship, nationality, residency or a quality related to a sense of belonging or even “. . . a belief system; it’s the way you act and think toward other people. It’s not where you’re from or where you’re born.”<sup>26</sup> In this way the meaning of being American shifts between something tangible (naturalization and citizenship), something unambiguous (bestowed by birth), something ambiguous (a belief system), and something transitory (a combination of any of these).<sup>27</sup> Even whites who say they never think about being American expect a range of privileges as part and parcel of their birthright, including the “psychological wage” of a belief that “we are the ‘best’” and the material goods that accompany being located in the homeland of the world elite. “[The United States] has no collective identity except as the best, the greatest country, superior to all others and the acknowledged model for the world” (Hobsbawm 2003, B8).

A recent study found that foreign-born whites (68.3 percent) believe that the United States can be multicultural and American significantly more than foreign-born Blacks (42.9 percent).<sup>28</sup> This may reflect the racialized experience of foreign-born Blacks being classified first and foremost as Black while foreign-born whites feel that their ability to assimilate is not hampered by how they are racially identified. Notions of loyalty are defined by symbols “foisted in the face of generations by the media at the behest of large business and religious leaders.”<sup>29</sup>

Another extremely important aspect of this discussion is the way that the label “American” is commonly equated with being of the United States, rather than the continent. *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* provides the following definitions:

*adj.* relating to or characteristic of the United States. • relating to the continents of America; *n.* a native or inhabitant of the United States. • a native or inhabitant of any of the countries of North, South, or Central America.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Keri, Black female (Bush 2004 107).

<sup>27</sup> Martinez writes, “Today’s origin myth and the resulting definition of national identity make for an intellectual prison where it is dangerous to ask big questions, moral questions, about this society’s superiority; where otherwise decent people are trapped in a desire not to feel guilty, which necessitates self-deception. . . . When together we cease equating whiteness with ‘Americanness,’ a new day can dawn” (1996, 24).

<sup>28</sup> Bush 2004, 108.

<sup>29</sup> Personal conversation, Abednigo Ndlovu, Johannesburg, South Africa, January 20, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> “American” *adj.*, *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford University Press, 2004. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Adelphi University (WALDO). 3 February 2006 <<http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.alicat.adelphi.edu:80/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t23.e1621>>

This popular practice intrinsically racializes who is and who is not included, thereby projecting “American” with white image. Elizabeth Martinez, author, points out that the concepts of “America” and “Las Americas” have been rendered irrelevant and nonexistent, as the United States has defined these terms solely in relation to itself.<sup>31</sup> There have been calls for U.S. national identity to be redefined for example as “United Statesian”; however, this, too, is a contested label as other nations also have “united states” or “America” as part of their official name (e.g., Estados Unidos Mexicanos).<sup>32</sup> Also at issue are the distinctions drawn between nation (generally understood as a cultural designation), state (political), and country (combination of the people and its governing bodies).<sup>33</sup>

In “Don’t Call This Country ‘America’: How the Name Was Hijacked and Why It Matters Today More than Ever,”<sup>34</sup> Martinez discusses the relationship between the appropriation of this label and the U.S. history and worldview. She argues that while there are more than 20 countries within the continents of North and South America, it is the policy of manifest destiny to deny their existence, thereby equating “American” with someone of European descent. “In most U.S. eyes, the norm for American remains white—whether we admit it or not. . . . In unthinking self-defense, we unite with a name that reflects a worldview both imperialist and racist” (Martinez 2003, 3). This articulates a presumption of U.S. dominance such that there is no consideration of a broader “American” world.

The mystification of the term “American” and its equation with someone from the United States, specifically of European descent, reinforce patterns of structured inequality by naturalizing these two concepts as one and the same. Toni Morrison explains that the conflation of national and racial identity is particular to the United States. She says, “Deep within the word ‘American’ is its association with race. To identify someone as a South African is to say very little; we need the adjective ‘white’ or ‘black’ or ‘colored’ to make our meaning clear. In this country it is quite the reverse. American means white” (1992, 47). This points to the uncertainty that many people have about the racial and national nature of American identity and raises issues of homogeneity, assimilation, Eurocentrism, and incorporation into mainstream society. This equation of being American with being from the United States speaks to the centering and naturalization of whiteness, for this question does not arise for foreign-born whites. Simultaneously, the question of belonging emerges for U.S.-born people of African descent. “In the eyes of this particular white person our identity as ‘black’ supplanted either of our identities as U.C. students and rendered us merely black – not customers, not students, not ‘Americans.’”<sup>35</sup> Davis argues that Du Bois’ formulation of “double-consciousness is actually “assessment of American

<sup>31</sup> Martinez speaks of this when she says “If ever there was a time for people in this white-dominated super-power to reject its racist contempt for 20 other American countries that happen to be of color, it is right now as Bush charges from one racist war to another” (2003, 69–72).

<sup>32</sup> Various blogs and websites debate this issue. Wikipedia includes an extensive discussion of the label “American,” a narrative of contested origins and a section entitled “Seeking alternate names” including entries such as “Nacirema” and “Washingtonian.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Use\\_of\\_the\\_word\\_American#The\\_alternatives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Use_of_the_word_American#The_alternatives)

<sup>33</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Country>.

<sup>34</sup> Unpublished manuscript by Elizabeth (Betita) Martinez, “Don’t Call This Country ‘America’: How the Name Was Hijacked and Why It Matters Today More Than Ever.” San Francisco, Calif. (circulated via e-mail, February 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Davis, Leneice T. 2005. “Stranger in Mine Own House: Double-Consciousness and American Citizenship.” *National Political Science Review*, 149. In this article, Dr. Davis examines “the meaning of the term ‘American’” and the way in which whiteness has become equated with ‘American-ness’ in the United States.

citizenship” and cites Robert Staples’ assertion that “being human—also American—seems beyond the pale of consideration for people of African-descent.”<sup>36</sup>

In contrast, for people of European descent national pride is often presumed, regardless of an individual’s conscious awareness of his or her identity:

*I consider myself to be an American. I was born in America; my parents were born in America. I think my grandparents were born in America, but I have Irish, German, and Dutch heritage. I love this country and that means a lot to me. Sometimes I’m amazed at myself when I hear, like, “God Bless America” or “The Star Spangled Banner.” I get emotional, and I think, wow, God blessed this country.<sup>37</sup>*

What does it mean to say “God blessed this country” when there are as many gods as there are religions, and when most of the world’s people do not subscribe to a religion that believes in a Judeo-Christian “God”?<sup>38</sup> Why bless our country (5 percent of the global population) and not someone else’s? This notion reinforces national pride and presumes superiority and specialness.

These passages offer conflicting portraits of whether, in order to be a “real American,” you must uphold a certain ideology or feel a national pride, or whether it’s enough to be born here or immigrate to the United States. It is unclear whether to claim American identity, one must “pledge allegiance to the flag,” show loyalty to symbols, and speak English. In light of changing demographics in the United States, this is particularly important as, for example, in 1996, 35 percent of public school students in New York City spoke a language other than English at home (Tell 1999).

What determines someone’s identity and status, as well as self-determined roles versus those set by state and legal systems? Does national identity necessarily mean citizenship; what does national loyalty require? It appears to depend on whether one has the power to assert judgment. Being white, one is generally provided options to be patriotic and nationalistic, or not, and to decide the terms on which one’s identities are negotiated. You can decide to think about being American, or not. You can choose one identity, one day, and another on a different day. A person of color, however, as described above, does not have that privilege. One’s identity is selected for you, like an arranged marriage with legal mandate not to speak out politically.

Another way that this dynamic is expressed is in the way that people of European descent much more frequently consider themselves to be American than any other group. In Bush’s study, 83.8 percent of U.S.-born people of European descent consider themselves to be American, versus 58.1 percent of U.S.-born Blacks (2004, 112). Referring to Du Bois’ writings about double-consciousness, Leniece Davis says, “Du Bois begins to understand how racial difference separated blacks and whites and served as the basis of black exclusion from full and equal participation in American society. The focus on racial difference(s) thwarts blacks’ efforts to wholly claim and assume the identity of American. As such, black people become estranged from their identity of American” (2005, 150) expressed as “Though I was and am an American, I [don’t] have what most Americans feel—that unique sense of belonging” (Gilmore 2002, 27).

Similarly, foreign-born Blacks identify themselves as “American” significantly less than any other group (Bush 2004, 112). These data suggest evidence of the racialization of the

<sup>36</sup> Davis, 2005, pages 149–150, draws from Staples, Robert. 1993. “The Illusion of Racial Equality.” In Gerald Early, Ed. *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*. New York: Penguin Books.

<sup>37</sup> Mara, white female (Bush 2004, 110).

<sup>38</sup> In an article entitled “Oh, Gods,” Toby Lester points out that new religions are born all the time. He quotes David B. Barrett, author of the World Christian Encyclopedia: “We have identified nine thousand and nine hundred distinct and separate religions in the world, increasing by two or three new religions every day” (2002, 41). Furthermore, 67 percent of the world’s people are non-Christian (www.adherents.com 2003).

foreign-born experience such that foreign-born whites are more easily assimilated into U.S. society than foreign-born Blacks. The national organization “Public Agenda” recently conducted an extensive survey on immigrants in America. They found that 42 percent chose “I have become an American” and 41 percent took a middle position: “I act like an American outside, but at home I keep my own culture and traditions” (Farkas et al. 2003, 30).

Ideology also plays a role in decisions about identity. Especially right after September 11, questioning U.S. foreign policy has come to be viewed as an attack on “America” as the mainstream explanation was that the individuals involved are jealous of “our freedoms.” This line of thinking presumes the experience of middle- and upper-class whites who are protected from the everyday affronts that both class and racial inequality invoke including an economic draft that leads to the overwhelming majority of the military drawing from the lower socioeconomic strata with a concentration from communities of color. Similarly, the justification for random interrogation of Arab Americans is framed as “I have nothing to hide, why they should?” However, this perspective epitomizes the experience of individuals who have never been “the persistent object of suspect profiling, never been harassed, never been stigmatized just for the way they look” (Williams 2001, 11).

## Patriotism

Referring to one’s self as “American” and believing that “God Blessed America” provides a sense of elevated status in relationship to the rest of the world. Immanuel Wallerstein discusses God’s unequal blessings and how the United States has always defined itself, measured by the yardstick of the world: “We are better; we were better; we shall be better” (2001). This identity confers elevated standing to those who hold it, regardless of class position, gender, or skin color, as whiteness does. At the same time, as discussed previously, distinctions are made between images of “true Americans” and people of status made questionable by the ambiguous borders and margins at which they are positioned. Thus all native-born Blacks, Latinos, and Asians hold tentative status as Americans, depending on circumstance. Additional distinctions are made between generations, linguistically, and within both immigrant and native-born populations.

U.S. national identity thus functions as one of many axes from which to understand the imposition of patterns of dominance and subordination on different groups within the U.S. population, at times to contradict and in other circumstances to enhance the status of its holder. Narratives about the United States as a global peacekeeper portray its citizens as “nice guys” (white). This imagery was exemplified in a comment made by a firefighter, as reported in November 2001, on CNN. He said, “We in the United States take care of everyone all over the world and this is what we get?”<sup>39</sup>

In fact, the concept of being American has held distinctive meanings for different people at various times in history, just as patriotism has been evoked simultaneously to make the case for inclusion and exclusion, unity and dissent, and both military sacrifice and conscientious objection. In this way, the United States has two somewhat contradictory traditions (Scott 2003, 4.1) currently being contested in public discourse. Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, writes in her weekly column in the *National Catholic Reporter*, “The world wants to know who we really are—international menace or mighty hero?” (2003).

---

<sup>39</sup> CNN News, 29 November 2001, 7:00 a.m.

Patriotism is often a rallying cry for national unity and maintaining the social order—a demand placed particularly on those who benefit most tentatively due to their vulnerable status in society. The phrase “if you aren’t with us, then you are against us” draws lines of demarcation, the “Pledge of Allegiance” seals commitment to nation and to God so there are no questions of one’s loyalty or the divine function. The “Star-Spangled Banner” firmly roots this allegiance in military images of right and might and white given that the history of the U.S. nation corresponds to the transition from the British Empire to that of the United States, orchestrated through military and ideological interventions.

Like the American Dream and democracy, the American flag has come to symbolize the elevated status of the United States in the global order. In *To Die for: The Paradox of American Patriotism*, Cecilia Elizabeth O’Leary, assistant professor of history at California State University, Monterey Bay, traces the development of the flag’s symbolic meaning to the period after the First Reconstruction and through World War I (1999, 7–9). She documents the legal and political struggles over the definitions of loyal or disloyal citizens. She says that during this period (1870–1920) there was disagreement and conflict over which icons, heroes, events, and identities would constitute the national memory and the historical narrative.

Many of the symbols and rituals of patriotism that we now assume as having always existed actually came into being within the last century. The “Pledge of Allegiance” was written in 1891; the “Star-Spangled Banner” was taken as the national anthem in 1931. O’Leary traces the points of contestation, contradiction, and ambivalence about American ideals and their everyday manifestations. She ultimately speaks of the contradictions of U.S. nationalism, as did Immanuel Wallerstein when he insisted that we reckon with national traditions of both patriotism and resistance (Wallerstein 2001). It is a challenge that many have recently faced—that is, how to understand contradictory patterns without essentializing either trend. This is the challenge, for if we acknowledge the agency of ordinary people in the United States and around the world, and build a movement recognizing the contradictions of nation and empire recognize contradictions, we have the ability to change this history.

Overall this raises the question of the purpose and function of nationalism. In his famous work, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson locates the rise of “nations” as corresponding to the development of industrial capitalism, a historically contextualized concept and asserts that once the printing press opened the possibilities of communication across territories, it became necessary to consolidate identity within communities. What it has come to mean is very different.

## THE “AMERICAN” DREAM

While data on the diminishing standard of living, reports of massive layoffs, and challenges faced in receiving adequate schooling and health care are readily available in mainstream media, there still exists a widespread belief that the “Dream” is achievable if you work for it. After September 11, 2001, media coverage occasionally noted concerns about the unequal distribution of funds raised for families of the deceased (Barstow and Henriques 2001, A1) and differentials in the severance packages of people who lost jobs.<sup>40</sup> These long-standing economic disparities have become increasingly difficult to explain and justify.

<sup>40</sup> In one estimate, each firefighter’s family received almost \$1 million, whereas families of people who were not unionized or were undocumented stood to receive little, if anything. Comparisons of the severance packages of people who lost jobs as a result of this tragedy also reveal great disparities. On the one hand, the severance package for the outgoing executive director of the Massachusetts Port Authority was reported at \$175,000, the airlines bailout was cited at \$15 billion, and the overall economic stimulus package is essentially a giant

The ideal of the American Dream has been depicted routinely in the media throughout the second half of the 20th century and forms the foundation of what life in “this great country” is all about. That immigrants can arrive penniless and in time will get rich saturates everyday discourse. This idea is a central pillar of the ideology of U.S. society (Hochschild 1995). For many, this was the case. The post–World War II era of rapid industrial growth and U.S. hegemony around the globe brought much, to many. However, for African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans, this dream was never a reality. After immigration laws changed in 1965, increasing numbers of people came to the United States, just when deindustrialization began to occur. The most prominent explanations for why these groups were not upwardly mobile drew increasingly from a culture-of-poverty framework.

Central tenets of the “Dream” revolve around the achievement of success in the forms of high income, a prestigious job, and economic security (Hochschild 1995, 15). The idea that this is an achievable goal for all has been built into what it means to be an American. Consider President Bill Clinton’s speech in 1993 to the Democratic Leadership Council: “The American Dream that we were all raised on is a simple but powerful one—if you work hard and play by the rules, you should be given a chance to go as far as your God-given abilities will take you” (Hochschild 1995, 18). This raises many questions about for example educational and socioeconomic inequalities that provide different foundations for different communities. In addition, what are “God-given” abilities?

However, over the last several decades the wealth and income gap has significantly grown. From 1960 to 2006, the wealth ratio of the top and bottom 20 percent went from 1:30 to 1:75. Average annual compensation of the top 100 chief executives went from 30 to 1000 times the pay of the average worker (Moyers 2006). Paralleling this increased polarization of wealth, imagery about the American Dream shifted from a small house, with a white picket fence and a two-car garage, two kids, a dog, and a cat, to the lifestyle of the most affluent as portrayed on shows such as “Dallas,” “L.A. Law,” and “Beverly Hills 90210” (Roper Survey Organization 1993, 86; Crispell 1994, B1).

Media in the United States does sometimes reports on poverty rampant throughout the world, yet the realities of the stratification within the United States are rarely shown. The “united we stand” slogan and “we are all in this together against the enemy” rhetoric function to obviate internal tensions and differences and to further promote the notion that America is the “greatest country in the world,” with more modernity, more technology, more efficiency, more liberty, more culture, and more democracy than anywhere else. This notion, deeply ingrained in the American psyche, signals that

*We are more civilized than the rest of the world. . . . We represent the highest aspirations of every-one. . . . We are the leader of the free world, because we are the freest country in the world, and others look to us for leadership, for holding high the banner of freedom, of civilization. . . . The Twin Towers are a perfect metaphor. They signaled unlimited aspirations; they signaled technological achievement; they signaled a beacon to the world. (Wallerstein 2001)*

At a time when the United States’ decline as a hegemonic power looms large on the horizon, we need as a nation to reconsider the belief in our solitary greatness, engage our “closest friends and allies,” and accept that they, too, have ideals and interests (Wallerstein 2001). The substance of the American Dream, as even a far-fetched ideal, has been shaken, even among some patriots who most vigorously defend its possibility. The events of 2001 and after propelled a coming to

---

corporate tax break, whereas laid-off employees of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union and various airlines were reported to have received little or nothing in the form of unemployment benefits (Jackson 2001, A23).

terms with the realities experienced by the everyday American. Increasing lines at the unemployment offices and greater numbers at soup kitchens and homeless shelters are just the beginning. Such trends are compounded by the expanded privatization of all aspects of social services, to such an extent that schools, medical facilities, and policing, for example, have increasingly become domains for profit-bearing as opposed to being services delivered for the public good.

Jennifer Hochschild, professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton University, states, “The political culture of the United States is largely shaped by a set of views in which the American Dream is prominent, and by a set of institutions that make it even more prominent than views alone could do” (1995, 37). Discussing the persistent divergence of opinions between Blacks and whites about the possibility of personally accomplishing the dream themselves, she states that 87 percent of whites believed “in the past 25 years, the country has moved closer to equal opportunity among the races,” yet only between 20 to 45 percent of Blacks saw an increase in racial equality (Hochschild 1995, 61).

Hochschild’s study parallels studies by *The Washington Post* and the National Opinion Research Center about perceptions of the current status of equality in society, in which whites consistently state that they believe discrimination is lessening, and Blacks report the persistent reality of racial inequality in their lives. Paul Street, Research Director of the Chicago Urban League, describes it as the “White Fairness Understanding Gap” (2001, 9–11). These data are critical to an understanding of the viability of the American Dream, in the way that different populations perceive the dream as a myth or a reality. If, as a nation, all people cannot count on freedom, justice, equality, and opportunity, then the ideology that holds these ideals as the explanation for American’s specialness is undermined. For whites, race usefully explains why the dream is no longer attainable. Hochschild explains the connection this way:

Something is wrong with the American Dream, and the problem is associated with Blacks (and immigrants) in some way. Identifying what is wrong and how Blacks are implicated in it is a difficult and thankless task for which they receive almost no institutional support. It is far easier to cling to the Dream, insist that it really works, and find someone to blame for the lacunae. (Hochschild 1995, 69)

Foreign-born whites appear to believe significantly more than any other group that the United States is a land of equal opportunity for all people.<sup>41</sup> This pattern appears to be a consequence of their racialized experience, where similar to previous European immigrants, they have been provided opportunities to improve their standard of living, more than the U.S.-born communities of color (e.g., access to various social services under the guise of assisting political refugees). It also seems to indicate that the U.S.-born whites are experiencing the economic pressures of the recent decades and feel less certain about their own futures.

The American Dream appears to inspire pride and hopefulness, yet when whites face economic pressures, rather than looking toward structural explanations for their troubles, they tend to blame individuals and groups. For example, in discussions about the difficulty in financing education, racially designated scholarships are often targeted as the problem despite the reality that this perception is significantly exaggerated (Bush 2004, 100). Rather than viewing minority assistance as a means to address historical patterns, they are characterized as perpetuating inequality by advantaging students of color.

Herein lay several ways of thinking that reinforce and reproduce mainstream discourse and structures about rights, belonging, and nation. The “American Dream” is achievable with hard work, and lack of effort is the cause of failure. Americans are superior; to be truly American one needs to be of European descent. The process of racialization and its consequent negative impact

---

<sup>41</sup> [See Appendix IV for Table 4: The United States Is a Land of Equal Opportunity for All People (Bush 2004, 122).]

(subordination) and positive impact (privileging) are illusive. They are implicit but unspoken within notions of identity, opportunity, and equality. Resistance is viewed as anti-American and ungrateful, and it's better not to acknowledge the underlying historical factors that have led to the betterment of living conditions in the United States in contrast to those of other people around the world.

Simultaneously, popular notions of democracy, the American experience, and the "Dream" provide several openings for heightened awareness. The profound and righteous ideals and idealism embodied in notions of freedom, equality, justice, and democracy provide the basis for a vision of a better world. Inconsistencies and incongruities in application of these principles, when acknowledged, provide opportunities to analyze and understand how mainstream discourse about the realities of U.S. national history and present-day positioning is strictly regulated to maintain the status quo. Economic downturns put pressure on whites, who either turn to the dominant explanations about who's to blame or can be more open to a deeper analysis from the perspective of the majority rather than the elite.

## NATION AND EMPIRE

*The ideals of American democracy, which have influenced liberal democracies around the world, rely crucially on the notion of consent as the basis of citizenship. What makes someone an American is that he or she agrees to be one . . . . By raising their hands and taking the pledge of citizenship, immigrants formally enact the consent upon which our political system depends; yet which native-born citizens only tacitly affirm.* Danny Postel (2001, A12)

Notions of what it means to be American, of democracy, and of birthright are deeply implicated in the foundation of our society. People came to the United States for a multitude of reasons and circumstances, and their experiences, once arrived, varied. The concept "the United States, a nation of immigrants" disguises the unequal status of various groups in how they arrived, what they experienced when they arrived, or how their lands and peoples were "incorporated" as part of the U.S. nation. "A nation of immigrants" presumes a European experience, where choice is the primary factor in migration. This portrait also renders invisible the very real transnational experience of many immigrants to the United States during the second half of the 20th century where ties are maintained actively with their home lands, whether through the flow of funds, care of children, or their intermittent stays in both locations. Their migration represents very different experiences of allegiance and strategic survival than the early generations of European immigrants (or for that matter even the recent migrants from Eastern Europe). For this group, being "American," patriotism, and national allegiance have a much more fluid character.

Bonnie Honig, author of *Democracy and the Foreigner* (2001), argues that while democracies need immigrants, "[We're] nervous about what they are going to do to our democracy. We criminalize alien populations, bar them from political activity; marginalize them in terms of the labor force. We practice xenophobia and xenophilia at the same time" (quoted in Postel 2001, A12). While what Honig asserts is certainly true, she does not account for the differential experiences of immigrants upon their arrival to the United States. Why is it that a boat of refugees from one country is allowed entry, while another is turned away? Additionally, "Malcolm X argued that in the process of Americanizing, European immigrants acquire a sense of whiteness and [an understanding of] white supremacy" (Roediger 1994, 187). Furthermore, providing commentary about the racialized nature of the Americanization process, he asserted that the first English word immigrants learn upon arrival to the U.S. is "nigger," (Haley and Malcolm X, 1965, 399) as the racialized nature of U.S. society bears down upon them.



Foreign-born whites often view the United States as the land of opportunity, an idea likely shaped before they arrived, as part of Cold War ideology. They tend toward a perspective in direct opposition to what they were told by their governments (Soviet and post-Soviet.) Upon arrival, the treatment they receive reinforces their beliefs as they absorb a “Horatio Alger” narrative that inverted communist ideology in relationship to a capitalist perspective. That is, everything that was bad about their prior lives would now be good, in “America.”

They arrive with a worldview that established freedom as a U.S. phenomenon and, as both the narrative and the statistics below indicate, they defend this image. Their experience as white immigrants has meant they have generally fared well, for example, in educational achievement, with slightly fewer high school diplomas but higher levels of college accomplished.<sup>42</sup> However, as they come to feel the impact of the increasing polarization of wealth and power under the reign of global capitalism, they may find themselves in more dire circumstances and seek explanations for the difficulties they face.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to the highly transnational and transmigrant nature of immigrants from the African, Latin, and Asian diasporas, the experience of Eastern European immigrants tends to root them in their new surroundings, where they feel welcome. Annelise Orleck, associate professor of history at Dartmouth College, reports that among the Soviet Jews she studied, most do not return home for visits. They say that everyone they know is in the United States. Orleck quotes one woman as saying, “America is my country, not Russia. I have no one left there to worry about” (2001, 135).

Regardless of their foreign-born status, European immigrants are treated as whites, providing them with an incentive to ascribe to racialized beliefs about the culture of poverty. Their defense of the structure as fair and equitable denies discrimination expressed in racialized patterns of assimilation or rejection. This process is evident as social services and the ever-present and useful “benefit of the doubt” are available to white immigrants but not to those from the African, Asian, or Latino diasporas. In the case of Amadou Diallo, the four police officers and the jury saw him as a Black man first, which led to his murder and the officers’ acquittals. The wallet in Amadou’s hands “became” (i.e., was assumed to be) a gun. Had Diallo been Russian, would this image transformation have occurred?<sup>44</sup>

There is an irony to the perceptions of foreign-born whites, as the civil rights movement laid the foundation for the liberalization of immigration policy in the 1960s. These statistics indicate, however, that foreign-born whites are unlikely to support measures to eradicate structural causes for racial inequality. In other words, once arrived, foreign-born whites assume the dominant

---

<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, of the U.S.-born whites, only one third of those who were born in New York City had completed a bachelor’s degree, as compared to three quarters of those who had moved to the city from elsewhere in the United States (Mollenkopf et al. 2001).

<sup>43</sup> Personal communication with Professor Donald Robotham, The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York (1 December 2000).

<sup>44</sup> This event occurred on 4 February 1999 in the Bronx, New York. Four police officers, searching for someone who had committed a rape, came upon Mr. Diallo in the vestibule of his home. They testified that he reached for a gun, which then in their minds justified shooting 41 bullets, 19 of which entered his body. It was later discovered that Mr. Diallo was reaching for his wallet to provide identification. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani characterized attention to this incident as “obsessive media concern” and “frenzy” (Barry 1999). Massive protests against police brutality and racism followed, for it was widely recognized that, had Diallo been white, the shooting was highly unlikely to have occurred.

position, rather than recognizing where support came from to increase their opportunities and, in turn, supporting opportunities for better conditions and access for other groups.<sup>45</sup>

The immigrant status of foreign-born whites lets them more easily assimilate into a white-dominant society, so perhaps they do not see the challenge in integrating their ethnic or national background into their identity as Americans. Foreign-born Blacks sometimes note that their racial identity became an issue only after they arrived in the United States. "Black immigrants face a unique set of social circumstances upon entering our borders. . . . the term 'cross-pressures' [names] the contradictory circumstances that mark the West Indian experience in the United States" (Bashi 1999, 890). One factor is that they come from societies in which they form majorities and which urge them to downplay race, and their experience in the United States provides opportunities for upward mobility but simultaneously immerses them in a society in which race is a key structuring principle (Bashi 1999, 891).

Another aspect of the question about whether the United States can be multicultural and have a unified national identity is examined in a discussion of Du Bois' writings. Many African Americans would "find it undesirable to subordinate their blackness to Americanness or American-ness to their blackness as a means of creating a unified individuality. . . . Instead they desire the unity of the two . . . The practice of exclusion makes black people feel that they are not recognized as truly American" (Davis 2005, 151).

## National Identity

The dynamic whereby resistance is racialized posits that people in the United States have freedom of speech, yet it depends on who says what as to whether that freedom is justifiable or not. Critical discourse is aggressively marginalized and implied to be criminal or crazy.

The perspectives of foreign-born whites are clearly distinct from that of those born in the United States; they tend to defend the system, whereas U.S.-born whites defend the symbols. Whether this is the result of having had a U.S. education or of having been exposed to the influence of mass media is not clear. Both groups articulate a willingness to identify with ideals in contrast to hesitancy about committing to action and structural explanations. They seem to be able to say one thing yet do another; diversity should be embraced, but "not in my backyard."

The media present us with images project a common experience, implicitly "white." When diverse images are presented, they generally portray Blacks who assimilated (such as on "The Cosby Show," "The Jeffersons," or "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air") or interracial friendships in a way that camouflages or denies racial inequality and undermines our ability to analyze significant and dramatic structural and systemic patterns. Images of people "getting along" lead one to conclude that there must no longer be a "race problem" ("The Hughleys," "White Men Can't Jump," "Regarding Henry") (DeMott 1998). There are positive aspects to these shows, which offer a hopeful vision and a less stereotyped view of different groups of people, though the negative impact significantly defuses the idea that something needs to be done. Portraits of sameness imply that race is a set of interpersonal

---

<sup>45</sup> From an illuminating discussion with Dr. Leith Mullings, CUNY Graduate School, 21 September 2001. This is a complex issue; for a fuller examination, see Bobo 2000, 186–202; Smith and Seltzer 2000; Steinberg 1995, 190–192; Gallicchio 2000.

relations, focusing attention on individuals and away from institutional inequality.<sup>46</sup> The rendering invisible of structural patterns allows symbolic representations of what being American means to dominate. Hence, patriotism and nationalism, with implicitly racialized ideological underpinnings, need not always be articulated. They can be called upon, at moments such as those after September 11, to impose the presumptions and draw the lines between who is and who is not a trustworthy, loyal, and “true” American.

The melting pot and assimilation and presumed upward mobility narratives avert attention from a broad understanding of economic and social forces that structure the everyday experiences of the majority of people worldwide. “Normal” is presented using criteria that few even white Americans experience. Individual circumstances are decontextualized; the responsibility for being poor is placed firmly on the shoulders of those viewed as “too lazy” to work hard enough to achieve upward mobility. Misrepresentations and lies are perpetrated outright.

The naturalization of whiteness and American identity and invisibility of race-dominance hide the processes of privileging. Whites tend to assume that everyone has access to the same resources and receive the same treatment as they do—that there is a common “American” experience. However, even people of color born in the United States are often not considered truly “American.” In recent years, someone of Arab descent may be challenged in his or her claim to an American identity as were many Japanese Americans interned in concentration camps during the early 1940s. That “God blessed America” as opposed to any other nation also expresses this “Americentrism.” That the borders and definitions of being “white” and being “American” have changed over time, and continue to do so, provide examples of how these identities bestow status differentially, depending on the circumstance.

## CONCLUSION

The notion of race is and has been historically crafted, manipulated, reinforced, reproduced, and rearticulated to justify the presumed superiority of people of European descent and to distract attention from the social arrangement that concentrates power and wealth in a very small percentage of the world’s population. The heightened instability of U.S. hegemony within the world capitalist system over the last two decades and the consequent vulnerability of western and white supremacy materially impact poor, working- and middle-class people in concrete and everyday ways.

During times when ordinary people experience political and economic insecurity, ideology plays a critical role in shaping how they understand and interpret what they feel and where they place blame. Since the events of fall 2001, the structures of power have become more visible than they had been since the 1960s. Political leaders moved aggressively to dictate the terms of these interpretations, looking to justify the current social organization and their power within it. We have been told we are not at war with Islam, Muslims, Arabs, Afghanistan, or the Iraqi people, yet who is profiled, and who is bombed? Would the public reaction be the same if the suspects were British, French, or German?

Many educators and activists struggled to bring to light the history of the United States’ foreign and economic policies that form the backdrop for recent events. Such policies enabled, for example, continuous interventions in the affairs of sovereign nations over the last

---

<sup>46</sup> For an excellent analysis of implicitly racial messages in media, see DeMott 1998 [1995].

100 years, recent support for Islamic fundamentalists, and economic partnerships between the Bush and the bin Laden and Hussein families.<sup>47</sup>

Simultaneously, political and media leaders assert narratives about freedom and justice that cloak the economic self-interest of the most powerful in language such as that “What is good for corporations, is good for us all” and “Either you are with ‘us’ (good), or with the ‘terrorists’ (evil).” They ostentatiously exclaim their own right to power in plain view. A McCarthy-era type of repression has emerged, attempting to conceal the facts and implications of these events and aiming to squelch dissent.<sup>48</sup> The contradictions of this dominant worldview have been exposed, though not often explicitly articulated. More people died from bombings in Afghanistan than on September 11 (Herold 2001), and it appears that during that time more U.S. soldiers were killed by “friendly fire” than enemy fire.<sup>49</sup>

At a memorial service for those who died at the World Trade Center, Rudolph Giuliani, heading one of the most racist New York City mayoral administrations in history, was seen singing “We Shall Overcome” with Oprah Winfrey at his side. The slogan “United We Stand” reinforces mainstream narratives about our having achieved equality for all people, dismisses the systemic racialized structuring of our society and of the world-system (which, if anything, has been heightened by recent events), and stigmatizes and marginalizes voices that challenge patterns of inequality in the United States and throughout the world.

Since then public debate about the meaning of patriotism surfaced. U.S. flags became increasingly visible, and choosing to wear or fly one became a measure of one’s loyalty. The meaning of being American was actively contested, and the reality of war loomed heavily in the hearts and minds of many people. Rigid notions of identity and the interpretation of history left little room for dialogue. The demand for us to “choose sides” between “good” and “evil” made it difficult to discuss alternative perspectives, as voicing dissent became grounds for suspicion, resulting in the silencing evident not only in the lives of ordinary people but also in the halls of Congress. The heroes portrayed in the media were overwhelmingly white firefighters and policemen. Raising the question of how this employment pattern came into existence and how it is perpetuated is deemed unacceptable, for it sheds light on the deeply stratified (apartheid-like) labor structure that is supposed to remain “hidden,” as if we should pretend it does not exist.

Assumptions about national identity and its symbols are present even when not conscious or explicit. It is also clear that the dearth of open engagement in society about the meaning of concepts such as democracy, freedom, peace, and justice has real consequences because, during such periods, underlying and concealed presumptions determine what people do.

There is a need for deeper understanding of global and local concerns as individuals, as a society, as a nation, and as members of the broadest, all-encompassing community of humanity in the 21st century. It is in this context that the questions of nation, national pride, and empire must be analyzed. Why would qualities of cooperation and caring being

---

<sup>47</sup> For details, see International A.N.S.W.E.R. (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), [www.InternationalANSWER.org](http://www.InternationalANSWER.org); Hatfield 2001; and Helmore 2003.

<sup>48</sup> A recent campaign has called for “intellectual diversity” legislation to rein in what they perceive to be a liberal bias in academia (Horowitz 2004; Fish 2004).

<sup>49</sup> More U.S. soldiers have been killed in Iraq since the war was declared “over” than during the formal battle.

presented as “American” as opposed to “human” nature? Is it true that only “Americans” can lay claim to generosity, democratic ideals, the striving for freedom, and the passion for equality?

Hope ultimately resides in our ability to conceive of ourselves as members of a global society, rather than as “Americans”—all the while taking responsibility for the actions taken in “our” name, and with our taxes. This is similar to considering oneself as part of the human community, positioned and allied with the world’s majority, yet recognizing the social realities of racism. Therein lie the particular responsibilities of whites who benefit from the presumption of white superiority.

Martin Luther King Jr. in his 1967 speech said war is a nightmare “for the victims of our nation and for those it calls the enemy.” Speaking out against war was the “privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism, and which go beyond our nation’s self-defined goals and positions” (Cohen 1996, vii–viii). The nationalism of those in positions of dominance, like whiteness, is a fabrication with real social consequence constructed solely to bestow value upon its owners. It is, as the “Race Traitors” describe whiteness, like royalty—an identity propped up to render some people more worthy and righteous than others (Ignatiev and Garvey 1996).

After 9/11 President Bush announced that “Freedom itself is under attack.” Our antagonists, he went on, “hate our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to assemble and disagree with each other.” But as Eric Foner articulates,

Freedom is the trump card of political discourse, invoked as often to silence debate as to invigorate it. . . . Calling our past a history of freedom for everybody makes it impossible to discuss seriously the numerous instances when groups of Americans have been denied freedom, or the ways in which some Americans today enjoy a great deal more freedom than others. (Foner, 2003)

We are told not to criticize or to look at history—that’s mixing apples and oranges. “Osama bin Laden and Islamic fundamentalism are the problem.” The United States represents goodness, generosity, democracy, superiority and freedom, so “they” (whoever “they” are) must personify evil.

*Is not nationalism—that devotion to a flag, an anthem, a boundary so fierce it engenders mass murder—one of the great evils of our time, along with racism, along with religious hatred? These ways of thinking—cultivated, nurtured, indoctrinated from childhood on—have been useful to those in power and deadly for those out of power . . . in a nation like ours—huge, possessing thousands of weapons of mass destruction—what might have been harmless pride becomes an arrogant nationalism dangerous to others and to ourselves. (Zinn 2005)*

Isn’t it time to question?

NOTE: Portions of this chapter draw from previous writing in Bush, Melanie E. L. 2004. *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., and 2002. “American Identity and the Mechanisms of Everyday Whiteness.” *Socialism and Democracy*. New York: The Research Group on Socialism and Democracy.

**APPENDIX I**

**TABLE 16.1. Beliefs about the Factors Contributing to Racial Inequality<sup>50</sup>**

How Much Do You Think the Following Factors Contribute to the Average Lower Incomes and Poorer Housing of Blacks?			
	Not at All	Moderately	A Lot
Low IQ	48.8%	33.7%	17.5%
Lack of motivation	21.2%	5.9%	32.8%
Historic inequality	20.3%	41.0%	38.7%
Discrimination	10.5%	46.3%	43.3%

How Much Do You Believe Discrimination Contributes?			
	Not at All	Moderately	A Lot
Latinos	8.3%	43.8%	45.8%
Asians	7.7%	38.5%	43.6%
U.S.-born Blacks	0.0%	48.8%	48.8%
Foreign-born Blacks	0.0%	19.1%	71.4%
U.S.-born whites	11.8%	54.4%	29.4%
Foreign-born whites	19.5%	57.3%	18.3%

How Much Do You Believe Historic Inequality Contributes?			
	Not at All	Moderately	A Lot
Latinos	20.8%	41.7%	35.4%
Asians	7.7%	38.5%	46.2%
U.S.-born Blacks	7.0%	32.6%	55.8%
Foreign-born Blacks	11.1%	25.4%	55.6%
U.S.-born whites	25.7%	43.4%	26.6%
Foreign-born whites	26.8%	42.7%	25.6%

**APPENDIX II**

**TABLE 16.2. Assimilation and Equal Treatment<sup>51</sup>**

All People, Regardless of Color, Can Be Assimilated into U.S. Mainstream Society			
	Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree
	16.1%	41.1%	42.8%

*(Continued)*

<sup>50</sup> Bush 2004, 183.

<sup>51</sup> Bush 2004, 187.

**TABLE 16.2. (Continued)**

People of Color Are Treated Equally to Whites When Applying for Jobs and Housing and Being Approached by the Police			
	Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree
Overall	69.9%	21.1%	8.9%
Latinos	85.4%	6.3%	8.3%
Asians	66.7%	23.1%	10.3%
U.S.-born Blacks	83.7%	14.0%	2.3%
Foreign-born Blacks	93.7%	4.8%	1.6%
U.S.-born whites	59.6%	30.2%	9.6%
Foreign-born whites	41.5%	36.6%	19.5%

### APPENDIX III

**TABLE 16.3. Evaluation of Equal Opportunity<sup>52</sup>**

All People, Regardless of Class Status, Race, or Ethnicity, Should Be Given a Fair Chance to Succeed		
Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree
2.4%	4.6%	92.9%
If People Don't Have Equal Access to Resources, Measures Should Be Taken to Equalize Opportunity		
Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree
6.2%	22.4%	71.4%

### APPENDIX IV REFERENCES

**TABLE 16.4. The United States Is a Land of Equal Opportunity  
for All People<sup>53</sup>**

	Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree
Overall	28.0%	43.0%	29.0%
Latinos	27.1%	52.1%	20.8%
Asians	23.1%	48.7%	28.2%
U.S.-born Blacks	41.9%	39.5%	18.6%
Foreign-born Blacks	36.5%	46.0%	15.9%
U.S.-born whites	25.0%	42.7%	32.4%
Foreign-born whites	15.9%	35.4%	48.8%

<sup>52</sup> Bush 2004, 209.

<sup>53</sup> Bush 2004, 122.

## REFERENCES

- Alba, Richard D. 1990. *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2000. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Babb Valerie. 1998. *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- Baker, Lee. 1998. *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896–1954*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Barrett, David George Kurian and Todd Johnson. 2001. *World Christian Encyclopedia (2nd edition)*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Barry Dan. 1999. “Giuliani Says Diallo Shooting Coverage Skewed Poll.” *New York Times*. on the Web, 17 March. [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Barstow, David, and Diana B. Henriques. 2001. “Gifts to Rescuers Divide Survivors.” *New York Times*. 2 December, A1.
- Bashi, Vilna. 1999. “Review of Crosscurrents: West Indian Immigrants and Race by Milton Vickerman.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 890–892.
- Blackhurst, Chris. 2001. “Anthrax Attacks Now Being Linked to U.S. Right-Wing Cranks,” 21 October. Online at <http://news.independent.Co.uk/world/Americas/story.jsp?story=100635>.
- Blassingame, John, ed. 1982. *The Frederick Douglass Papers*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Blauner, Bob. 1972. *Racial Oppression in America*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Bloom, Allen. 1987. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Bobb, Vilna Bashi. 2001. “Neither Ignorance nor Bliss: Race, Racism and the West Indian Immigrant Experience” in *Migration, Transnationalization and Race in a Changing New York*, edited by Hector R. Cordero-Guzman, Robert C. Smith, and Ramon Grosfoguel, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Bobo, Lawrence D. 2000. “Reclaiming a Du Boisian Perspective on Racial Attitudes.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. March: 186–202.
- Bush, Melanie E. L. 2004. *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bush, Roderick D. 1999. *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century*. New York: New York University Press.
- California Newsreel Film “Race: The Power of an Illusion” *Part II the Stories we tell*. 2003. <http://www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0149>.
- Chittister, Sister Joan. 2003. “I Give Up: What Is Americanism?” From Where I Stand, *National Catholic Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 16, 15 July. Online at <http://nationalcatholicreporter.org/fwis/pc071503.htm> (accessed 15 July 2003).
- CNN News, 29 November 2001, 7:00 a.m.
- Cohen, Adam. 2006. “According to Webster: One Man’s Attempt to Define ‘America.’” *The New York Times* Editorial Observer. February 12. Online at <http://www.nytimes.com>.
- Cohen, Joshua, ed. 1996. *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson Ed. 2004. *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. 3 February 2006 <http://0-www.oxfordreference.com>.
- Cox, Oliver Cromwell. 1948. *Caste, Class & Race: A Study in Social Dynamics*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Crispell, Diane. 1994. “We Don’t Need Much to Have It All.” *Wall Street Journal*. 21 October, B1.
- Davis, Leneice T. 2005. “Stranger in Mine Own House: Double-Consciousness and American Citizenship.” *National Political Science Review*. 149.
- DeMott, Benjamin. 1998 [1995]. *The Trouble with Friendship: Why Americans Can’t Think Straight about Race*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dickinson, Tim. 2005. “The Return of the Draft.” *Rolling Stone*. 27 January.
- DiLeonardo, Micaela. 1999. “‘Why Can’t They Be Like Our Grandparents?’ and Other Racial Fairy Tales,” in *Without Justice For All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*, edited by Adolph Reed Jr. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Donate, Gaston Alonso, Corey Robin, Roberta Satow, and Alex Vitale. 2002. *People, Power and Politics*. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Douglass, Frederick. 1970 [1855]. *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company.
- Drake, St. Clair. 1987. *Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology*. Vol. 1. Los Angeles: University of California Center for Afro American Studies.



- Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. 1986 [1903]. "The Souls of Black Folk," in *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*, edited by Nathan Huggins, New York: Library of America, 358–547.
- Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. 1979 [1936]. *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880*. West Hanover, MA: Atheneum Publishers.
- Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. 1970 [1940]. *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward and Autobiography of a Race Concept*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. 1953 and 1961. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Greenwich, CT: A Fawcett Premier Book.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2002. "Hobo Heaven." Review of *Down and Out, On the Road*. by Kenneth L. Kusmer. *New York Times Book Review*. 20 January.
- Farkas, Steve, Ann Duffett and Jean Johnson with Leslie Moye and Jackie Vine. 2003. "Now That I'm Here: What America's Immigrants Have to Say about Life in the U.S. Today." *American Educator*. Summer: 28–36.
- Fish, Stanley. 2004. "'Intellectual Diversity': The Trojan Horse of a Dark Design." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 13 February. <http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i23/23b01301.htm> (accessed 19 February 2004).
- Foner, Eric. 2003. "Rethinking American History in a Post 9/11 World." *Liberal Education*. Vol. 89. No. 2. Spring.
- Foner, Eric. 1998 and 1990. *The Story of American Freedom*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Freeman, Greg. 2001. "Misperceptions May Be Holding Back Race Relations." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Inc.*, 15 July, Five Star Lift Edition, C3.
- Gallicchio, Marc. 2000. *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Galston, William A. 2001. "Can Patriotism Be Turned into Civic Engagement?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 16 November, B16.
- Gilmore, Brian. 2002. "Stand by the Man: Black America and the Dilemma of Patriotism." *The Progressive* Vol. 66, No. 1 (January): 24–27.
- Glazer, Nathan. 1983. *Ethnic Dilemmas 1964–1982*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Glazer, Nathan and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. 1975. *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Glazer, Nathan and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. 1963. *Beyond the Melting Pot, The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Gonzalez, Juan. 2000. *Harvest of Empire: a History of Latinos in America*. New York: Penguin.
- Grossman, Zoltan. "A Century of U.S. Military Interventions: From Wounded Knee to Afghanistan" Znet, 20 September 2001. Online at [www.zmag.org/crisescurevts/interventions.htm](http://www.zmag.org/crisescurevts/interventions.htm) (Accessed 7 July 2003.)
- Haley, Alex, and Malcolm X. 1965. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Harrison, Faye. 1998. "Introduction: Expanding the Discourse on 'Race.'" *American Anthropologist* Vol. 100, No. 3 (September): 609–31.
- Hatfield, James. 2001. "Why Would Osama bin Laden Want to Kill Dubya, His Former Business Partner?" Online Journal, 3 July. Online at [www.onlinejournal.com/Special\\_Reports/Hatfield-R-091901/hatfield-r-091901.html](http://www.onlinejournal.com/Special_Reports/Hatfield-R-091901/hatfield-r-091901.html) (accessed 2 August 2003).
- Helmoe, Edward. 2003. "Oscar Winner Michael Moore Targets Bush and bin Laden." Published by the Observer/UK, 30 March. *Common Dreams News Center*. Online at [www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0330-06.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0330-06.htm) (accessed 28 September 2003).
- Herold, Marc W. 2001. "A Dossier on Civilian Victims of United States Aerial Bombing of Afghanistan: A Comprehensive Accounting." Online at [www.cursor.org/stories/civilian\\_deaths.htm](http://www.cursor.org/stories/civilian_deaths.htm) (accessed 20 January 2002).
- Hobsbawm, Eric. 2003. "Only in America." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 4 July, B7–B9.
- Hochschild, Jennifer L. 1995. *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class and the Soul of the Nation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Honig, Bonnie. 2001. *Democracy and the Foreigner*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Horowitz, David. 2004. "In Defense of Intellectual Diversity." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 13 February. <http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i23/23b01201.htm> (accessed 19 February 2004).
- Ignatiev, Noel, and John Garvey, eds. 1996. *Race Traitor*. New York: Routledge.
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. n.d. "Turnout in the World—Country by Country Performance." Online at [http://idea.int/vt/survey/voter\\_turnout\\_pop2.cfm](http://idea.int/vt/survey/voter_turnout_pop2.cfm) (accessed 7 July 2003).
- . n.d. "United States Voter Turnout from 1945 to Date." Online at [http://idea.int/vt/country\\_view.cfm](http://idea.int/vt/country_view.cfm) (accessed 7 July 2003).
- Jackson, Derrick Z. 2001. "Buckingham's Lucrative Landing: United We Stand, Except at the Unemployment Line." *Boston Globe*. 31 October. A23.
- Jacobs, Harriet. 1861. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Source: "North American Slave Narratives, Beginnings to 1920" at the "Documenting the American South" website of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, [docsouth.unc.edu](http://docsouth.unc.edu).) 265–275.

- King Jr., Martin Luther. 1967. "Beyond Vietnam." Speech delivered at Riverside Church. 4 April. Accessible at <http://www.commondreams.org/views04/0115-13.htm>.
- Kraly, Ellen Percy, and Ines Miyares. 2001. "Immigration to New York: Policy, Population and Patterns" in *New Immigrants in New York*, edited by Nancy Foner. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lavin, David E., Richard D. Alba and Richard A. Silberstein. 1979. "Ethnic Groups in the City University of New York." *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 49, No. 1 (February): 53–92.
- Lemert, Charles and Esme Bhan. 1998. *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lerner, Gerda. 1997. *Why History Matters: Life and Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lester, Toby. 2002. "Oh, Gods!" *Atlantic Monthly*. February, 37–45.
- Lewis, Oscar. 1969. "Author's Response to Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals." *Current Anthropology* Vol. 10, Nos. 2–3 (April–June): 189–192.
- Lewis, Oscar. 1961. *The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family*. New York: Random House.
- Livingston, Andrea, John Wirt, Susan Choy, Stephen Provasnik, Patrick Rooney, Anindita Sen and Richard Tobin. 2003. "The Condition of Education 2003." National Center for Education Statistics. U.S Department of Education. *Institute of Education Sciences NCES, 2003–2067*.
- Marable, Manning. 2002. "Abolishing American Apartheid, Root and Branch." Presentation at the Symposium on Racism in San Francisco, 25 July.
- Marable, Manning. 2001. "The Economic Crisis and Globalization." *Left Turn* (June): 44–45.
- Martinez, Elizabeth. 2003. "Don't Call This Country 'America': How the Name was Hijacked and why it Matters Today more than Ever." *Z Magazine*, July–August, 69–72.
- Martinez, Elizabeth. 1996. "Reinventing 'America.'" *Z Magazine*, December, 20–25.
- Marx, Anthony. 1998. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, The United States and Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchell, Kirsten B. 2003. "Members of Congress with Children in Iraq." Footnote Fahrenheit. Media General News Service. November 16. <http://www.newsai.com/f911chap7-8.html>.
- Mollenkopf, John, John Kasinitz and Mary Waters. 2001. "Chutes and Ladders: Educational Attainment Among Young Second Generation and Native New Yorkers." The Center for Urban Research: City University of New York. Paper presented at the ICMEC Conference on New Immigrants in New York City. CUNY Graduate Center, November.
- Montagu, Ashley M. F. 1945. *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Morgan, Edward S. 1975. *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Morin, Richard. 2001. "Misperceptions Cloud Whites' View of Blacks." *Washington Post*. 11 July, final edition, A1.
- Morrison, Toni. 1992. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Moyers, Bill. 2006. "Restoring the Public Trust." TomPaine.com. February 24.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. 1965. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor.
- Mullings, Leith. 1978. "Ethnicity and Stratification in the Urban United States." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. No. 318: 10–22.
- Myrdal, Gunnar. 1964. *An American Dilemma*. Vols. 1 and 2. New York: McGraw-Hill (1944).
- New York Times*. 1999. Editorial, "The Journey to 2000." 31 December. A20
- Nussbaum, Martha. 2001. "Can Patriotism Be Compassionate?" *The Nation*. 17 December, 11.
- Nussbaum, Martha. 1996. "Reply." *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*. Edited by Joshua Cohen. Boston: Beacon Press.
- O'Leary, Cecilia Elizabeth. 1999. *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- Orleck, Annelise. 2001. "Soviet Jews: The City's Newest Immigrants" in *New Immigrants in New York*, edited by Nancy Foner. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Postel, Danny. 2001. "Outsiders in America." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 7 December, A12.
- Roediger, David R. 1999. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso. [1st ed. 1991].
- Roediger, David R. 1998. *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to be White*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Roediger, David R. 1994. *Toward the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics and Working Class History*. New York: Verso.
- Roper Survey Organization. 1993. "How We Classify Ourselves." *American Enterprise*, May–June, 87.
- Ryan, Joseph. 1973. *White Ethnics: Their Life in Working Class America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Sassen, Saskia. 2003. "Citizenship Destabilized." *Liberal Education* Vol. 89, No. 2 (Spring): 14–21.
- Schaefer, Richard T. 1995. *Race and Ethnicity in the United States*. New York: Harper- Collins College Publishers.
- Schwartz, Barry, Hazel Rose Markus and Alana Conner Snibbe. 2006. "Is Freedom Just Another Word for Many Things to Buy? That Depends on your Class Status." *New York Times Magazine*. 26 February. 14-15.
- Scott, Janny. 2003. "The Changing Face of Patriotism." *New York Times Week in Review*, 6 July, 1.
- Scott-Heron, Gil. 1992. "'B' Movie." Reflections. Bertelsmann Music Group Company. Compact Disc.
- Sklar, Holly. 2003. "Imagine a Country." *Z Magazine*, May, 53–59.
- Smedley, Audrey. 1998. "'Race' and Construction of Human Identity." *American Anthropologist*. Vol. 100, No. 3 (September): 690–702.
- Smedley, Audrey. 1993. *Race in North America*. San Francisco: Westview Press, Inc.
- Smith, Robert C. and Richard Seltzer. 2000. *Contemporary Controversies and the American Racial Divide*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Staples, Robert. 1993. "The Illusion of Racial Equality" in *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, edited by Gerald Early. New York: Penguin Books.
- Steinberg, Stephen. 2001. *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity and Class in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Steinberg, Stephen. 1999. "Occupational Apartheid in America: Race, Labor Market Segmentation and Affirmative Action" in *Without Justice For All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*, edited by Adolph Reed Jr. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Steinberg, Stephen. 1995. *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Street, Paul. 2001. "The White Fairness Understanding Gap." *Z Magazine*, October, 9–11.
- Tell, Shawgi. 1999. E-mail to the Mult-cul@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu list, July.
- United States Election Project. "2004 Voting-Age and Voting-Eligible Population Estimates and Voter Turnout." [http://elections.gmu.edu/Voter\\_Turnout\\_2004.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/Voter_Turnout_2004.htm). (accessed 10 December 2005).
- Waldinger, Roger. 2001. "Rethinking 'Race.'" *Ethnicities*. Vol. 1, No. 1: 19–21.
- Waldinger, Roger. 1996. *Still the Promised City: African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2001. "America and the World: The Twin Towers as Metaphor." Presentation at the Charles R. Lawrence II Memorial Lecture, Brooklyn College, December 5. Online at [www.binghamton.edu/fbc/iwbkln02.htm](http://www.binghamton.edu/fbc/iwbkln02.htm) (accessed 10 December 2001).
- Williams, Patricia J. 2001. "Disorder in the Court." *The Nation*, 10 December, 11.
- Wiltse, Charles M. 1965. *David Walker's Appeal*. New York: Hill & Wang.
- Winant, Howard. 2001. *The World Is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy since World War II*. New York: Basic Books.
- Wise, Tim. 2000. "Everyday Racism, White Liberals and the Limits of Tolerance." *LiP Magazine*, 4 December. [www.lipmagazine.org/articles/featwise\\_11.htm](http://www.lipmagazine.org/articles/featwise_11.htm).
- Tolerance.org. 2001b. "Hate in the News." Hate Goes to School. [www.tolerance.org/news/article\\_hate.jsp?id=312](http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_hate.jsp?id=312) (accessed 24 November).
- Zinn Howard. 2005. "The Scourge of Nationalism" May 20 <<http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0516-29.htm>>.
- Zinn Howard. 1995. *A People's History of the United States 1492–Present*. New York: HarperPerennial.

## CHAPTER 17

# Racial Hegemony, Globalization, Social Justice, and Anti-Hegemonic Movements

RODNEY D. COATES

*There is a stereotype of who can be intelligent and competent, who can have power. In Brazil it is rich, white men who represent the face of power.*

—(Benedita da Silva, Afro-Brazilian Senator)<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1996, a small, and all but ignored, article written by Jullie Ellison (1996) appeared in the University of Chicago-published journal, *Critical Inquiry*, entitled “A Short History of Liberal Guilt.” In this article, Ellison explicitly argues that the Black Civil Rights movement was successful in that it appealed to white guilt. Continuing her argument, she attributes the conservative reaction as essentially rejection of such guilt and the appeal to white fears. Dr. Ellison concludes with the idea that this accounts not only for the wholesale abandonment of the civil rights agenda by white ethnics, but also the appeal to white masculinities resulted in conservative victories at the national, state, and municipal levels.

Such arguments, while appealing, fail to grasp the magnitude of the Civil Rights movement and the reactionary conservative response. Although some of what Ellison wrote appears to be accurate, clearly there is much more happening. The Civil Rights movement was more than about guilt and victimization, but radical and significant calls for redistributive measures, elimination of the racial divide, and social justice. Anything short of these goals presents a rather limited view of the Civil Rights agendas (Edsall and Edsall 1991).

---

RODNEY D. COATES • Miami University of Ohio

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Johnson, Ollie, “Racial Representation and Brazilian Politics: Black Members of the National Congress, 1983–1999,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 40, no. 4, Special Issue: Brazil: The Challenge of Reform (Winter 1998): 97–118.

Now there may be some who would suggest that guilt and a passion for justice are intricately interweaved, as suggested by Myrdal (1996). I wonder if indeed this is the case. Obviously, guilt may be a byproduct of one's advantage that indeed springs from recognition of another's disadvantage.<sup>2</sup> But guilt alone is insufficient to account for the racial state, its rearticulation, or how future social justice responses should be crafted (Omi and Winant 1994). What is needed is a critical reflective process that recognizes that (1) wrongs have been done, (2) these wrongs have been institutionalized and made part of the national experience, (3) benefits have resulted, and (4) hence remedies are forthcoming. I believe to confound these four distinct notions with some vague idea of guilt produces not only compassion fatigue, apologetic inertia, and misplaced sympathies but also denial and obfuscation. The process produces little more than another variant of psychological reductionism with its attendant and vague notions of guilt and victim-hood.<sup>3</sup> It is, as I see it, not about someone feeling guilty,<sup>4</sup> but a process which reverses the structural inequities that produce liabilities for generations.

Failure to understand that race, racialization, and racism are part of "systemic" processes associated with a particular racial order is to continually confound symptoms with systems.

Systemic racism includes the complex array of anti-Black practices, the unjustly gained political-economic power of whites, the continuing economic and other resources inequalities along racial lines, and the white racist ideologies and attitudes created to maintain and rationalize white privilege and power. (Feagin 2000: 6)

Thus, concludes Feagin, by systemic we mean the "core racist beliefs" that dominate the institutional structures of a given society. It should be understood that Feagin makes specific reference to white racism (aimed against blacks) and argues that it need not be so restrictive. Failure to understand the systemic processes associated with the racial state—to include racial hegemonies, social/racial justice projects, and what Omi and Winant refer to as re-articulation—means that we will continue to be blind.<sup>5</sup> As the racial state has transformed, so has racism. In the past, racism, backed by law and institutional norms, was mostly overt. That is to say it was quite obvious, apparent, and openly expressive. During America's history, such obvious acts of racism have included segregation and

---

<sup>2</sup> A new breed of racial apologists has argued that white flight is essentially their response to the civil rights agenda and has resulted in "the decline in social connectedness began just after the successes of the civil rights revolution of the 1960s" (Putnam 2000: 41).

<sup>3</sup> Or even worse we spin our wheels constructing what may be called psychological knee-jerk programs that go under a variety of labels associated with diversity and multicultural programs. Hence we are left with sympathy, rather than empathy. Even empathy, understanding the situation of another, absent any specific link to issues of societal responsibility, societal gain (at the expense of another), and the structural components that replicate these wrongs (institutional/systemic racism), means that when the moment has passed, when consciences have been placated, or when the cost exceeds the level of guilt the movement toward redress is stunted, halted, or reversed.

<sup>4</sup> Arguments, which merely want someone to feel my pain, to sympathize with my situation, to understand my plight, produce little else but guilt. I cannot eat guilt, my children cannot go to school on guilt, and the future does not look any brighter because one feels guilt, remorse, or sadness. No, whether or not Germans like the Jews or feel guilty because of the genocide, whether or not the Russians feel guilty for their complicity in the annihilation of another generation of Chechyan, whether the British feel guilty for the centuries-long denial of human dignity to the Irish, or whether we in the United States recognize the same indignity that Blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and others have had to endure is not the central issue. What is critical is not guilt, but redress, not psychological band-aids, but structural adjustments, which produce remedies, allow for redress, and repair the damage—as a matter of justice, and not guilt.

<sup>5</sup> Indeed as suggested by Allen (2004), racial and political mistrust is part of this rearticulation process.

discrimination, hostility and violence, genocidal murder and lynching. White attitudes toward these overt racist acts have also typically ranged from passive acceptance to mild protestations. The success of the Civil Rights Movement was that these more obvious racist acts were made illegal. Unfortunately, left untouched were the more covert, less than obvious, forms of racism that have also been part of the American (and Western world) experience. Covert racism, obscured by the ideology of a colorblind society, operates to restrict and deny access to power, privilege, and position normally available to racialized elites. Under the veneer of color-blind racism, covert racism operates in the housing and employment markets, educational and entertainment institutions, and religious, social, and political institutions in the racial state (Feagin and Vera 1995).

Recognizing the social and racial justice focus of the Civil Rights Movement, this paper will investigate how these projects are best understood within the praxis of racial hegemony. More specifically this paper will deal with racial hegemony, social action, and social justice projects. As we shall explore, the system of racial hegemony is not a constant, but varies across time, space, and circumstance. Recognizing this variability, it seems only logical that any social action or social justice projects—aiming at modifying, reforming, and/or transforming racial hegemonies—must also vary. To the extent that the racial state has transformed, then our projects must also be transformed.

The world we live in, increasingly reflecting the globalization of technology, education, capital, industry, and populations, requires a more complex understanding and hence global awareness of systems of racism (Appadurai 1996; Castells 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Gold 2004). Although global awareness of these systems seems apparent, the variability of race, both within and across national boundaries, remains contested among scholars (Coates 2004). Or as pointed out by Song (2004), while many acknowledge the existence of racial hierarchies, there are limited discussions regarding their parameters or how they operate. The complexities of such variability can be seen within the United States in respects not only to whites and blacks but also to Latinos (Portes and Bach 1985; Ortiz 1996), Asians (Sethi 1994), Arabs (Saliba 1999), and others. The theoretical problem is not that we isolate these distinct racial groups; the problem is that we tend to think of race in binary terms. That is to say, we tend to talk about these groups as if they are isolated from each other. Jones (1981) argued that racism operates typically at the individual/psychological, cultural, and institutional levels. The most blatant and damaging forms of racism operate at the structural or systemic level (Feagin and Barnett 2006). Gotham (2000) demonstrates that racialization (i.e., racial structures) operates not only to define but also to reinforce national policies, corporate interests, and racial discrimination<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, while we acknowledge the structural components of racism, our responses still tend to be psychological (Fannon 1967: 77; Winant 1986; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Tilly 2005). Alternatively, and as argued in this paper, our responses to these structural shifts should recognize not only the increasing levels and types of racial pluralism, but also that globalized racial hegemony requires anti-hegemonic movements based in social justice.

---

<sup>6</sup> George Lipsitz effectively argues that the primary structural benefit of whiteness is property. See “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the ‘White’ Problem in American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (September 1995): 369–386. Similarly see Cheryl Harris’ “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1710–1791.

## RACIAL HEGEMONY AND GLOBALIZATION

Hegemony, reflected in Marx's<sup>7</sup> (1964: 78) statement "the ideas of the ruling class, are, in every age, the ruling ideas," was given cultural significance through the work of Gramsci (1971). Moreover, hegemony, accordingly, structures how reality is defined, shaped, and understood. Under these situations the elite and their power are deemed to be both natural and legitimate. Omi and Winant (1994), demonstrating the essentialness of race, argued that class and class interests were indeed determined by racial dynamics. Thus racial hegemony is a system, which determines perceptions of reality by legitimizing, normalizing, and centralizing racial elite through its control of cultural institutions (most specifically media, schools, and polity).

### HEGEMONY: WHO GETS TO CLAIM NORMALCY

The mere presence of racial groups and processes of racialization do not automatically lead to the development or the continued presence of racial hegemony. For racial hegemony to come into being, there must be a political process that grants or cedes national identity to a particular group. Such a process defines specific groups, or clusters of groups, not only as dominant, but also imbued with the central characteristics valued or representative of the nation. Thus we see, for example, what can be called the Nazitization of Arians, the whitening of Europeans in the United States, the whitening of Native Americans in the United States, Brazil, and Cuba, the Sovietization of Caucasians, or the Hawaiinization of Asians. With these hegemonic processes, we also note the creation of socially excluded groups who become labeled as marginalized or minority. In fact, the very same process that creates racial elites (and their presumed normalcy) also creates racial non-elites who, by definition, deviate from normalcy. While other examples can be identified, the process remains the same—the creation of racialized elites and racialized non-elites.<sup>8</sup>

It is assumed that violence and exploitation are always a part of racial hegemony even when they appear to be hidden. Later in this paper we will explore the various mechanisms of control utilized by racial hegemonic systems to preserve, maintain, or create power. By racial hegemony, following Omi and Winant (1994) we mean a system of dominance and exploitation based upon race. Within this system consent and legitimacy are accomplished through consensus between the exploiters and the exploited. Thus racial oppression and exploitation become perceived as being natural and common sense. This produces an uneasy balance until the hegemonic structures are challenged either by external or internal events, issues, and/ or movements. While racial hegemony transcends most modern societal types, it is clear that the form of racial hegemony that develops is dependent upon the

---

<sup>7</sup> Sandra L. Gilman (1984) demonstrates that Marx himself was a product of racial hegemony, as he struggled to distance himself from his Jewish ancestry and embrace the rational German identity. See her "Karl Marx and the Secret Language of Jews," *Modern Judaism*, 4, no. 3 (Oct.): 275–294.

<sup>8</sup> The dominant race model in sociological discourse reflects another hegemonic process. The bipolar racial model distorts the racial terrain and provides what Omi and Takagi (1996) refer to as a "master frame" that effectively distorts and oversimplifies race in America. (See their "Situating Asian Americans in the Political Discourse on Affirmative Action," *Representations*, no. 55 (summer): 155–162.) They demonstrate that the effective manipulation of these distortions by the right led to the structuring and eventual defeat of Affirmative Action in California.

form of society. Political ideology and resources, historical antecedents, military and industrial sophistication all structure society and serve to structure the form that racial hegemony takes. In the section that follows we will investigate the changing face of racial hegemony in our modern universe.

### **SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE ENDURANCE OF RACIAL HEGEMONY**

Early colonial situations provide the clearest example of the variability of racial hegemonic situations. Racial hegemony can be linked to both political ideological and level of military and/or industrial development (Coates 2006). While racial hegemony was produced in all of these colonial situations, the form that this racial hegemony took varied considerably. For example, even in the Americas, few would argue that the colonial situations created by the French, Spanish, and English were distinctly different. Alternatively, given the variability between and among the American colonies, we can yet distinguish these from those occurring later on in the African, Asian, or Australian continents. In this section our goal is to demonstrate that such differences are more than anecdotal, but have to do with the variations in political ideology and resources, historical antecedents, and military and industrial sophistication. These variations not only serve to structure particular societal types but also define the form of racial hegemony that ultimately develops. The importance of knowing these differences is apparent if we are to develop remedies<sup>9</sup> to the problems of racial hegemony. The point being stressed here is that the face of racial hegemony, to include the method and manor of racial violence and exploitation, is uniquely determined by each societal situation.

Simply put, we can demonstrate that racial hegemony can occur across a range of societal types that coincide with levels of industrial/military power and political ideology. Thus democracies with advanced industrial and/or military centers are more likely to foster modern racial hegemonies associated with what some writers have called colorblind racism. Within these systems we would expect for racial hegemony to be obscured by class structures. These class structures offer not only a veneer of legitimacy, but also stability to the racial hegemony. Alternatively, democracies with limited or less advanced industrial and/or military centers are more likely to foster racial hegemonies, which correspond to internal colonialism. These racial hegemonies are also most likely to be assumed to be absent in the official language. Non-democratic societies with advanced industrial and/or military centers are more likely to establish racial hegemonies, which are maintained by the brute force of the racialized elite under the guise of national unity, identity, etc. Lastly, non-democratic societies with limited or less developed military and/or industrial centers are more likely to establish racial hegemonies in which political, cultural and economic resources are manipulated to the advantage of a racialized elite at the expense of a racialized non-elite. It should be recognized that while, frequent national crises, economic dislocations, or political conflict are associated with all racial hegemonic types, these situations are aggravated within non-democratic societies with limited or less developed military and/or industrial centers.

---

<sup>9</sup> I am convinced that remedies must be tailored to the specific hegemonic structure. As these structures change so also must our remedies. The so-called failure of the Civil Rights Movement was not so much a failure as it was the transformations that occurred in the racial state and its response to the movement. See Omi and Winant (*Ibid.*), especially Chapter 5, for a discussion of this.



Such situations, while natural, are nevertheless manipulated or exploited by the racial dote to circumvent any real debate or critique of the racial hegemony.<sup>10</sup>

### **DEMOCRATIC, WEAK MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL BASE—BRAZIL**

The 1960s marshaled a new era of activism as social justice, racial justice, and human rights movements challenged racial hegemony globally. The hope and promise of the 1960s left many believing that we had reached a pivotal place in civilization as race and racism appeared to be declining in significance. A series of studies, commissioned by UNESCO, designed to explain the racial harmony within Brazilian society, did just the opposite. These studies were among the first to clearly discuss racial hegemony and its global impact. A more recent book by George Reed Andrews (1991) not only falsifies the racial democracy myth, but also points to the racial hegemony that operates to preserve the interests of Brazilian white elites at the expense of blacks.

In Brazil, after decades of turmoil, race and any discussion of racial inequality was expressly forbidden. Military leaders ruled that such racial dialogues were subversive. These leaders, in 1970, ordered census officials to remove the race question and thus produced the illusion of a colorblind society (Agier 1995; Lovell 2000). Governmental indifference and white attitudes of complacency continued to deny the reality of institutionalized racism.<sup>11</sup> As a consequence, “Nonwhite women continue to be sterilized and nonwhite children continue to die from disease and violence at rates far exceeding those for analogous groups of whites” (CONEN 1996); state governments continue to budget little or nothing to offices treating judicial cases of racism (DataFolha 1995); police brutality and prison sentences continue to be applied disproportionately to nonwhites (Adorno 1995); and nonwhites continue to be paid less, occupy lower-status jobs, and receive less education than whites (Bento 1992, 1995; Lima 1995; Abreu et al. 1994) (cited by Burdick 1998: 137).

Political and social activism resurfaced, targeting racial inequality and calling for social justice projects as remedies (Andrews 1996).

### **DEMOCRATIC, STRONG MILITARY/ INDUSTRIAL BASE—UNITED STATES AND ENGLAND**

From imperial colonialism, racial hegemonies have been advanced as a central feature of such nations as the United States and England (Smith 1997). The racial state, under so-called democratic values, appears to be most at odds with the core values it presents to itself and

---

<sup>10</sup> In a previous paper, I developed a typology of racial hegemony and applied it to colonial situations. In that paper an expanded section in which this typology was elaborated. Both time and space in this paper precludes a similar elaboration, and appears more abbreviated in this paper. This current paper should be seen as a natural extension of the previous one, in that it serves to extend the analysis to include agency. Agency, in this paper looked at as social justice projects, therefore represents a correction to the obvious overly deterministic orientation of the previous one. (See Coates, Rodney. 2006. “Towards a Simple Typology of Racial Hegemony,” *Societies Without Borders*, 1:69–91. I do not offer these typologies as the final word, but as the first one’s. As with the previous paper, I offer this typology as an initial one with the hopes of fostering critical inquiry into the nature of racial hegemonies.

<sup>11</sup> For a radically alternative view, see Segato’s “The Color-blind Subject Myth: Or, Where to Find Africa in the Nation,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 27, 129–151. In this article a case is made that all of the authors above essentially got it wrong. While it does make for some interesting reading, I was not persuaded. I, however, leave it to the reader to explore this perspective.

outside. Yet, core values aside, the racial values of these countries have dominated their respective histories. In the United States, as pointed out by Klinkner and Smith (1999), progress toward racial justice has had little to do with the core values of freedom, justice, and equality. Rather, they demonstrate that only when the national security was threatened were more inclusive policies advanced. That is to say, during the various national crises—such as the Civil and Spanish-American wars, World War I and II, and the Cold War and that of Vietnam—the nation needed the services of blacks and other racialized non-elites. Effective civil right strategies, designed by black and other racialized non-elite activists, who linked their progress to the national needs, were most effective. But unfortunately, for racial equality and the racialized non-elites, no sooner had the crises been abated did racialized elites work to undue the policies, programs, and remedies. Racial liberalism, advocated by both Truman and Eisenhower, was a blatant attempt to attract black voters (McMahon 2004: 102, 191). Mary Dudziak (2000) and Klinkner and Smith (*Ibid.*) demonstrate that Eisenhower and Kennedy, concerned with avoiding international embarrassment, pushed the executive branch to foster programs aimed at dismantling Jim Crow.

Within advanced western democracies, such as the United States and England, a new form of racism has emerged with the ascension of the New Right. The “new face” of racism essentially denies the significance and current relevance of the cruder and older forms (Ansell 1997). It clouds the issue by creating a new discourse where whites (and preferably white males) are now being victimized by the minorities and racial remedies of a previous generation. Thus while utilizing some of the same rhetoric of civil rights, the far right actually challenged and effectively undermined such liberal victories as affirmative action, busing, the voters’ rights act, and etc. This results in not only a rejection of the continued significance of racism, but also claims victim status by those whites in majority positions (reverse discrimination), and devalues and delegitimizes racial remedies by arguing that they undermine meritocracy (Fraser and Kirk 2000). From the left, this “retreat from racial justice” results from the complicity of social scientists, politicians, political and social activists—who settle for a “politics of possibilities” rather than the social restructuring needed to transform societies into true democracies (Steinberg 1995). Thus, in retreat, bandaids such as affirmative action are presented that do little to alter America’s occupational apartheid. Consequently, while a black middle class is enhanced, the overwhelming majority of blacks, browns, and others are continually displaced by an ongoing preference for white immigrants. The legacy of slavery, the racial division of labor, and the racial divide continue unabated as we continue to “disinvest” in native workers. Within the U.S. context the collective results of these processes have produced the illusion of a color-blind society.<sup>12</sup> But illusions aside, the reality is that the racial void has very real consequences. The racial divide in the United States is expanding faster than in other industrialized countries. Thus racial non-elites witness not only retrenchment but also reversals in racial progress (Jacobs et al. 2004)

---

<sup>12</sup> In fact, as critically discussed by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, the hiding behind the façade of racial democracy resides what he labels “color-blind” racism, which serves not only to dehumanize the racial other but also to preserve the dimensions of racialization in more covert and subtle ways. (See “How to Talk Nasty about Blacks without Sounding ‘Racist’: Exposing the Sophisticated Style of Color-blind Racism,” in R. Coates (ed.), *Race and Ethnicity: Across Time, Space and Discipline*, Netherlands: Brill, 2004.)

**STRONG MILITARY AND/OR INDUSTRIAL,  
NON-DEMOCRATIC RACIAL  
STATES—RUSSIA<sup>13</sup>**

Equally problematical for scholars have been the xenophobia and racial politics that seem apparent in the countries formerly within the Soviet Union. While the ongoing rebellion of Chechnyans in Russia fills the news, one would be hard pressed to ignore the “ethnic cleansing” among the Croats, Serbs, and Moslems in the former Yugoslavia and not see the racial overtones. Since its very inception, the Russians have utilized racial and ethnic hostilities to foster a sense of people-hood. Over 10 years ago, Russian journalist Aleksandr Minkin pointed out:

The government needs yet another enemy (an enemy is an integral part of Russian life and currently that role is given to the Chechens), as without him you cannot satisfactorily explain why 60% of the Russian people live below the poverty line. The dissatisfaction of the people represents a real force. Therefore, it is much better to direct it against the Chechens rather than toward the governors, prefects or the Kremlin who don't pay salaries for many months and increase rents. (Cited by Souleimanov 2006)

Indeed, Weitz (2002) argues that even absent overt racism and a long history of denying the presence of race, racial politics emerged in the post-Soviet period. Between 1937 and 1953, Weitz notes:

The state not only repressed overly fervent and potentially dangerous expressions of nationalism (it also) . . . deported entire national groups. In the Stalin period especially, particular populations were endowed with immutable traits that every member of the group possessed and that were passed from one generation to the next. The particular traits could be the source of praise and power, as with Russians, or could lead to round-ups, forced deportations, and resettlement in horrendous conditions. Under Iosif Stalin, the Soviets practiced—intermittently, inconsistently, to be sure—racial politics without the overt concept and ideology of race. (Weitz *Ibid.*: 3)

Stalin's goals in subdividing much of the territory under Soviet control were to preserve the hegemony of the Russian racial order. Therefore, in Central Asia, Turkestan, and adjacent states he utilized strategically<sup>14</sup> defined “ethno-national” identities to further subjugate the region.

The Chechnyans, during the 1994–1996 war, were racialized in Russia to justify the war and their extermination. Russian media and politicians stereotypically represented Chechnyans as “terrorists, demons from hell,” and often referred to the Chechnyan fighters as “monkeys” (Anders and Bell 1999: 76–77). It is a strange irony that what would be a prototypical group, from which we get the word “Caucasian,”<sup>15</sup> continues to be racialized, vilified, and victimized by the Russian racial elite.

---

<sup>13</sup> We could have easily chosen China to demonstrate this case. But, Russia, while it may hide behind the technicality of democracy, in actuality is yet a one-party state. With time, perhaps with continued democratization, it will be further along. For now, it is less democratic than either England or the United States. I know that we could argue the level of democracy that exists in these two countries as well. Such arguments I freely acknowledge, as with the problems associated with this labeling.

<sup>14</sup> As observed by Hanks (1998), “Due to the Stalinist policy of divide et impera, national identities were imposed where none had existed before, and the territory assigned to the national groups often had little historical relevance or foundation in ethnological reality”.

<sup>15</sup> The Chechnyans, oddly enough, were the original group cited as beautiful “Caucasians” by Blumenbach when he codified the first biologized racist hierarchy of “races” in 1776. See Feagin and Feagin (1999) for a brilliant analysis of this group and their place in our racial history.

### **WEAK MILITARY AND/OR INDUSTRIAL, NON-DEMOCRATIC RACIAL STATES—SUDAN**

It is important to realize that while our attention in the west has been directed toward the Sudanese conflict for only two decades, the conflict is much older. Racial violence, often described in ethnic terms, has plagued Sudan for over 100 years. Egypt and Turkey conquered Sudan in 1820. The Egypt/Turkey conquest was associated with Ottoman imperialistic aims. The Sudanese land and people were seen as a rich source of slaves, gold, ivory, and timber. Prior to this invasion, Sudan consisted of various kingdoms and smaller ethnic configurations. The present boundaries of Sudan did not exist. From that period, racial and religious violence was promoted in the Sudan in order to maximize the exploitative potential (Warburg 1991). The conquest of the Sudanese produced millions of slaves for both the Arab and the New World.

In 1882, Great Britain invaded Sudan under the ruse of “self-determination for the Sudanese.” Britain’s primary purpose in this invasion was to divide and thus conquer the region. This strategy was facilitated by manipulating the inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict between the various Egyptian and Sudanese populations. On paper, Britain and Egypt jointly ruled the Sudan. In reality, Britain controlled both Egypt and Sudan until a civil war forced the British to retreat. Sudan gained its independence in 1955. The lights of freedom were quickly quenched a year later as the Sudanese military formally took power (Warburg, *Ibid.*).

In 1963, a group described by the Arab-led government as “racialist conspirators” planned a coup. These racialist conspirators, under the banner of “The Negro Liberation Movement,” while greatly outnumbered and outgunned, embraced supporters “from the Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and the Western Sudan” (Aguda 1973). More recently, the expanding Sahara desert has aggravated land disputes, pitting Northern Arabs against black Africans. The government, dominated by Northern Arabs, has purposefully engaged in racist practices in its attempt to consolidate power and control the shrinking arable land and other resources in the region. Thus racialized, Black Sudanese—to include Christians, Moslems, and animists—have been targeted. Government militias have killed over 200,000 black Sudanese (officially described as “thugs”), another 1.2 million fleeing the violence have been forced to become refugees in neighboring countries (Chittister 2004).

### **RACIAL HEGEMONY, GLOBALIZATION, AND IMMIGRATION**

Racialized elites utilize racial hegemonies to exploit the labor, cultural and social capital, and political realities of racialized non-elite. Thus racialized elites in disparate places such as Europe (Russians and Balkans most recently and especially from within the former Soviet Bloc—Chechnyans, Serbians, Croatians, Poles, etc., Ireland Italians, etc.), the Americas (Mexico, Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, etc.), Japan, China (Hong Kong, Taiwan), Korea (both North and South)—serve to accelerate immigration of racialized non-elites who relocate. These relocation streams, in search of more competitive wages, better lifestyles, and freedom, now pits one set of racialized non-elites against another. Thus in host countries we see increased racial tension among what may be termed indigenous and exogenous racialized non-elites. This competition, along the margins, serves to depress wages and misdirect or diffuse racial hostilities away from the racialized elites.

The social scientist reading this will see an immediate similarity to this process and that originally described by Bonacich (1972). What is different, as I see it, is that we are talking about a global process, where political, economic, natural, and social crises are either manipulated or exploited in such a way as to increase the flow of refugees. Such flows, on a global scale, become fodder for and to the interests of racialized elites and their desire to increase profits.

Within a given country like the United States we may note how such global flow affects racialized non-elites in multiple ways. For example, as the U.S. industrial economy continues to deteriorate, we note an increase in the bio-technological and the high-technological spheres. As documented by several researchers, these jobs have attracted a flow of European and Asian tech-skilled workers. These racialized exogenous non-elites have effectively displaced both white and black racialized indigenous non-elites in this country. The friction that has resulted from this flow has resulted in obvious backlashes in California—where anti-Affirmative Action, anti-immigration, anti-welfare policies have effectively pitted an increasingly frustrated and marginalized white non-elite against an increasingly marginalized and frustrated black, Asian, and Latino non-elite.

Alternatively, within service and construction sectors, exogenous racialized non-elites willing to work at significantly lower wages are displacing skilled and non-skilled indigenous racialized non-elites. Thus, here in Ohio we note within the building trades, an exogenous racialized labor pool of Latinos, Europeans, Asians, and others has displaced blacks, whites, and others.

It is clear that the precarious position of indigenous racialized non-elites in both these market situations means that they will be most likely displaced, as has been the case in previous periods. What is less clear is the problem produced by racial blinders where we rarely see the dilemma faced by other racialized non-elites. Put simply, we often ignore the fact that our reality is one where there exist multiple racialized non-elites. The sheer fact that there are racialized whites that are also non-elites tends to get totally ignored in our overly bipolar (white/black) racial dialogues. The displacement of Appalachian blue-collar whites (in steel, auto) or farmers rarely gets mention within discourses regarding race. Alternatively, the displacement of lower-status Asians and Hispanics by immigrating Asians and Hispanics also gets lost.

Obviously we live in multiracial and multi-ethnic societies. Our responses, in terms of theories, methodologies, policies, and activism—tend to be myopic, and thus fail to produce the kind of understandings and change we would hope for. Part of our failure is our inability to come to grips with racial hegemony and globalization, and thus to create anti-hegemonic movements.

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE, ANTI-HEGEMONIC MOVEMENTS: FROM LOCAL ACTIVISM TO GLOBAL RESPONSES**

Racial hegemonic structures, advancing with global capitalism, have served to duplicate, augment, and expand European racial dominance around the globe. This statement is more than tautological, for what I am suggesting is that European-based racial systems of control, legitimacy, and normalcy now transcend individual national boundaries as we now exploit labor and resources on a global basis. When we recognize that the most heavily marketed western, and particularly U.S., commodity is our mass media—it becomes apparent how these “master frames” are globalized. Challenging these master frames requires global strategies, which reflect the variability of racial hegemonies, historical specificity, and the interconnections of racialized non-elites globally.

We have identified above several different instances and types of racial hegemony. In respects to racial hegemony, as well as clothes, one size does not fit all. In this section we shall investigate how in order to achieve social justice, various types of anti-hegemonic movements can be identified. Following our conversation regarding various types of racial hegemony, it should be understood that variability in social justice responses must be accomplished. That said, it is understood that when the racialized state sponsors violence or terrorism targeting specific racial groups, such groups must not be limited in their response.

We live in a values-based world. From presidents and prime ministers to kings and queens, from Parliaments to Congresses, from corporate executives to grass-roots social activists, all are guided by values—whether we talk about America or Ghana, England or Russia, China or France, Israel or Uzbekistan—that implicitly and explicitly dictate or structure our actions. While legitimacy is assumed to be associated with the values of the racialized elite, those of the racialized non-elite are presumed to be illegitimate. Similarly, elite values are presumed to be normal or the outcomes of natural forces, while those of racialized non-elites are presumed to be deviant. The problem is that we can ill-afford not to know the various value perspectives and when they collide, when boundaries are breached, and when conflicts are actually about boundary maintenance. But this does not effectively deal with the conflict; instead the tensions are just pushed underground and come out in alternative ways. Solutions based upon misspecified or mis-understood racial systems produce more problems than it solves. Racial conflict is often about racial boundaries and their maintenance. If indeed we are to understand the tensions and the resulting conflicts, it is wiser to allow both views to be expressed. Thus we call for both freedom of expression and democracy. While this does produce increased agitation, it nevertheless causes us to question and affirm our values. It also helps us to understand alternative views and hopefully become more open to differences. The alternative is political correctness, McCarthyism, communism, fascism, or Nazism. While acknowledging the basic premises associated with democracy, throughout American and western world history, there has been a denial of the right of blacks and other peoples of color to enjoy such (Stanfield 1992).

Often conflicts between value perspectives represent challenges to the very core of racial hegemonies. These challenges, attacking the presumptions of legitimacy, normalcy, and “common sense” of elite values, attack the core of the racial hegemonies. Such challenges, reflecting the variations of racial hegemonic types, must also be varied.

Racial hegemonies obscure a whole range of questions: Such questions include: Who are the real Americans? Whose version of history will all others learn as legitimate?<sup>16</sup> Who are the natural patriots, and who must prove their patriotism? Who becomes subsumed under the hegemonic cloak of normalcy, and who by definition are marginalized, de-legitimated, and by definition suspect, deficient, deviant, and “the problem”? The creation of what Tilly (2005) calls “boundaries”<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> I am told that Hitler, when asked was he concerned with how the world would view his handling of the Jewish Question, responded: “History belongs to the victor. Who ever are victorious, they will write history.”

<sup>17</sup> One could actually talk about another paradox of democracies in that they allow for, even encourage the development and maintenance of various group and the resultant boundaries. This indeed is the paradox of democracy. How do we allow for multiple freedoms without jeopardizing freedom itself? Some of it requires boundary maintenance, that is to say, I believe that to some extent, when our values would impose or dictate limitations on another, then we need to determine whether or not we want to create or erect barriers. Or safe zones, much like smokers’-only lounges and bars, or hotel rooms, which allow the one to smoke without interfering with the others’ unwillingness to share. But this, as with all freedoms and other values, are not absolute, that is to say, I may value human sacrifice, but obviously such a thing must be forbidden, and herein lies the real paradox. How do we balance conflicting values? This is where social justice comes into play.

serves not only to define who is “in” but also who is outside one’s (or one’s group’s) sphere of influence. All of these questions raise the issue of hegemony, and how we can effectively limit its influences in the modern world.

### **ANTI-HEGEMONIC STRUGGLES—TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL JUSTICE RESPONSE**

When this country here was first being founded, there were 13 colonies. The whites were colonized. . . . And in those days, they used to say that the British Empire was so vast and so powerful, the sun would never set on it. . . . And here you have 22 million Afro-Americans, black people today, catching more hell than Patrick Henry ever saw. And I’m here to tell you, in case you don’t know it, that you got a new – you got a new generation of black people in this country, who don’t care anything whatsoever about odds . . . . No. This is a new generation. (Malcolm X 1965)

Social justice, predicated upon the expansion of human rights, is by definition a critical and intellectual enterprise. Social critique, made possible by social justice paradigms, provides the basis for social action and social change and leads to the enhancement of social democracies. Such critical intellectual enterprises require that we constantly re-evaluate not only our social institutions but also the terms we utilize to describe our very existence. Such re-evaluation is best accomplished within the crucible of the academy, the streets, or the revolutionary moment.

For the purposes of this paper, social justice is both praxis and theory. Thus, the social justice context is defined by the world experiences of racialized non-elites historically, socially, and politically. Within this context we have for over 100 years discussed various groups as being marginalized, socially isolated, and hence having obtained minority status.

Within the U.S. context<sup>18</sup> we make particular reference to blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native American<sup>19</sup> who have in varying degrees been limited in their ability to achieve upward mobility, societal rewards, and privilege. Put simply, they (as groups) have in varying degrees been underrepresented in the highest status, more powerful, and/or highly prestigious situations. Within the U.S. context they have collectively and individually experienced institutional discrimination typically sanctioned and enforced, both publicly and privately, by judicial, executive, and legislative bodies.

Social justice paradigms begin with the presumption that individuals and/or groups interact from the basis of equality and freedom. When we speak of marginality, social isolation, and minority status—invariably we utilize as our measure of centrality a presumed fixed reference point. This reference point is typically some group who we define or decide to label the dominant group. Such conversations in sociology, regarding the center and periphery, typically can be traced to the early work of the Chicago School and more specifically the work of Robert E. Parks and theories of Edward Shils. While only scant mention is made of these sociologists today, their lasting impact upon the discourse cannot be ignored. Neither can we afford to

---

<sup>18</sup> While we center upon the U.S. context, it is assumed that the parameters of racial hegemonies include similar types of racialized non-elites.

<sup>19</sup> We could also include those white racialized non-elites such as Appalachians, Poles, and others who while provisionally included among whites suffer varying degrees of marginalization.

ignore the implicit racialization of the dialogue that is accompanied within these perspectives. These perspectives run at the core of what has become known as race relations.

From a social justice paradigm, I would argue that such terms and the resultant disciplinary dialogues regarding race relations are basically flawed. Put simply, at the core of race relations is the notion that marginality, social isolation, and minority status can somehow be transformed, translated, or transcended. What this implies is that what are essentially definitional, theoretical, and conceptual flaws become reinterpreted into inter/intra group dynamics, conflict, and praxis. Such perspectives imply that at the minimum—marginal groups must transform their culture (i.e., culture of poverty) or at the maximum—transform the culture of the majority (i.e., sensitivity training). In the United States, close to 100 years of this type of reasoning has produced little more than discourse(s) into the mundane. What should be clear is that the issue is not one of race relations, or the relations between races, but rather a extremely oppressive, exploitative systems that racialized particular population groups (Bell 1992; Steinberg 2001). These theoretical and conceptual flaws, leading to mistaken policy, remedies, and solutions, continue to produce confusion, obfuscation, and reification. Within modern democratically and non-democratically based racial hegemonies, we can identify several social justice anti-hegemonic movements. These anti-hegemonic movements reflect multiple options. While not exhausted, they clearly suggest the variability that should be associated with such movements.<sup>20</sup> We begin with what I choose to call “centering the margins” as an anti-hegemonic movement, which challenges the legitimacy of definitions and notions of normalcy. We shall then move to reparations and conclude by examining revolutionary movements and moments.<sup>21</sup>

### **CENTERING THE MARGINS—AS A ANTI-HEGEMONIC MOVEMENT**

Centering the margins is more than definitional fiat, which merely lead to either intellectual retrenchment by those reluctant to give up their cherished terms or concepts or grandiose claims of victory by those whose only victories are in the realm of where ideological paper tigers rule the day. Centering the margins is conceived of as a practical way in which formerly marginalized groups may redefine their struggle by viewing themselves at the center of their cultural universe.

At the core of this process is a structural shift in the social system itself. Being marginalized means having less access to the rewards, privileges, and status enhancements as available to those more central to the system. For example, because racialized non-elites are also marginalized, there is a greater likelihood that they will attend deficient schools and live in neighborhoods that have more taverns, prisons, and waste dumps than universities, factories, and parks. Consider a real war on poverty, where the poor are not perceived as being marginal to the interests of our nation. If we fought the war on poverty with the same amount of resources we are willing to devote to the so-called “war on terrorism,” within a short period of time we could declare victory. Instead, the so-called war on poverty is deemed to be associated with marginalized groups whose interests are not at the core of our society’s priorities.

---

<sup>20</sup> The sections that follow are speculative. As such they should be seen as possibilities and not yet realities.

<sup>21</sup> While I am committed to non-violence, even a cursory examination of the historical and contemporary record will demonstrate that violence and revolutionary struggles are part and parcel to any anti-hegemonic movement. Thus much like the Western Powers and their unwillingness to take the “nuclear option” from the table, those struggling with the racial state can ill-afford to take violence and other uses of force off the table.



What we are arguing here is a perspective that recognizes not one but multiple overlapping cultural centers. Legitimacy and self-actualization would thus derive from placement in multiple spheres of cultural identity. And rather than prioritizing one at the expense of others, we recognize a sort of dynamic mosaic where all centers are equally viable, vibrant, and accepted. Thus this process recognizes value in the cultural center through which and in which the respective members abide, while encouraging active participation in multiple spheres where they exist.

The problem with a majority/minority-type conversation is that it presupposes that a particular group dominates the center. As pointed out by Hood (1995), to use the dominant standard “outside culture as a reference” to the particular culture denies not only inner self, but also agency. As pointed out by South African freedom fighter Steven Biko, “The most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” A social justice paradigm, rejecting the positivist ideal of objectivity, explicitly argues from the subjective, value-laden position of the insider. Thus Hood (1995) asserts that

Justice for all . . . means that justice should respect the value system of the particular subculture or society within which the action is seen as just or unjust. (Thou shall not violate the “prime directive” of imposing one’s value judgments on a subculture or society different from one’s own.) (p. 3)

A social justice paradigm would allow students to question the repeated low numbers obtained by minorities in such things as achievement<sup>22</sup> and I.Q. tests, promotions and tenure decisions, corporate boards and deliberative committees. Such a paradigm would lead to the rejection of any notion that these low numbers, across several generations, have any thing to do with individual effort and began to identify institutions and their agents as the source of lack. A social justice paradigm would insist that effort plus talent should be rewarded with success, access, and admission. Absent such rewards, we must determine the system to be lacking justice.

Looking at this practically we can discuss how it would work on say a standard achievement exam or IQ test. We know how to construct racially biased exams. We have a long history and large body of research in so doing. While some would have us spend even more resources at attempts to design racially neutral exams, perhaps our efforts could be more rewarding if placed in other directions. I once had a professor who freely provided past exams to his class. When asked, he stated he did not have to control the questions, but control the answers. Seeing our puzzled look, he continued, “Each year, by changing the content of the class, the course material, I essentially change the answers.” In our case, it’s not an issue of essentially changing the answers, but in changing the environment in which education takes place, changing the content of our curriculum, and changing our attitudes regarding difference. So it’s not as simple as changing the names from Jim, Jane and John to that of Manual, Aisha, and Tamika<sup>23</sup> but to change the importance of culture, identity, and location in how we teach, what we teach, and how we include others into the canon. That is to say that mathematics still results in the teaching of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—but the examples, problems, etc. should reflect the racial, economic, and cultural diversity of the consumers

<sup>22</sup> While examples are legion, a recent court challenge to racial test bias resulted in a Texas court’s justifying racial bias by asserting that high-stakes tests serve to motivate poor-performing racial non-elites. (See “Court Rules for High Stakes Testing” in *FairTest Examiner*, winter 1999–2000. Accessed from the web on February 10, 2006, at: [http://www.fairtest.org/examarts/winter00/Court\\_Rules\\_For\\_High-Stakes\\_Testing.html](http://www.fairtest.org/examarts/winter00/Court_Rules_For_High-Stakes_Testing.html)).

<sup>23</sup> Presently, ethnically sounding names carry a stigma. Thus centering the margins, normalizing minority status, such stigma may indeed be reduced.

(i.e., the students and their parents). Alternatively, what constitutes “the classics,” great philosophies, and worldviews should include more than “dead white men.” The shifting of the margins would insist upon a curriculum that was as diverse as the student population, while still stressing the importance of critical thinking skills, mathematics, chemistry, etc. It should be noted that we are not calling for some kind of “Ebonics,” other forms of essentialism, or politically correct terminology. Rather, we are arguing that the process of centering the margins can result in the normalization of the racialized non-elites. Thus by centering the margins, as implied by Rawls (1985), we measure the reach and quality of justice not by the standard of that available to the affluent but those who lack affluence.

If indeed we cannot destroy the master’s house with the master’s tools, then it stands to reason that we must refuse to continue to build the master’s house that continuously distorts and denies the reality of the racial other.

Words, as important as they are, must not be the sum total of any anti-hegemonic movement. All too often it seems that every so many years this sort of navel gazing merely results in the renaming of particular groups, or the reexamination of the “crises.” Real progress is more than words, and more than laws, policies, and programs. Real progress can only come about with the very real investment, to address the systematic disinvestment and divestment, in communities and institutions serving heretofore excluded groups. More simply, systemic problems can only be handled at the structural level. Only by centering the margins (i.e., redefining society in such a way that all groups are examined from the basis of their centrality) can we effectively de-racialize the dialogue. Finally, only through the process of centering the margins and de-racializing the dialogue can we continue the development of social justice and began the process of transforming American culture in such ways that race truly declines in significance. Centering the margins alone will not overcome centuries of oppression and exploitation. Social problems plague racially marginalized, socially isolated, and economically disempowered communities created by the racial state (Massey and Denton 1993).<sup>24</sup>

## REPARATIONS AS AN ANTI-HEGEMONIC MOVEMENT<sup>25</sup>

Reparations are not about placing guilt at the feet of whites, nor are they about claiming victim status for blacks. Blacks have been victimized, and they have experienced America as victims. Whites have benefited from their whiteness, and they have experienced American

---

<sup>24</sup> There are those who might argue, Why not just do away with all such categories, won’t that solve the problem? Unfortunately, while we recognize that racial and ethnic categories are socially constructed, their political, social, economic, and medical manifestations are quite real. Even sophisticated medical researchers associated with the human genome group recognize the importance of maintaining racial/ethnic categories, even while they stress a non-hierarchical clustering of such groups for research and treatment. See, for example, Mountain and Joanna Neil Risch, “Assessing Genetic Contributions to Phenotypic Differences among ‘Racial’ and ‘Ethnic’ Groups,” *Nature Genetics*, 36 (2004): s48–531. Accessed on February 14, 2006, at: <http://www.nature.com/ng/journal/v36/n11s/abs/ng1456.html>.

<sup>25</sup> This section is derived from my earlier paper “If a Tree Falls in the Wilderness: Reparations, Academic Silences, and Social Justice.” *Social Forces*, 83.2 (2004): 841–864.

guilt. Reparations, however, are not about blacks feeling better about their blackness, or whites wincing with the weight of 500 years of collective guilt. Guilt and victim politics, practices, and solutions rarely lead to anything but embarrassed reluctance on the part of the guilty, and frustration and anxiety on the part of the victim. The guilty, attempting to seek absolution, are encouraged to make some gesture of atonement. Such gestures, rarely anything but tokens of attrition and contrition, always delivered with great fanfare, encourage the victim to believe that finally his or her remedies are forthcoming. Alas, as the guilt subsides, typically with the passage of time or the press of economic realities, resolve is weakened, programs are reduced and/or eliminated, and another cycle of unmet promises is recorded. Each cycle of guilt and victim identification, with its resultant policies and practices of appeasements producing even more anxieties and frustrations, culminates in another generation on both sides who lose faith in the capacity of the other to appropriately respond. These cycles, being repeated several times over the course of the American experience, have produced waves of guilt, victim identification, anxiety, and frustration. This cyclic process has produced within the white community what Kozel has described as compassion fatigue, and within the black community what West describes (but mistakenly explains) as nihilism. The guilt cycle, producing at both extremes compassion fatigue and nihilism, can only be broken by a complete solution, a real attempt to restore the African to his proper place in our global universe. We must repair the damage, we must remedy the harm, and we must reclaim that which was stolen. Put simply, social justice calls for reparations.

Social justice, in the form of reparations, is a social, not an individual, solution. Social justice, in the form of reparations, is not a handout, but the just compensation for damages resulting from 500 years of forced enslavement, kidnapping, rape, segregation, discrimination, hyper-exploitation, super-oppression, and a system designed to continue the cycle of victimization for blacks long into the future. It would be a social response to a social problem created by a social system. The social response, in the form of a class action, would provide the resources for educational and health institutional upgrades, housing and community development, business startup funds and economic planning. Western imperialism, with its global dependency upon Africa and the African, for over 500 years (to include the formal slave, colonial, and post-colonial periods), must provide a global reparation response. African debt must be forgiven, and European (lead by the English, French, Italians, and Germans) and U.S. governments and economic institutions must formally apologize and proceed to invest what I estimate should be \$12–15 trillion<sup>26</sup> into the aforementioned African and black institutions, industrial bases, and economic markets. To continue the policy of handouts, welfare, foreign aid, and IMF loans is to continue the rape, exploitation, oppression, and victimization.

---

<sup>26</sup> My estimate is a simple calculation based upon the 12 to 15 million original slaves and their immediate descendants.

This estimate is a simple function of multiplying this sum by \$100,000  $\omega$  12–15 million. At this point, some may even argue, given today's standards, if a human life is worth this. But, I am also suggesting pain and suffering, gross and criminal negligence, conspiracy, unjustified imprisonment, loss of wages, defamation of character, genocide, rape, and false imprisonment (to name but a few). In the scheme of things numbers are just that, numbers; they are meaningless until the principle of reparations as social justice is accepted. Not being a lawyer or an economist, I pick this as a convenient way of conceptualizing the magnitude of both the tragedy (past) and ongoing tragedies (present) that these funds would be utilized to (re) address. Since the recent United Nations conference on reparations and other leading scholars come to similar results, I do not believe that my estimates are that out of line. Again, right now, for the sake of this paper, the figure is irrelevant (it could conceivably be put at \$1, although doing such would trivialize what western imperialism has already sought to minimize to non-existence). What is relevant is the legitimacy of the claim for justice.

Africa and Africans, the world over, deserve the same type of investment strategies that rebuilt both Japan and Europe after the world wars. In both cases, we did more than provide loans; we actively encouraged the development of modern, industrial-based economies. Surely, the 500-year debt owed to the African “meteors” should provide nothing less. Social justice is the only response, reparations the only cure. To the extent that Asians, Native Americans, and others can cite similar histories of exploitation at the hands of Europeans, the reparations should be global and expansive.

Absent such a commitment, the cycles of guilt and frustration will continue until we are engulfed in the sea of nihilism, anger, and bitterness. Poverty, hopelessness, anger, and bitterness produce volatile mixtures the world can ill-afford to ignore. Repairing the damage, the just response to centuries of abuse, encourages the climate of forgiveness, peace, and sanity.

### **FAIR TRADE, FAIR WAGES, FAIR EXCHANGES, AND FAIR CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS AS ANTI-HEGEMONIC MOVEMENTS<sup>27</sup>**

Fair trade must mean fair wages, fair exchanges, and fair contractual agreements. Such basic fairness lies at the heart of any kind of social justice project. The history of capitalism, in the last two centuries, has resulted in sweetheart deals for the first world, and odious debt for the second and third worlds. Thus Africa, much of Asia, and Latin America have been underdeveloped, and the only major development has been to produce centers of labor and resource extraction and exploitation. The slave, plantation, and colonial systems have merely been replaced by the more efficient and exploitative systems of neo-colonialism, NAFTA, and the massive flow of undocumented labor. The reader would be hard pressed to find any industrial development—no local-owned auto plants, steel or oil refineries, food processing plants, etc. A classic example is immediately apparent when one realizes that cocoa, originating in Latin America or Africa, must be exported to Europe and the United States for processing and then re-imported into Latin America and Africa for sale. The same can be said for oil and petroleum products, lumber and steel, cotton and other agricultural products.

Immigration policy, trade agreements, and labor organization(s) are not mutually exclusive discussions but must by their very nature occur simultaneously. Therefore, we must recognize the reality that the United States and Western development and encouragement of globalized capital impact directly upon immigration, trade, and labor organizations. In fact it is at the heart of any conversation involving these issues. To the extent that a racialized hegemonic social structure with global tentacles can be identified, we must recognize that the instrument of its control is more recently tied to the development of global capitalism. Hence, any attempt to constructively and creatively minimize or destroy racialized hegemony must in some ways effectively deal with instruments of global capitalism. Anti-hegemonic movements, which can

---

<sup>27</sup> While there are those who, holding onto the Marxist prophecy, look for the gradual withering away of the capitalist state, I do not believe that this will happen within our lifetime. Rather, I believe that the most radical thing labor can do, given our current world situation, is to organize across racial and national boundaries to produce collaborative responses to the globalization of capital and the development of hegemonic structures that transcend national boundaries. Therefore, rather than a revolution, I seek transformative processes, which will take away from global racial hegemonies their most successful of weapons—the division of racialized non-elites into often competing groups.

also be described as democratic movements, serve to enhance labor and immigrant rights across racial, national, cultural, and gender lines.

If we take a page from U.S. history, such anti-hegemonic movements can be identified with the early union organizations, which facilitated the development of labor ties across racial and geographical boundaries. This was also the case for immigrant farm workers. The problem is that such organizational efforts have failed to persist or to exist across the entire spectrum of labor situations. And unfortunately, in some cases it has actually served to maintain the racially segmented labor forces (in auto and steel, poultry and meat-packing house workers, longshoreman, and the building trades).

Rather than pointing to the failure of these movements, I would like to use them as a backdrop to envision a broader, more sweeping, and empowering process. Such a process would encourage the development of global links to combat global capitalism. Thus the various organized union and labor groups would be encouraged to lobby for immigration reform where such workers would enjoy the same rights and privileges of the endogenous labor force. This would greatly add to the membership and vitality of many failing unions. It would also provide an opportunity to expand past national boundaries, and meet global capitalism on a more universal footing.

Collaboration would not stop at the organization and membership level. Unions could also be encouraged to establish training and skills development academies, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship programs. Such developments would allow unions to gain further legitimacy, enhance their membership, and more effectively engage in a global labor marketplace. By encouraging the credentialization and the development of global labor ties and organizations, unions can greatly enhance the development of anti-hegemonic movements, and further the advance of democratic relationships between racialized non-elites that transcend national boundaries. As someone once said, "Making democracy is much like making sausage; it is messy, but it tastes good."

## VIOLENCE AND ANTI-HEGEMONIC MOVEMENTS

By the mid-1960s the promise of racial justice, equality, and freedom seemed more distant than at any other time as racial violence, riots, and destruction visited many of America's urban centers. A new battle cry was heard on the urban landscape, and rather than the Satyagraha there was the call for "black power." Ghetto residents tired of token political gains, appeasements, and un-kept promises "took it to the streets" demanding "Freedom Now." "Burn, Baby, Burn" replaced the civil rights slogan of "We shall overcome." During these years of long, hot summers, white America found itself responding to demands and not requests, violence and not non-violence, and a politics of confrontation and not one of conciliation (Killian 1975).

No matter how dubious the incident that triggered a riot, no matter how much responsible black leaders condemned violence, an outburst in any city focused attention on the long-term grievances of the ghetto residents and evoked tokens of concern from white leaders. Watts was followed by frantic actions at municipal, state, and federal levels to cope belatedly with conditions that had long existed in Los Angeles. (Killian 1975: 98)

In 1964, Malcolm X would issue his famous challenge, the "ballot or the bullet" to push America into passage of the 1965 Voter's Rights Act.

Regardless of the aims of the non-violence, the calls for self-determination, self-defense, and “Liberation Now” reverberated throughout the ghettos of America. It should be understood that the Civil Rights Movement of King never really made it to the urban jungles of Chicago,<sup>28</sup> New York, or San Francisco. During the latter portion of the 1960s, it was to the Black Panthers, the Nation of Islam, and black radicals that urban black America turned for direction. The naïve among us may believe that such radical calls were a novelty of the 1960s, but this is not borne out from the historical record. Slave rebellions and insurrections, urban and rural insurgencies, riots and violence have been well documented with the first attempts by Europeans to enslave, exterminate, and control the Native American. Alternatively among the Africans we note the successful slave rebellions in Haiti and the development of maroon communities throughout the southern portion of the Americas and the Caribbean. Thus violence has always been on the table, as the racialized non-elites have found ways to protest the violence that perpetually has been part of their experiences in the racial state. In the final section we shall look at how violence continues to be used as an anti-hegemonic strategy.

### INSURGENCY AS AN ANTI-HEGEMONIC STRATEGY

An insurgency is an armed rebellion aimed at remedying long-held complaints that have proven resistant to other methods of redress. Insurgencies, either organized or unorganized, can function effectively with relatively limited resources. Tactics may include raids, clandestine warfare, hostage taking, terrorist attacks, and other acts of violence. Often insurgents align themselves with other disgruntled elements of the society. Thus in some areas insurgents may function under the protection or in conjunction with organized criminal activities associated with trade in drugs, smuggling, or illicit underground operations. These activities may also provide financing, personnel, and other logistic information and material necessary to sustain a rebel operation.

Insurgencies prove to be highly effective simply because they tend to be clandestine operations with deep roots within the indigenous population. The fact that most modern states are equipped to deal with traditional military threats and are similarly ill-equipped to deal with insurgencies goes without saying. The most powerful governments in the world today, with their massive arsenals and weapons of mass destruction, seem unable to thwart the aims of determined, disciplined, and persistent insurgents (Hoffman 2004).

The Zapatistas, in open rebellion for slightly more than 10 years as of this writing, are viewed by many to be an anti-hegemonic globalization movement. As such, the rebels not only target global capitalism, but also the racial state. Almost 10 years ago Zapatista rebels took up arms in Mexico, demanding more rights for indigenous Indians. In 1994, rebels calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army under the leadership of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos challenged the Mexican racial order by declaring war. The demands made in the name of the Chiapas are really quite simple—they are to retain the agrarian traditions and communal ownership of land in an autonomous state. The Zapatistas, pointing to state complicity in government-induced poverty and illiteracy—also want the government to make restitution,

---

<sup>28</sup> Actually, Martin Luther King Jr. made one trip to Chicago in 1966. The march was abruptly called off as the crowd turned violent.

pay reparations, and invest significantly in the infrastructure of the Chiapas. While the movement has had its ebbs and flows, the Mexican government has been unwilling to seriously consider the Zapatista demands. The insurgency continues to defy the government and press the need of the Chiapas.

Other insurgencies in Latin America have proven to be more successful. While the Cuban revolution represents a casebook on insurgency against a racial state, perhaps a more recent example is in order. For this we shall turn to Bolivia and Evo Morales. In April 2000, the Aguas de Tanari, a large multinational corporation, attempted to privatize water in Cochabamba. Under the plan it would be illegal to catch or use rainwater, therefore forcing the majority of the poverty-prone residents to purchase water from this state-sanctioned monopoly. Impromptu mass demonstrations blocked roads and battled viciously with both police and military until the government acquiesced. Evo Morales, of the Movement to Socialism, was one of the leaders of this peasant movement. He has been part of a violent protest challenging America's war against the coca producers in the region. In 2002, he won second place in the presidential elections. While garnering fierce condemnation by America, who labeled him a "narco-trade unionist," he continued to receive significant support from the indigenous populations. In January 2006, Mr. Morales became the first indigenous president of Bolivia.<sup>29</sup> Following his election, several thousand rebels laid down their weapons and began the road to true democracy.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper we explored social justice projects associated with racial hegemonies. We began by demonstrating that the system of racial hegemony is not a constant, but varies across time, space, and circumstance. We began by asserting that at the simplest level four types of racial hegemonies can be identified. Simply put, we can demonstrate that racial hegemony can occur across a range of societal types that coincide with levels of industrial/military power and political ideology. Thus democracies with advanced industrial and/or military centers are more likely to foster modern racial hegemonies associated with what some writers have called colorblind racism. Within these systems we would expect for racial hegemony to be obstructed by class structures. These class structures offer not only a veneer of legitimacy, but also stability to the racial hegemony. Alternatively, democracies with limited or less advanced industrial and/or military centers are more likely to foster racial hegemonies, which correspond to internal colonialism. These racial hegemonies are also most likely to be assumed to be absent in the official language. Non-democratic societies with advanced industrial and/or military centers are more likely to establish racial hegemonies, which are maintained by the brute force of the racialized elite under the guise of national unity, identity, etc. Lastly, non-democratic societies with limited or lower development military and/or industrial centers are more likely to establish racial hegemonies in which political, cultural, and economic resources are manipulated to the advantage of a racialized elite at the expense of a racialized non-elite. Continual national crises, economic dislocations, or political debates are either manufactured or exploited to circumvent any real debate or critique of the racial hegemony.

---

<sup>29</sup> This section on Bolivia and Morales was derived from BBC news stories obtained via the Internet on February 1, 2006, at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3203752.stm>.

Recognizing this variability, we then argued that any social action or social justice projects aiming at modifying, reforming, and/or transforming racial hegemonies must also vary. As a consequence we explored several anti-hegemonic movements that ranged from the simple and non-violent to the more complex and sometimes violent. Often it is assumed that anti-hegemonic projects operate on multiple levels, utilizing multiple methods. We do not assume that the projects here identified exhaust the possibilities; quite the contrary, they merely suggest what is possible. We begin by questioning a basic core value of hegemonies—that of normalcy, and who gets to claim it. By rejecting the claim, we effectively center the margins and thus shift the dialogue. We argued that by shifting the margins, we recognize not one but multiple overlapping cultural centers. Legitimacy and self-actualization would thus derive from placement in multiple spheres of cultural identity. And rather than prioritizing one at the expense of others, we recognize a sort of dynamic mosaic where all centers are equally viable, vibrant, and accepted. Thus this process recognizes value in the cultural center through which, and in which, the respective members abide, while encouraging active participation in multiple spheres where they exist.

Next, recognizing the historic role that racial exploitation has visited among select racialized non-elite, we called for the establishment of reparations. Social justice, in the form of reparations, was defined as a social, not an individual, solution. Thus defined, reparations would seek just compensation for damages resulting from 500 years of forced enslavement, kidnapping, rape, segregation, discrimination, hyper-exploitation, super-oppression, and a system designed to continue the cycle of victimization for blacks long into the future. It would be a social response to a social problem created by a social system. The social response, in the form of a class action, would provide the resources for educational and health institutional upgrades, housing and community development, business startup funds and economic planning. Western imperialism, with its global dependency upon Africa and the African, for over 500 years (to include the formal slave, colonial, and post-colonial periods) must provide a global reparation response. To the extent that Asians, Native Americans, and others can site similar histories of exploitation at the hands of Europeans, the reparations should be global and expansive.

Global capitalism, taking advantage of racial hegemonies, was able to greatly facilitate profit maximization and accumulation. Thus we note, on a global scale, the wholesale exploitation of multiple racialized non-elites in multiple geographical locations. The sheer magnitude of these racial enterprises has not been witnessed in any previous historic period. The underdevelopment witnessed in places such as Africa, the Middle East, Asia, etc. is directly tied to global exploitation. Consequently, we argued that we must discuss global processes that aim to provide a living wage to workers. Only by insisting upon a system of fair trade can workers across the globe enjoy such living wages. But fair trade must mean fair wages, fair exchanges, and fair contractual agreements. Such basic fairness lies at the heart of any kind of social justice project.

Immigration policy, trade agreements, and labor organization(s) are not mutually exclusive discussions but must, by their very nature, occur simultaneously. Therefore, we must recognize the reality that the U.S. and Western development and encouragement of globalized capital impacts directly upon immigration, trade, and labor organizations. In fact it is at the heart of any conversation involving these issues. To the extent that a racialized hegemonic social structure with global tentacles can be identified, we must recognize that the instrument of its control is more recently tied to the development of global capitalism.

As we look at the most extreme forms of racial hegemonies, i.e., those reflected in the blatant and naked use of state power to enforce a racial state, it seems that a *prima facie*



case seems apparent, justifying violence or revolution as a necessary tool for the oppressed. In the cases cited above, specifically the Chechnyans and the Sudanese, it is clear that more stringent measures are needed to effect any significant change in the racial order. Violence, in the form of revolutionary actions, self-defense, armed opposition, or insurrection, has effectively been utilized throughout history. Thus we concluded by demonstrating when all else fails, racialized non-elites facing state terrorism and violence can be expected to respond in kind.

Finally, this paper has argued that anti-hegemonic movements provide racialized non-elites a full range of options, which aid in their struggle against the racial state. The variety of racialized hegemonies, coupled with multiple mechanisms, requires multiple response tools be available to and for the racialized non-elite. The globalization of capital, facilitated by the presence of racial hegemonies, further necessitates the reality that these strategies be global as well.

## REFERENCES

- Abreu, Alice R. d. P. A. F. J. a. B. S. 1994. "Desigualdade De Gênero e Raça e Justiça Criminal Em São Paulo." *Estudos Feministas* 2(2): 153–178.
- Agier, Michel. 1995. "Racism, Culture, and Black Identity in Brazil." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 14(3): 245–264.
- Allen, Danielle S. 2004. *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Andrews, George R. 1992. *Blacks and Whites in Sao Paulo, Brazil: 1888–1988*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Andrews, George R. 1996. "Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1990–90: an American Counterpart." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31(3): 483–507.
- Ansell, Amy E. 1997. *New Right, New Racism: Race and Reaction in the United States and Britain*. New York: New York University Press.
- Anders, Aslund and Martha Bell, editors. 1999. *Russia after Communism*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bell, Derrick. 1992. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bento, Maria A. S. 1995. "A Mulher Negro No Mercado De Trabalho." *Estudos Feministas* 3(2): 479–488.
- . 1992. "Resgatando a Minha Bisavo: Discriminação Racial e Resistencia Nas Vozes Dos Teabalhadores Negros." Potifícia Universidade Católica, São Paulo.
- Bonacich, Edna. 1972. "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market." *American Sociological Review* 37: 547–559.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2003. "New Racisms, Color Blind Racism and the Future of Whiteness in America." Pp. 271–284 in *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*, editors Ashley W. Doane and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. London: Routledge.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1997. "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation." *American Sociological Review* 62(3): 465–480.
- Burdick, John. 1998. "The Lost Constituency of Brazil's Black Movements." *Latin American Perspectives* 25(1) (The Brazilian Left and Neoliberalism): 136–155.
- Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Chittister, Joan 2004. "Tragedy in Sudan Says Much about the United States." *National Catholic Reporter* (article accessed January 30, 2006, at: [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1141/is\\_42\\_40/ai\\_n6355398](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1141/is_42_40/ai_n6355398)).
- Coates, Rodney. 2004. "Introduction." Pp. 1–18 in *Race and Ethnicity: Across Time, Space and Discipline*, editor Rodney Coates. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Coates, Rodney. 2006 (Forthcoming). "Towards a Simple Typology of Racial Hegemony." *Without Borders* (official journal of Sociologists Without Borders, Brill Publishers).
- Dudziak, M. L. 2000. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Edsall, Thomas Byrne and Mary D. Edsall. 1991. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Ellison, Julie. 1996. "A Short History of Liberal Guilt." *Critical Inquiry* 22(2): 344–371.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove.
- Feagin, Joe. R. and Clairece Booher Feagin. 1999. *Racial and Ethnic Relations*. 6th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Feagin, Joe. 2000. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York and London: Routledge Press.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Bernice McNair Barnett (Forthcoming, 2006). "Success and Failure: How Systemic Racism Trumped The Brown v. Board of Education Decision." University of Illinois Law Review (accessed on February 1, 2006, at: <http://grove.ufl.edu/~feagin/>).
- Feagin Joe R. and Vera Hernán. 1995. *White Racism*. New York and London: Routledge Press.
- Fraser, James A. E. K. 2000. "The Interpretive Repertoires of Whites on Race-Targeted Policies: Claims Making of Reverse Discrimination." *Sociological Perspectives* 43(1): 13–28.
- Gold, Geven. 2004. "From Jim Crow to Racial Hegemony: Evolving Explanations of Racial Hierarchy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27(6): 951–968.
- Gotham, Kevin F. 2000. "Racialization and the State: The Housing ACT of 1934 and the Creation of the Federal Housing Administration." *Sociological Perspectives* 43(2): 291–317.
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hanks, Reuel R. 1998. "Directions in the Ethnic Politics of Kazakhstan: Concessions, Compromise, or Catastrophe?" *Journal of Third World Studies* (URL accessed on January 31, 2005, at: [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_199804/ai\\_n8785068](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_199804/ai_n8785068)).
- Hoffman, Bruce 2004. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation (URL accessed on February 2, 2006, at: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2005/RAND\\_OP127.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf)).
- Hood, Thomas C. 1995. "The Practical Consequences of Sociology's Pursuit of 'Justice for All'." *Social Forces* 74(1): 1–14.
- Jacobs, Lawrence et al. 2004. "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality." The Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy American Political Science Association. *American Political Science Association*. (URL accessed on February 8, 2006, at: <http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/taskforcereport.pdf>).
- Jones, J. M. I. 1981. "The Concept of Racism and Its Changing Reality." *Impacts of Racism on White Americans*, editors B. P. Bowser and R. G. Hunt. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Klinkner, Philip A. and Rogers M. Smith. 1999. *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lima, Marcia. 1995. "Trajetória Edicacopma; e Rea; Ozação Socio-Econômica Das Mulheres Negras." *Estudos Feministas* 3(2): 489–505.
- Lovell, Peggy A. 2000. "Gender, Race, and the Struggle for Social Justice in Brazil." *Latin American Perspectives* 27(6) (Brazil in the Aftershock of Neoliberalism): 85–102.
- Malcolm X, speaking in January 1965 giving a speech entitled "Prospects for Freedom." Courtesy of the *Pacifica Radio Archives* ([Http://www.pacificaradioarchives.org](http://www.pacificaradioarchives.org)).
- Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (Translated by T.B. Bottomore). London: McGraw-Hill.
- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton 1993 (2003). *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Myrdal, Gunnar. 1996 (1944). *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.
- Ortiz, Vilma. 1996. "The Mexican-Origin Population: Permanent Working Class or Emerging Middle Class?" *Ethnic Los Angeles*, editors Roger Waldinger and Mdhd Bzorgmeh. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Portes, Alejandro A. B. R. 1985. *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rawls, John. 1985. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 14(3): 223–251.
- Saliba, Therese. 1999. "Resisting Invisibility: Arab Americans in Academia and Activism." Pp. 304–319 in *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, editor Michael W. Suleiman. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Sethi, Rita C. 1994. "Smells Like Racism: A Plan for Mobilizing Against Anti-Asian Bias." Pp. 235–250 in *The State of Asian America*, editor Karin Aguilar-San Juan. Boston: South End.
- Smith, Rogers M. 1997. *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Song, Miri. 2004. "Who's at the Bottom? Examining Claims about Racial Hierarchy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27(6): 859–877.
- Stanfield, John H. I. 1992. "Ethnic Pluralism and Civic Responsibility in Post-Cold War America." *Journal of Negro Education* 61(3, Africentrism and Multiculturalism: Conflict or Consonance): 287–300.
- Steinberg, Stephen. 1995. *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Steinberg, Stephen 2001. "'Race Relations': The Problem with the Wrong Name." *New Politics* 8(2) (new series), whole no. 30 (winter) (accessed on February 12, 2006, at: <http://www.wpunj.edu/~newpol/issue30/steinb30.htm>).
- Souleimanov, Emil 2006. "Caucasian and Chechen phobias within Russian Society." *Prague Watchdog*, 23 Jan. 2006 (accessed on February 12, 2006, at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KHII-6LC2HT?OpenDocument>).
- Tilly, Charles. 2005. *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Warburg, Gabriel. 1991. "The Turco-Egyptian Sudan: A Recent Historiographical Controversy." *Die Welt des Islams*, New Ser., Bd. 31, Nr. 2: 193–215.
- Weitz, Eric D. 2002. "Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges." *Slavic Review* 61(1): 1–29.
- Winant, Howard. 1986. "Class Concepts, Class Struggle and Racism." *Theories of Race Relations*, editors J. Rex and D. Mason. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## CHAPTER 18

# Acting for a Good Society: Racism and Black Liberation in the *Longue Durée*

ROD BUSH

While social scientists have played an exemplary role in changing the tenor of the scholarly and public discourse on race, I would like to focus in this chapter on the issues of structure and agency in the formation of racial and ethnic categories and identity. While oppressed groups are categorized in an invidious manner by the more privileged, for the more privileged such invidious distinctions are central in reinforcing their dominance in society. So in this account I will focus both on how oppressed groups form their own sense of racial or ethnic identity and reflect upon and act upon the corresponding issues of racial oppression or ethnic stratification, and on how privileged groups align around the issues of race, racialization, racism, and liberation. I will focus on the issue of white versus Blacks in this essay not because I believe in the essentialism of such a binary, but because of the central role that this opposition has played in the elaboration of the concept of race, first within British North America and later throughout the capitalist world-economy under European hegemony.

In the United States public awareness of race as a societal issue was heightened by the civil rights movement. But if you ask the question, “When was the civil rights movement?” most people, including many scholars, would say it started with the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the murder of Emmett Till, or Brown versus Board of Education, all in the mid-1950s. Recent scholarship on the civil rights movement, however, has increasingly articulated the concept of a “Long Civil Rights Movement,” traced back to the 1940s. I would like to view the elaboration of a racial order and of agency among people of African descent in the United States within what Immanuel Wallerstein refers to as historical capitalism or what Fernand Braudel refers to as the *Longue Durée*.

The period of easy expansion of the world-economy after World War II enhanced the bargaining power of the working classes throughout the core zones of the world-economy, ultimately giving rise to a new social compact within the pan-European world, the social democratic welfare state.<sup>1</sup> It is in this context that in the United States a New Deal political

---

<sup>1</sup> Radicals have often referred to this phenomenon as the social democratic compromise to distinguish it from the conquest of power by the working class envisioned by Marx and Engels and those who operate in that tradition.

coalition gained control of the federal government and initiated social policies based on the idea of collective responsibility for the common good. The coincidence of this period of economic expansion with the rise of the United States to a hegemonic position in the world-economy (coined the “American Century” by *Time Magazine* magnate, Henry Luce) and the political competition between the United States and the Soviet Union would create a political opening for people of color to advance up the economic ladder, which was actively engaged by the civil rights movement and its allied movements. The shift (circa 1967–1973) from the expansion phase to the stagnation phase of this long economic cycle undermined the largesse of the global liberalism of that time. But the attempt of the nation to finally incorporate its Black residents into the nation’s mainstream is a story that relates to a much larger arc of time with which we must be concerned, a temporality that we might understand not simply in terms of slavery but of what Wallerstein refers to as the “pan-European project of world domination (the expansion of Europe)” (Wallerstein 2000).

The resurrection of the language of the second reconstruction by a number of authors (Bush 2004, Marable 1985, Kousser 1999) helps focus our conceptual tools on the possibilities contained in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s challenge to the nation in 1963 that we live out the true meaning of our creed, the so-called fulfillment of the American Dream. Later Dr. King began to see the limits of the American Dream, moving him closer to Malcolm X’s position. Malcolm X argued that he did not see an American Dream but an American nightmare, and given the increasing power of the Bandung World during this time, he thought that we had arrived at the end of white world supremacy. But the fact that the advent of the Bandung World did not spell the end of white world supremacy, as seemed to be the case at that time, does not diminish the significance of the crisis of white world supremacy.<sup>2</sup> Malcolm X did not invent the concept of the rise of the dark world. It has long been a part of the conceptual apparatus of the intellectuals and activists of the dark world.

The Working Group on Coloniality at the State University of New York at Binghamton (aka Binghamton University) have argued that the modern-capitalist world that has unfolded for the last 500 to 700 years has had as a fundamental element processes of racial formation and domination that have been central to its expansion and organization. These processes have been the focus of social movements who have organized against the multiple forms of this global structure of racial formation/domination. Anibal Quijano has argued that what is now called globalization is the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of the Americas and “colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism,” a process fundamentally anchored in the establishment of a system of social distinction among the world’s population based on the “idea of race.” (Quijano 2000:533). In Quijano’s view the use of racial categories originated in Anglo-America where “so-called Blacks were not only the most important exploited groups” due to their central role in the economy of the time, “they were, above all, the most important colonized race, since Indians were not a part of that colonial society” (Quijano 2000:534). With the expansion of European colonialism to the rest of the world, this pattern

---

<sup>2</sup> Anyone who listened to Malcolm X speaking about the end of white world supremacy during the 1960s would have found his arguments absolutely compelling. The relevant speeches are collected in a volume entitled *The End of White World Supremacy: Four Speeches*, New York: Merlin Press, 1971. See also my forthcoming *The End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007. But people of color are not the only ones who have been preoccupied by the rise of the dark world as can clearly be seen by reading of the classics of white supremacist literature by Lothrop Stoddard (1921), entitled *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*; and Madison Grant (1920), *The Passing of the Great Race*, both of which are reviewed in the first chapter of my book.

expanded to the rest of the world along with the elaboration of a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge, and the use of race to naturalize the colonial relation between Europeans and non-Europeans. The use of race as the means of justifying the distribution of the world population into ranks, places, and roles in the world's structure of power outlasted the system of formal colonialism.

I would like to survey articulations of the world-systems perspective and the coloniality of power perspective as frameworks for understanding racism as an ideology and structure of oppression, the project of agents (social groups) seeking to protect what they perceive to be their own interests. I would like to take seriously Kelvin Santiago-Valles' admonition that we need to draw on and think through subaltern theorizing in order to pursue theoretically informed historical research as part of contributing to emancipatory struggles. He thus calls for reconstructing both sides of long-term structures constitutive of racial capitalism. This calls for identifying the connections and contradictions between the different moments of capital accumulation and the thousands of assorted facts and everyday details of discursive practices. He follows Sylvia Wynter's lead to an examination of sexually racialized forms that regulate socio-systemic hierarchies such as class and gender in the modern capitalist world order. The principle expressions of these forms for Santiago-Valles are

racial infantilisation (unruliness, irrationality, the requiring of guidance, supervision, and protection) and /or feminised racialization (the beast within, absence of reason, primordial innocence and heathen influences). While these operations do not reign uncontested, they are vital to the social construction of all subordinate groups, especially the working classes of the "lesser races." (Santiago-Valles 2005:60).

If the expansion of a European-based world-economy relied in part on the social glue of pan-European racism and white supremacy as moral justification for and defense of Euro-North American world hegemony, the path to freedom for oppressed populations could only go forward by constructing alternative visions and strategies. The "rise of the dark world" has been a central theme of African American social thought. Since Blacks constituted a numerical minority relegated to second-class citizenship within U.S. society, there was little hope of a strictly "national" solution, giving rise to the peculiar philosophy of Black internationalism. While many know that at the turn of the 20th century W.E.B. Du Bois said that the problem of the 20th century would be the problem of the color line, far fewer know that he made this statement at the first Pan-African Congress, and fewer still put this together with subsequent events: the emergence of the New Negro Movement, the rise of the Garvey movement, and African American involvement in the world socialist movement.

During the evolution of social movements and national movements in the era of proletarian insurgency of which the Bolshevik revolution was a part, Black internationalists impressed upon the Third International the need to elevate the "Negro Problem" in the United States to a central position in the strategy of the International revolutionary movement and in the strategy of U.S. revolutionaries. Comintern leaders asked the representatives of the Communist Party of the United States, if Blacks were the most oppressed people in the United States, why did they not constitute a majority of the American party? While under pressure from the international body, the CPUSA attempted to rectify the Left's historical neglect of the Negro problem, it was the Black Left who continued to push for the full unfolding of the needed strategy. Some have conceptualized the work of this non-sectarian gathering of the 1930s and 1940s as a Black Popular Front. Among this grouping are familiar names such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, Paul Robeson, C.L.R. James, George Padmore, Ralph Ellison, Angelo Herndon, Claudia Jones, and E. Franklin Frazier. During the 1940s the Black

Popular Front articulated a position holding that the strategic goal of U.S. Blacks should be the struggle for human rights, a struggle against domestic racism, imperialism, and capitalism. The defeat of the broad allied forces within the popular front (finally in the Henry Wallace presidential campaign of 1948) made way for the imperialist project dubbed “The American Century” by Henry Luce of *Time Magazine*. The centrist liberals within the NAACP formed an alliance with the Truman Administration to help with the defeat of the agenda of the Black Popular Front, which was the most radical and vibrant part of the broader popular front, and closely connected to the Black public sphere.<sup>3</sup> The defeat of the Black Popular Front allowed for a disconnect with the past such that the civil rights movement that emerged in the next decade could be framed simply as a struggle for assimilation and acceptance into American society, a much narrower and less critical framework than that assumed by the Black Popular Front. But the radical impulse inherent in this movement could not be long suppressed.

The final outcome of the two world wars is that the United States emerged from World War II as the most powerful state in the world-system, the hegemonic power, which, by definition, had no serious rival. The major opposition to the exercise of U.S. power came from the Soviet Union, a strong military power and ideological rival that stood at the head of a system of allied states known as the Socialist Camp. The oppositional status of the Soviet Union stemmed from its position at the forefront of the world’s working classes and oppressed peoples. While this spectre of communism was always more a potential than a reality, the internationalist working-class ideology binding the USSR to a segment of the core zone working classes, Left wing movements, and anticolonial militants was not a situation about which the core zone ruling classes could be sanguine. The requirements of currying favor with the nations and peoples of this dark periphery and maintaining its status as the world’s leading advocate of democracy meant that the United States had to demonstrate to the world that it was an open society for all those within its borders, requiring a serious engagement with the issue of domestic racism.

Hegemonic status was defined in part by the concentration of world economic remuneration within U.S. borders. Thus the postwar expansion of the capitalist world-economy which created opportunities for the working classes of the core states to enter into a social democratic compromise (sought precisely against any threat of class war) with their ruling classes applied most of all to the white working class of the United States, which derived enormous benefits from the New Deal. The contingencies of cold war competition in the midst of the most powerful expansion of the world-economy in its history created conditions within which a *limited engagement* with the civil rights movement became a part of U.S. hegemony in the same way as the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress.

But the mobilization of millions of Blacks and their allies in support of civil rights, and of hundreds of thousands organized in or sympathetic to Black Nationalist organizations such as the Nation of Islam during the Malcolm X period, forced the pace of change. When urban rebellions seemed to be the rule rather than the exception in post-1965 Black America, the economic and political elite called for the maximum feasible inclusion of Blacks in U.S. society. But the genie was now out of the bottle, or so it seemed. In response to the insurgencies within Black communities, the social movements operating within these communities became more radical in their outlook. The forces of liberation within the Black community reconnected with forces of liberation outside the Black community and indeed outside the United States.

---

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the Black Popular Front, see Von Eschen (1997), Singh (2004), and Biondi (2003).

Black Power became a hegemonic force within the Black Freedom Struggle and influenced movements of other oppressed groups throughout U.S. society and beyond. Ordinary Black folk accelerated the pace of their rebellion against the racial status quo at the same time that the United States was confronted with the rebellion of oppressed people in Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, and other locations and the beginnings of an economic squeeze that promised to end the era of easy accumulation that followed the second world war. Since the mature global liberalism of the post-war world could not continue in these circumstances to maintain a stable social order, and a modicum of control over subordinate strata, the trajectory toward social democratization was sharply curtailed, and a counterinsurgency regime came to power to rein in what Samuel Huntington referred to as “an excess of democracy” (Crozier et al. 1975:113).

The shift away from the global liberalism of the era of U.S. hegemony began with the mobilization of a counterestablishment by conservatives who had been badly beaten in the 1964 presidential election when Lyndon Baines Johnson won in a landslide against Barry Goldwater. But the fact that Republicans won the five deep South states for the first time by couching their opposition to civil rights in non-racial language taught them that they could use a “Southern Strategy” to mobilize the resentment of Southern segregationists and many whites outside the South in a campaign that used coded language (such as “law and order” and “states rights”) to signal an opposition to the incursion of lower-status Blacks and other “minorities” into the social ranks which were supposed to distinguish them from these groups (Bush 2004).

While the Nixon administration continued to adhere to some of the principles of the New Deal, by the 1980s the Thatcher/Reagan tandem had dramatically changed the course of the core states. Reaganomics led to a policy of disinvestment and withdrawal of the state in the inner-city areas where Blacks and Latinos resided. This devastated these areas as the conservative forces used the ensuing reactions of residents of the inner city to this devastation (dramatic increases in participation in the informal economy and reliance on public benefits) as a justification for their policies of disinvestment and the withdrawal of the state in favor of supply-side remedies (code for the transfer of resources to wealthy property holders). At the same time they used this as a strategy to mobilize the more privileged sectors of the population (especially whites) who resented the incursion into their privileged status by these dishonored groups. The line of argument was why should those (read whites), who had played by the rules, be penalized to benefit the lazy and criminally inclined (read Blacks and Latinos), who did not want to play by the rules, but to obtain handouts in the form of affirmative action, public relief, etc.?

The demonization of young Blacks in the public discourse led almost inexorably to the elaboration of a counterhegemonic discourse among Blacks that emphasized the assertion of identity politics against the insulting rhetoric against them in the public discourse. The Left (including much of the Black Left) railed against “identity politics” as a mystification of oppression, an essentialist obscuring of the deeper structural roots of racial oppression. The centrist elements in the Black Power movement who had not been widely targeted in the counterinsurgency against the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and 1970s had largely relied on a strategy that emphasized identity and pride more than the need for overall structural change in the society. They were in the best position to lead the movement that emerged in the 1980s. Minister Louis Farrakhan and Reverend Jesse Jackson were the best-known leaders of that genre who came to the fore in the 1980s.

Farrakhan had benefited from the boost that he got from being an alternative to Malcolm X’s revolutionary nationalism, and later to Jesse Jackson’s call for a Rainbow Coalition (a much tamer version of the Rainbow Coalition initiated by Black Panther Party leader



Fred Hampton, but nonetheless viewed as dangerous by centrist political officials). Farrakhan, like Jackson, was skilled in oratory, but his sharp rhetoric had greater resonance with Black youth, who were held in utter contempt by much of the white public. Jackson admonished them to “keep hope alive”; Farrakhan argued that the white man’s system offered no hope, that they had to “do for self.”

Even Huey Newton had indicated that he had some difficulty contending with cultural nationalists and religious nationalists despite his undisputed claim on the honor of the Black Street. While it seems obvious to me that Malcolm X got it right, Left Black Nationalism has not done as well as would have been predicted by our sociological concepts, wherein the concepts of Weber and Marx could explain the power of a working-class nationalism based in the most excluded parts of the working class, as the Comintern projected in the 1920s.

Has Marxism been a mixed blessing for African American social movements? From the time of W.E.B. Du Bois, Hubert Harrison, Cyril Briggs, Claude McKay and others, Marxism has enlarged the analytic capability of Black intellectuals. But despite the very careful attention that Marxism gives to building mass movements, and to locating the power of transcendence in the working classes of oppressed groups, the Black Left has consistently been sidelined in the competition with centrist Black leaders who either curtailed their strategies to the parameters of what is approved by the white power structure, or effectively used rhetorical militance to engage the Black masses with no ambition beyond the framework of the capitalist organization of society.

While Du Bois’ critique of the problem of the color line in the *Souls of Black Folk* reflected the misguided optimism of the movement of that time, the New Negro Movement that emerged during the period of the first great migration and the Great War posed an uncompromising challenge to white supremacy. Hubert Harrison, often called the father of Harlem radicalism, clearly articulates the orientation of this group:

The Nineteenth Christian Century saw the international expansion of capitalism—the economic system of the white peoples of Western Europe and America—and its establishment by force and fraud over the lands of the colored races, black, brown, and yellow. The opening years of the Twentieth Century present us with the sorry spectacle of those same white nations cutting each other’s throats to determine which of them shall enjoy the property which has been acquired. For this is the real sum and substance of the original “war aims” of the belligerents; although in conformity with Christian cunning, this is one which is never frankly avowed. Instead we are fed with the information that they are fighting for “Kultur” and “on behalf of small nationalities.” (Harrison 1918, subsequently published in *When Africa Awakes*, 1920:116)

Clifton Hawkins (2000) dates Harrison’s conversion to the Race First position to his experiences within the Socialist Party and the white Left milieu of that time. These experiences, Hawkins argues, disillusioned Harrison with cross-race organizing not only because of the pervasive racism of whites, but also because of the defensive race consciousness of Blacks. Hawkins quotes Harrison as follows:

“Behind the color line,” Harrison sadly acknowledged, “one has to think perpetually of the color line, and most of those who grow up behind it can think of nothing else . . .” *Race, not class, was the organizing principle of American life* [emphasis added]. (Hawkins 2000:51)

By 1916, Hawkins argues, Harrison embraced the *American* [my emphasis] doctrine of Race First (Hawkins 2000:51). This is clearly a defensive position, but it has been a consistent position among a substantial section of the Black radical intelligentsia and among much of the Black working class, in opposition to the class first position articulated by a smaller segment of the New Negro Movement lodged mainly in the Messenger Group and associated with the

U.S. Socialist Party. The Race First radicals were the backbone of the Garvey Movement and operated within a larger intersection between the New Negro Movement and other segments of U.S. and world society, very notably with advocates of world revolution in the Third or Communist International.

Recent literature about the New Negro Movement (James 1998, Makalani 2004) and their relationship with the World Left provides us with an important entrée in rethinking the race-class question as an issue not only of theory but of praxis. The Race First trend within the New Negro Movement identified something very fundamental about the social reality (not nature) of the United States and about the capitalist world-economy that I have previously identified with the works of Anibal Quijano, Immanuel Wallerstein, and those associated with the Working Group on Coloniality at Binghamton University.

Quijano and Wallerstein (1992) argue that the creation of the geosocial entity called the Americas was the constitutive act of the modern world-system in the 16th century. Because of the near destruction of the indigenous population at the birth of the modern world-system, Americanness has always been associated with Modernity. The imperialist nature of this venture has often been set aside so that we view it not as conquest but as the founding of a “new world.” The elements of newness that distinguished the Americas from the “old world” included coloniality, ethnicity, racism, and the concept of newness itself. “Coloniality was essentially the creation of a set of states linked together within an interstate system in hierarchical layers” (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992:550). While the colonial states were at the bottom of the hierarchy, coloniality continued after the system of formal colonialism had come to an end in the form of a socio-cultural hierarchical ranking between the European and Non-European. Quijano and Wallerstein contend that the “hierarchy of coloniality manifested itself in all domains—political, social, and not least of all cultural (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992:550). The hierarchy reproduced itself over time though there was always some mobility for the few. Coloniality was also essential to the integration of the interstate system, creating both a rank order and sets of rules for interaction among the states.

The phenomenon of stateness in the Americas made it possible for ethnicity to emerge as a building block of the modern world-system, a communal identity that located groups within a given state. Quijano and Wallerstein argue that ethnicity served to delineate the social boundaries corresponding to the division of labor, and thus justified the different forms of labor control that came to exist within the Americas: slavery for Black Africans, various forms of cash crop labor for Native Americans, indentured labor for European workers. While forms of labor control evolved with changes in the capitalist division of labor, hierarchy remains as a constant of the system. Furthermore the movements for independence assumed more often than not the form of efforts of white settler populations frightened by the spectres of Black ex-slave republics as in Haiti or in rural Amerindian claims to upsetting the ethnic hierarchy such as the Tupac Amaru rebellion (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992:551).

With the ending of formal colonialism and slavery, ethnicity came to be reinforced by a conscious and systematic racism, explicitly theorized during the 19th century. The purpose of this new racism was to shore up culturally an economic hierarchy some of whose political guarantees were weakening in the post-1789 era of “popular sovereignty.” During this period racism was not explicitly elaborated in Latin America, it tended to be concealed within the pre-existing ethnic hierarchy. In Latin America there was no formal segregation or discrimination, according to Quijano and Wallerstein.

It was the 19th-century United States that was the first state in the world-system to enact a system of formal segregation, as well as the first to place indigenous people on reservations. Quijano and Wallerstein argue that it was precisely its strong position within the world-economy

that made this practice necessary. In the United States the upper strata as a percentage of total population was growing much faster than in any other country, thus providing more opportunities for upward mobility. In such a situation "informal constraints of ethnicity" seemed not to be up to the task of maintaining "workplace and social hierarchies" (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992:551). Formal racism is then an important further contribution of Americanness to the world-system.

But as we will see later this system of formal racism was not compatible with U.S. social and geopolitical realities after its ascension to the hegemonic position within the world-system after the second world war. These circumstances created the opening for the African American-led civil rights movement to overcome the limits of the Jim Crow system of de jure segregation. Wallerstein had contended heretofore that the more enduring form in which privilege is maintained is the creation of de facto but informal privileged access to non-state institutions (education, occupation, housing, health care), optimally through the operation of a totally individual attribution of advantage. By refusing to discriminate in particular situations, the institution abstracts the totality of social factors that account for differential performance, and hence widens rather than narrows existing inequalities (Wallerstein 1979). The expansion of the United States into economic spaces throughout the world-system and the strength of its economic position also made it necessary that the United States permit widespread legal and illegal migration from non-European countries. The combination of the internally colonized populations of African descent, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Native American, and various Asian populations with the new immigrants created the phenomenon that came to be called "the third world within."

But this situation also called for a more subtle practice of racism. Quijano and Wallerstein thus argue that racism subsequently took refuge in what seems to be its opposite, universalism, and the derived concept of the meritocracy. This may seem quite incredulous to our commonsense notions, but their case is not at all far-fetched. They argue that any examination system within an ethnic hierarchy will inevitably disproportionately favor the upper ethnic strata. In such circumstances, racist attitudes are justified without the need to verbalize them. Those ethnic strata that perform poorly are said to do so because they are inferior. This is said to be a self-evident fact. It is simply statistical, and therefore verified by "scientific" proof.

The reification and deification of "newness" is an additional element of Americanness that justifies inequality. Since the new world was not tied down to tradition, the privileged strata of the "old world" and the traditions which they incarnated carried no weight. This sense not only added to the idea of the meritocracy, but it also led to the denial of the worth of historical depth. "Modernity became the justification of economic success, but also its proof." The circularity of this argument has continued to escape the attention of many. "The appearance of offering a way out of the inequalities of the present, the concept of 'newness' encrusted them and inserted their inevitability into the collective superego of the world-system" (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992:552).

The contradictions of Americanness have generated substantial politico-intellectual turmoil over the history of its existence. Therefore Quijano and Wallerstein argue that it is no accident that core-periphery analysis (dependency theory and world-systems analysis) was propelled onto the world intellectual scene by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). By the same token it is no accident that anti-racist political mobilization received its earliest and greatest impulse in North America.

This indicates that those of us who have understood the temporality of the cultural wars and the demonization of inner-city Blacks in the public discourse in conjunctural (middle run)

terms have simply not paid sufficient attention to the manner in which the demonization of Black skins was both constitutive of the current world order and foundational to the stratification processes of both the United States and the world-system. This explains the persistence of nationalist strains among African Americans even as U.S. society becomes more diverse. To dismiss the nationalist aspirations of the most oppressed elements inside our borders—as do some elements within the Left and Progressive intelligentsia and activists, even among the Black Left—is unacceptable, not only because dogma is counterproductive but because it undermines the agency of those groups. We need to collectively engage in the construction of a broad and inclusive vision and praxis adequate for the period of global transition from capitalism into which we have entered, recognizing that we are now fighting for the future. Although we do need a sophisticated understanding of social time and thus a mix of short-range, medium-range, and long-range strategies, we cannot and should not attempt any kind of short cut that will (temporarily?) put aside the grievances of the most aggrieved to placate some portion of the more privileged strata, because again we undermine the agency of the most oppressed.<sup>4</sup> The agency of those at the bottom of the social order is central to the creation of a system that is democratic, egalitarian, and just.

## RACISM AND HISTORICAL CAPITALISM

I think that one source of such a vision can be found in the work of scholars working within the world-systems perspective (Wallerstein, Hopkins, Amin, Arrighi, and Frank) who themselves have drawn from a number of intellectuals and revolutionaries from the periphery and the internal colonies including W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro.

I will focus here on a limited sampling of Immanuel Wallerstein's writing. In his 1983 book *Historical Capitalism*, Wallerstein argues that historical capitalism developed an ideological framework of oppressive humiliation that had never previously existed: sexism and racism. For Wallerstein racism created the justification for low reward for productive labor, despite its importance in defining the right to reward. It accomplished this task by defining work with the lowest remuneration as remuneration of the lowest-quality work (Wallerstein 1995:103). Sexism and racism frame the structural inequality of the capitalist world-economy and thus cannot be dismantled without dismantling the entire historical system.

The logic of racism within historical capitalism is fundamental in Wallerstein's analysis of the system. He argues that it is in the interests of those who wished to facilitate the accumulation of capital that workforces be created in the right places for those who are available for work for the lowest wage possible. One way that such households were created was via the ethnicization of community life under capitalism. Wallerstein defines an ethnic group as sizeable groups of people to who were reserved certain occupational/economic roles in relationship to other groups living in geographic proximity (Wallerstein 1995:76). Such groups are often marked outwardly in Wallerstein's conception by their culture, religion, language, or values.

---

<sup>4</sup> Here I am referring to the declining significance of race thesis and also of a too-rigid formulation that counterposes race specific against universal policies.

Wallerstein argues further that ethnicization facilitates the reproduction of the labor force, provides for the socialization of the young into the economic roles appropriate for their group, and has encrusted the ranking of occupational roles in an easy code for income distribution, clothed he argues in the legitimacy of "tradition."

Racism is precisely the ideological justification for the hierarchization of the workforce. For this reason Wallerstein maintains that racism is one of the main cultural pillars of capitalist civilization. But racism is also central to the construction and reproduction of appropriate workforces. These workforces must be managed by cadres, who however have to be created, socialized, and reproduced. The primary ideology used to create such cadres is universalism.

For Wallerstein universalism is an epistemology, a set of beliefs about what is knowable and how it can be known. It posits that there exists a set of general statements about the world that are universally and permanently true, and that the objective of science is a search for these statements. Universalism is said to be a faith as well as an epistemology. It requires not merely respect but reverence for the elusive but allegedly real phenomenon of truth. Truth in historical capitalism is a cultural idea without peer. We are taught that the search for truth is a disinterested virtue. But if we look at the empirical evidence of social practices under historical capitalism, we are just as likely to conclude as does Wallerstein that the search for truth is a self-interested rationalization (Wallerstein 1995:82).

Since the workforces of historical capitalism are drawn from and are located in every corner of the world-economy, cadres must be created, socialized, and reproduced across the ghettos of the capitalist world-economy. They had to be taught the requisite cultural norms and engaged in such a way as to eliminate competing cultural norms. These cadres were also westernized, or in the case of internally colonized groups bourgeoisified, so that they were separated from their masses and less likely to revolt, or organize their masses to revolt. Wallerstein argues that this was a monumental miscalculation, but the logic of this position seemed unassailable.

The concept of a neutral "universal" culture to which the cadres of the world division of labour would be "assimilated" (the passive voice being important here) hence came to serve as one of the pillars of the world-system as it historically evolved. The exaltation of progress, and later of "modernization," summarized this set of ideas, which served less as true norms of social action than as status-symbols of obeisance and of participation in the world's upper strata. The break from the supposedly culturally-narrow religious base of knowledge in favour of supposedly trans-cultural scientific bases of knowledge served as the self-justification of a particularly pernicious form of cultural imperialism. It dominated in the name of intellectual liberation; it imposed in the name of skepticism. (Wallerstein 1995:83)

Scientific culture was a form of socialization of the cadres of the world division of labor. It was a means of class cohesion. It created a framework within which it was possible for individual mobility to thrive without threatening the very real hierarchal workforce allocation. Indeed Wallerstein argues that meritocracy reinforced hierarchy. The emphasis on the rationality of scientific activity shaded from public view, and most of all from public understanding of, the irrationality of the endless accumulation of capital. Those cadre from the peripheral zones and internal colonized populations tended to be ambivalent toward this ideology of universalism, alternatively viewing it as a tool of true liberation and empowerment of their populations, as means of personal mobility for themselves within the world-system, and as a trap set by the elites of the world-system to trap them as a subordinate group within the world-system with no means of even seeing the truth since they have been suckered into using the "master's tools." We know that Marx used a similar tactic (with the

same dangers) in distinguishing his views from other 19th-century socialists by using the designation “scientific socialism.”<sup>5</sup> It is in this way that Wallerstein argues that “anti-systemic movements have often served as intermediaries of the powerful to the weak, vitiating rather than crystallizing their deep-rooted sources of resistance” (Wallerstein 1995:88).

But beginning in the 20th century and with increasing power since the 1960s, the theme of civilizational assertion and cultural resistance has been increasingly important in the theorizing of the anti-systemic movements and its intellectuals. Wallerstein argues that the basis of this shift in ideology among the anti-systemic movements is the increase in recruitment of strata more economically and politically marginal to the functioning of the system.

Compared with the profile of the membership of the world’s anti-systemic movements from 1850 to 1950, their profile from 1950 onwards contained more from peripheral zones, more women, more from “minority” groups (however defined), and more of the work-force towards the unskilled, lowest-paid end of the scale. (Wallerstein 1995:90)

There is thus a cultural crisis wherein the anti-systemic movements are questioning the premises of universalist ideology, such that the movements are taking seriously the search for civilizational alternatives. Furthermore the whole intellectual apparatus that came into being during the 14th century is being slowly placed in question (Wallerstein 1995:92).

In assessing the balance sheet of capitalist civilization, Wallerstein explains how the ethnicization of the workforce has been required for the optimal functioning of historical capitalism. Widespread and continuous migration of people (both forced and voluntary) has been necessary in order to fill the labor force requirements of particular geographical regions. Throughout the history of the capitalist world-economy there has always been a high correlation between ethnicity (however defined) and occupational or class location. While there is some benefit to societal functioning via the process by which youth are socialized to accept and expect their role in the social structure, such ethnicization is also the structural basis of continuous social conflict between upper and lower ethnic strata (Wallerstein 1995:121–122).

It is precisely this ethnicization in Wallerstein’s view that requires an ideology of racism such that large segments of the world’s population are defined as members of an underclass, as essentially inferior beings whose behavior has earned for them the marginal social position to which they have been relegated. The ferocity of the antagonism that exists between these underclasses and the normal class structure of a given state or region has often led to civil wars, which have become more, not less, frequent, more oppressive, and more deadly (Wallerstein 1995:122).

Despite the hierarchical ethnicization of the work force across the entirety of the world-system, a central claim by the defenders of historical capitalism is that it alone has changed the allocation of reward from one based on inherited privilege to one based on merit. While historical capitalism is unique in the sense that meritocracy has been widely proclaimed as an official virtue rather than merely a de facto reality, it is also true that it has given rise to an increase in the proportion of people for whom socioeconomic ascent is possible. Yet we cannot afford to miss the meaning of the very significant caveat that in the midst of our celebration of the achievement of our official ideology of the meritocracy, this number is still a minority. We would do well to ponder the implication of this fact. For Wallerstein the meaning is quite

---

<sup>5</sup> Here Marx uses the prestige of science on behalf of the workers’ movement and to enhance the ability of the workers’ movements and allied intellectuals to understand the world in order to change it. But this claim also lodged the false claims of science raised throughout Wallerstein’s work in the heart of the epistemology of the workers’ movement.

unambiguous: the meritocracy is a false universalism that is by definition only meaningful in the structures of our social world precisely because it is not universal. For Wallerstein the “. . . meritocracy is intrinsically elitist” (Wallerstein 1995:132).

Wallerstein’s powerful critique of Western “universalism” is complemented by an equally devastating critique of the myth of Western democracy. If democracy is defined as the maximization of participation in decision making at all levels on the basis of equality, then we must ask what the constraints are on such democratization. Wallerstein argues that there are two. One is the demand for privileged access, and the other I would see as the closely linked demand (or rationalization of privilege) for competent performance. Both demands run counter to democracy by fostering hierarchy. The existence of two constraints rather than one explains the enormous gulf in the interpretation of reality. If one gains access via a process that accrues to one because of a position of advantage (for example, greater access to educational resources, experience in certain activities, etc.), which then are reflected in greater performance in some screening measure, this is a clear violation of democracy from the point of view of the losers in this process though the winners tend to feel that their reward stems not from their position of advantage but is rather what they justly deserve and have earned by virtue of their performance on these measures of merit.

Given the entrenched inequalities that we have observed, how do we explain the positive evaluation of capitalist civilization by so many?

The ideology of the meritocracy has indeed resulted in considerable individual mobility, even of specific ethnoracial groups, or at least portions of some ethnoracial groups. This did not transform the statistics of the world-economy since individual mobility was countered by incorporating new populations into the world-economy or by differential demographic rates of growth. Second, there has tended to be a concentration on that 1–15 percent of the population who consumed more surplus than they themselves produced. Within this sector there has been a dramatic flattening of the curve between the top 1 percent and the other 14 percent. Third, over the last 20 years, under pressure from the antisystemic movements, there has been a slowing down of absolute polarization (Wallerstein 1995:104–105).

Approximately 15 years later Wallerstein broaches the subject of racism as practiced more explicitly within Europe. Here Wallerstein seeks to understand the crisis in Austria with the showing of the racist right wing in Austria, and the censure of Austria by the E.U. To do so Wallerstein proposes to examine racism in the world-system in four time frames: since 1989, since 1945, since 1492, and after 2000.

Wallerstein is concerned that the almost exclusive focus of world social science since 1989 has been on the so-called phenomenon of globalization. He argues that much of world social science talk about globalization is “dust in our eyes.” For Wallerstein the term “globalization” is fundamentally misleading, for it is nothing more than a passing rhetorical device in the continuing struggle over the degree to which trans-border flows should be unimpeded. So also, Wallerstein argues, is the litany about ethnic violence. Not that such violence is not a terrible reality, but the implication that such violence is the domain of some less fortunate, less wise, less civilized group outside the mainstream of western society is most certainly misleading and disingenuous. Such violence should more appropriately be viewed rather as the absolutely normal result of the deep and growing inequalities within the capitalist world-system.

The year 1945 marked the end of the Nazi horror. But anti-Semitism was not new. It was the major internal expression of the deep racism of the European world. While almost everyone in the pan-European world had been happily racist and anti-Semitic prior to 1945, after 1945 they hesitated because almost no one intended this racism to result in the genocidal

practices associated with the holocaust (*the Endlosung*). The object of racism is not to exclude or exterminate people; it is to keep them within the system as an underclass. Yet the practice of racism had always been a delicate game, and the line had been crossed in the past, but never to such an extent and so visibly in a central arena of the world-system. In coming to terms with the holocaust, the pan-European world banned public usage of racism, and primarily of the public usage of anti-Semitism. It became taboo language.

In the post 1945 pan-European world the nations of the core zone sought to emphasize their internal virtues as integrative nations unspotted by racist oppression, lands of liberty against the Soviet “evil empire,” whose racism became a regular theme of Western propaganda. But racism was still a structural necessity by which the pan-European world could obtain a low-wage workforce, an underclass. This was necessary because during the post-World War II period the countries of the pan-European world underwent a dramatic demographic transition that resulted in radically reduced birth rates, so that the labor force had to be supplemented from abroad. This role fell to Mediterranean people in non-Mediterranean Europe, Latin Americans and Asians in North America, West Indians in North America and Western Europe, Black Africans and South Asians in Europe, former socialist bloc residents in western Europe after 1989. When the world-economy entered into a B-phase in the 1970s and unemployment increased for the first time in the post-1945 period, the immigrants were a convenient scapegoat and gave rise to a significant increase in the size of the far right within the pan-European world for the first time since 1945. Wallerstein thought the attempt of the E.U. to distance itself from Austria was suspect not because of the “good intentions” of the E.U. but because the historical practice of these nations clearly demonstrated that the universalist values of Western Europe are “deeply encrusted with the chronic, constitutive racism of the pan-European world” (Wallerstein 1990:6).

Wallerstein offers not even faint praise for the efforts of social scientists on this front, as they echoed rather than unmasked the deeply encrusted and the chronic, constitutive racism of the pan-European world. Samuel Huntington’s thesis of “the clash of civilizations” is held up for particular scorn.

Wallerstein locates the origins of racism in the encounter between the Europeans who traveled to the Americas and the indigenous peoples. Some of the Europeans who were acquiring vast lands wanted to enslave the Amerindians since they were barbarians and worthy only of being subjected to servitude and the harshest treatment. There were others, mainly Christian evangelists, who objected to this treatment and insisted upon the possibility of saving the souls of the indigenous peoples. Bartolome de las Casas was the most prominent representative of this position.

While Las Casas was initially able to prevail with Emperor Charles V with these views, the emperor had second thoughts and convened at Valladolid in 1550 a special Junta of judges to hear a debate between Las Casas and Juan Ginas de Sepulveda on these issues. Sepulveda argued that enslavement of the indigenous people was justified because they were barbarians, they practiced idolatry and human sacrifice, intervention was necessary to save lives, and this type of intervention would ultimately facilitate Christian evangelization. Las Casas argued in turn that no people should be forced to submit to another on the basis of cultural inferiority, that people should not be punished for committing a crime of which they are unaware, that one is only justified in intervening to save innocent people if the intervention does not cause even greater harm, and that Christianity could not be propagated by the sword.

Las Casas indeed argued quite pointedly that no one is unable to locate a barbarian to dominate, reminding the Spaniards of their own treatment at the hands of Rome. While the outcome of this debate before the Junta de Valladolid is unclear, and though Wallerstein



points out that it is inconclusive whether Las Casas was an anti-racist defender of the down-trodden or someone who sought to institutionalize a “good colonialism,” henceforth racism was established as constitutive of the capitalist world-economy, which used racism as a justification for the establishment of a hierarchical system to the benefit of the pan-European world.

Though there were always people who sought to alleviate the worse features of the system, there have also been brutal massacres or *Endlosungen* before the *Endlosung*.

For Wallerstein one of the most striking things about social knowledge throughout the 19th century and up to 1945 is that the social sciences never confronted the issue of racism directly (Wallerstein 1990:9). From historians who studied only “historical nations,” to economists who viewed any and all political behavior that could be considered racist as “economically irrational,” to political scientists whose study of comparative governments consisted only of the five major pan-European countries, to sociologists who either directly supported white supremacy or who sought sympathetically if patronizingly to explain the deviant behavior of the poor (who are ethnically distinguishable from the middle class), social scientists have not established a record of serious scholarly analysis of the phenomenon of racism.

So as we enter a period of chaotic transformation of the world-system in which the world’s people have struggled for 500 years, we must finally come to grips with the “deeply encrusted” and the “chronic, constitutive racism of the pan-European world.” In building a good and beautiful and more livable world, we may then begin to eradicate the deep racisms that lie within us (Wallerstein 2000:13). But what of those in the extra-European world (including the third world within)?

### **THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM AND THE COLONIALITY OF POWER**

Ramon Grosfoguel, a co-organizer of the aforementioned 1998 Conference on “Historical Capitalism, the Coloniality of Power, and Transmodernity,” argues that while the capitalist world-system has historically depended on the supply of cheap labor from the periphery of the world-system, the core zones also “maintained a cheap labor force from the internal colonial periphery within the empire” (Grosfoguel 1999:410). As an example from the 18th and 19th centuries, Grosfoguel makes the point that there were Scottish and Irish workers in London, Bretons in Paris, and African slaves in New York. For Grosfoguel this means that racism was a central mechanism for the maintenance of a disenfranchised labor force. Following Wallerstein, Grosfoguel argues that those colonial populations with metropolitan citizenship were relegated to the status of second-class citizens via the geoculture of racism in the capitalist world-economy. Racism served the function of relegating a population to serve mainly as cheap labor or to exclude a population from particular sectors of the workforce.

The social power of white males is said to have expanded along with the incorporation of new zones into the capitalist world-economy. Grosfoguel points out that the privileged position of white males in the capitalist system fostered hierarchical relations structured around race, sex, and gender.

For Grosfoguel the racial/ethnic hierarchy at a world-scale implied a global colonial/racial formation of discourses and meanings about race. This has been the case since the 16th century. For most of the time race was defined by biology. But the Nazi occupations in Western Europe delegitimized biological racist discourse. The civil rights movement in the United States and Britain are said to have also challenged the use of overt racist discourse,

forcing the expression of the continuing inequality structured along racial lines to be expressed in what Grosfoguel refers to as “cultural racism.” It was in this way that “cultural racism” became a part of the geoculture of the post-1960s capitalist world-economy (Grosfoguel 1999:411).

To understand this process Grosfoguel focuses first on the issues of nation, race, and coloniality. In the core zones, Grosfoguel argues, the nation is frequently “imagined” as being white, thus the construction of national identity is entangled with racial categories. These racial categories were initially defined in biological terms but came to assume cultural form after the Holocaust against the Jewish people in Europe and the civil rights movements in the United States and Great Britain. But the line of reasoning constituting cultural racism, and the use of the culture of poverty as an explanation for inequality, sound suspiciously like the reasoning behind the way that the nation is imagined in the core. The rise of the white nation then was essential to the stratifying processes of the capitalist world-economy.

Like Quijano, Grosfoguel argues that the end of formal colonial structures did not entail the end of the coloniality of power and that social power has continued to be structured along the same lines as in the colonial relationship. Thus the colonial/racial/ethnic hierarchy continues in the postcolonial world. “The representation of colonial subjects as lazy, criminals, dumb, inferior, stupid, untrustful, uncivilized, primitive, dirty, and opportunist have a long colonial history” (Grosfoguel 1999:415).

Grosfoguel briefly surveys the melting pot approach to incorporating ethnic groups into U.S. society, and the manner in which African Americans and Puerto Ricans came to be classified in the same manner as European ethnic groups, referring in particular to Glazer and Moynihan’s 1963 classic *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and the Irish of New York City*. The basic premise of the Glazer and Moynihan classic is that all groups experienced some degree of discrimination, but through the acquisition of experience and skills are able to be incorporated into the mainstream of U.S. society. If one fails to be incorporated, it is because of their own shortcomings, which came to be defined by some as “a culture of poverty.” But for Grosfoguel and indeed for a significant body of scholarly commentary, “Puerto Ricans and African Americans are not simply migrants or ethnic groups, but rather colonial/racialized subjects within the United States empire” (Grosfoguel 1999:417).

Grosfoguel’s theorizing summarized above represents a gathering trend among intellectuals concerned with the impact of the coloniality of power on the geopolitics of knowledge. Some of the concerns of these scholars are summarized in Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez (2002), to which I will now turn.

Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez (2002) call for the unthinking of a series of mythologies that have unfortunately molded our thinking during the process of the formation and consolidation of the modern world-system. The candidates for unthinking are objectivist/universalist knowledges, the decolonization of the modern world-system, and developmentalism. The three are intertwined with each other and tied to Eurocentric conceptions and systems of knowledge production. The discourse on the superiority of the West or Occidentalism is the common denominator of the three myths. Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez hold that these myths serve to mystify the roots of the hierarchical system in which European hegemony is embedded and the “global designs” upon which the system rests. These myths have served to control the imaginations of the oppressed and have eclipsed their representations of alternative ways of life, political options, and epistemologies (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002).

Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez follow Wallerstein (1974) in situating the formation of the capitalist world-economy in the expansion of the Spanish and Portuguese to the Americas in the long 16th century. The foundations of what they deem the racist/colonial culture and the global capitalist system were established during the first modernity (from 1492 to 1650). This is not controversial to my mind, but then they add to this insight a point of emphasis. The expansion to the Americas in 1492 occurred at the same time as the expulsion of the Arabs and Jews from Spain in the name of “blood purity” (*pureza de la sangre*). Thus following Mignolo (2000), they contend that an internal border constructed to keep the Arabs and Jews at arm’s length was built simultaneously to the “external border,” separating the peoples from the peripheral geographical zones. They follow Quijano and Wallerstein (1992) in arguing that the Spanish and Portuguese expansion to the Americas was crucial in the construction of the racial categories that would later be generalized to the rest of the world.

During the second modernity (1650–1945), the core of the world-system shifted from Spain/Portugal to Germany, the Netherlands, England, and France. Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez argue that the emergence of Northwestern Europe as the core of the world-system deepened the internal imaginary borders constructed against Jews, Arabs, and Gypsies and the external imaginary border against the Americas, and expanded to include Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002:xiii). But the second modernity added a new border, between Northwestern Europeans and the Iberian peoples. Hispanic/Latin/Southern European cultures were constructed as inferior to that of the Northwestern Europeans. In extending this notion to North America, Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez argue that Anglo-Saxon Protestant <sup>6</sup> hegemonism was the ideological basis of the annexation of half of the Mexican territory in 1848 as a consequence of the Mexican-American War, the political annexation of Puerto Rico, and the formation of a protectorate in Cuba in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898. Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez argue that these imperial conquests established the regional foundation for what would later become U.S. global hegemony. But these events are also considered to be the historical core of the “ethnic” conflict “regardless of place of origin of those called ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino/a’ . . . . From there on, within the context of the United States, ‘Hispanic Cultures’ of the Americas were subalternized, and the notion of “Whiteness” would be further distanced from its meaning in Latin America” (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002:xiii).

Henceforth Latin American independence from Spain and Portugal is said to have been hegemonized by Euro-American elites. They argue that it was not a process of social, political, cultural, or economic decolonization. White Creole elites continued to dominate the power relations of the newly independent countries of South and Central America in the 19th century, but they were excluded from the notion of whiteness that held forth in the United States, and thus “Hispanics” were constructed as part of the inferior “other,” not a part of the superior “White,” “European” races. In the United States the notion of whiteness would eventually be extended to what Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez refer to as groups who “were internal colonial subjects of Europe under Northwestern European hegemony (e.g., the Irish, Eastern Europeans, and the Jews), which would emphasize class as a major social marker within these groups, while the Indians and the Blacks would continue to be racial/colonial subjects” (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002:xiv). It is the history of the second

---

<sup>6</sup> It may seem curious that Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez omit any racial designation here. I resisted the temptation to insert “white” in brackets here, but the omission is pointed as becomes clear later in the article.

modernity that Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez hold to be key to the racialization of the immigrants from Latin America and their descendents.

While categories of modernity such as citizenship, democracy, and nation-building were acknowledged for the dominant Northwestern Europeans, the colonial “Others” were submitted to foreign military presence, forms of political tutelage, coerced forms of labor exploitation, and subjected to authoritarian rule in their countries as a way of granting the systemic equilibrium required for the development of the intertwined processes of nation building and global expansion. (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002:xiv)

While sociobiology and eugenics were forms of knowledge used to justify racist discourse, in the 20th century these forms of knowledge were replaced by what Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez refer to as “neo-culture of poverty” approaches, or “cultural racist” discourses. While the crude racism of the sociobiologists was not different in substance from cultural racist discourse, Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez call our attention to the manner in which the colonial experience leads to complex translocal scenarios that shape the production and dissemination of knowledge, including subjugated knowledges, subaltern forms of knowledge, and “border thinking.” Border thinking is a product of people who move back and forth between former colonizing countries and their respective colonies, and refers principally to the in-between location of subaltern knowledges, critical of both global hegemony and local power relations. These forms of knowledge are said to yield critical insights and political strategies from the subaltern side of the colonial difference, which could serve as a point of departure to move beyond colonialist and nationalist discourses.

Working within the coloniality of power and world-systems traditions, Santiago-Valles provides us with an important angle of vision on a component of coloniality that focuses on the social construction of whiteness as a concept that encapsulated global power relations. He argues that the Spaniards, the Dutch, the French, and the English “discovered” (invented) “their respective nations” in the course of discrepancies (economic, gnoseological, and military) over how they each expressed and lived their “Europeaness” -as -“whiteness” by which he means who best represented the white world of Europe and hence who was best fit to rule the world (Santiago-Valles 2003:54).

Over the 19th and 20th centuries the term “whiteness” was applied alternatively to the “propertied and educated summits of European societies and to a community of white people which enabled the ruling classes to mobilize the laboring classes in support of colonization and slavery” (Santiago-Valles 2003:54). But the pressure of the more restrictive sense of whiteness coexisted with the physiologization of class polarizations within European and Euro-diasporic populations. The aristocracy and the bourgeoisie were recasting urban laborers and peasants (including Christians) “as an alien race of fraudulent ‘Europeans’/’whites.’” Examining these conflicting notions of “Europeaness”-as-‘whiteness” should give us a sense of how the concept of race stemmed partly from and was deployed within the operations of the coloniality of power.

As we entered the post-1945 period, the social blocs of the pan-European world had been transformed:

... assembling the white and near white laboring classes, and the propertied and educated classes within the European and Euro-diasporic nation-states (North –and partly-Latin American and Caribbean, as well as South African, Pacific, and Israeli) against “their natives” (infantilized and feminized, overseas and domestic). This was part and parcel of the reorganization of Western imperial social formations and their colonial (external and internal) and neocolonial “regional hinterlands.” (Santiago-Valles 2003:58)

As a result of this 150-year transformation:

the European and Euro-diasporic sites of the coloniality of power would increasingly be marked by “the distinction between the objects and subjects of power not within the national body, but as organized by the many rhetorics of imperialism”—and colonialism (external and internal)—between that body and other, “non-civilized” peoples upon whose bodies the effects of power were unleashed with as much theatricality as had been manifest on the scaffold originally deployed to spectacularly punish the insolent rabble and undeserving poor, that degenerate and fraudulent “Europeans”/“whites” from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.” (Santiago-Valles 2003:58)

Later Santiago-Valles agrees with Quijano that it was the pivotal and interwoven advent of “race” and capitalist accumulation on a new (world) scale that generated modernity and defined the colonial character and structure of its forms of power (Santiago Valles 2003:61). But Santiago-Valles holds that the decisive shift in the invention of “race” and the emergence of a historically racialized capitalism was the metamorphosis of Mediterranean island sugar plantations based on the domestic labor of children and women into the expanded sugar plantations of the Eastern Atlantic and West African coastal islands and then the Caribbean Pernambuco relying on adult male labor.

Additionally Santiago-Valles argues that “by being able to position themselves vis-à-vis ‘savages,’ ‘heathens,’ and ‘infidels’ within this new (world) geography of conquest, colonialism, and chattel-slavery, ‘Christians’ did not merely become ‘European,’” they also became white, viewed as the embodiment of reason, order and agency (as naturalized masculinist categories of social adulthood) vis-à-vis the increasingly feminized and infantilized “natives” (Santiago-Valles 2003:62).

Sylvia Wynter charts the transformation of the nature of the coloniality of power in the modern world-system in a similar manner. Wynter (2003) argues that our conception of the human (Man) overrepresents the Western bourgeois ethnoclass as though he is synonymous with universal humanity. Wynter argues that any attempt to unsettle the coloniality of power will call for the unsettling of this overrepresentation as the second and now purely secular form of what Quijano identifies as the racism/ethnicism complex. She explains the process of moving from a religious to a secular justification of the coloniality of power by reviewing the clash between Las Casas and Sepulveda mentioned earlier. She holds that the clash was over whether human identity should continue to reside in Las Casas’s theocentric Christian or that of the newly invented Man of the humanists, as the rational (or ratiocentric) political subject of the state (represented by Sepulveda). The enslavement of non-Europeans was initially justified on the basis that they were “Enemies-of-Christ” or “Refusers-of-Christ.” The concessions of non-European lands to the Spanish and Portuguese by the pope was effected by various papal bulls that defined these lands as *terra nullius* (“the lands of no one”) since they did not belong to a Christian prince (Wynter 2003:291–292). But the Spanish sovereigns soon became impatient with the papacy’s claim to temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty and summoned several councils to establish new grounds for Spain’s sovereignty outside the limits established by the papacy. This process backed by Sepulveda eventually led to a shift from the “Enemies-of-Christ” system of classification to one based on nature, embedded in the more modern concept of race, which established natural “racial” differences between the superior Europeans and the inferior non-Europeans, who were ordered along the lines of the degree of rational perfection/imperfection. This “by nature” difference would later be codified in a substance called I.Q. (Wynter 2003:297).

## THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE RACIAL ORDER

The Modern World-System framework has not been widely used in the scholarly literature on the sociological study of race and ethnicity within the United States. A recent exception is from Morehouse University sociologist Cynthia Lucas Hewitt in a 2002 issue of *Review*, the journal of the Fernand Braudel Center.

Hewitt (2002) argues that racial stratification within national labor markets is an aspect of the worldwide division of labor the ruling strata used to grant and restrict access to the means of production. Specifically Hewitt argues,

Capital ownership and control is 1) cumulative at a geometric rate since the inception of the system in the sixteenth century, leading to centralization, and 2) this centralization is organized through *ascriptive solidarity*, that rests, ultimately, upon familial relations of marriage and inheritance.

According to Hewitt, the key to this ascriptive solidarity is the European patriarchal family and it is expressed most clearly in the concept of private property, which is then clearly expressed in white racial solidarity and endogeneity (Hewitt 2002:138).

Hewitt holds that the likelihood of employment correlates closely to his or her social closeness to owners or controllers of productive capital. Social closeness is defined racially and enforced and reflected in marriage patterns. In contrast to those who point to the defining role of class in determining race relations, Hewitt argues that “class is largely an artifact of racialized solidarity processes of expropriation and exclusion integral to the formation of modern nation-state structures” (Hewitt 2002:140). In this way Hewitt identifies what she feels to be a crucial measure of long-term intergenerational control of productive assets, which she argues is the distinguishing feature of capitalist accumulation.

Hewitt argues that one may very well view an oppressed minority as a group within the lower class, but cautions that the theory of class focuses on a process of class differentiation based on individual or family choices and opportunities within a more or less open structure. This assumes sharing within any set of national borders as mandated by the imagined nation. But the reality for racist societies or nations is that racism assumes the exclusion of some groups from the national identity.

Hewitt contends that the concept of “race” as we know it was the handiwork of the Germanic Anglo-Saxon people of England who benefited from the colonization of America and who were the pioneers of manufacturing for the market with imposed conditions of unequal exchange. She adds that the term “race” was originally used among Europeans to designate a descent group linked by consanguinity (blood relationship). The importance of the concept of “race” at that time was to distinguish between a “migrating tribe” and a conquering group who formed a ruling class, connected by blood over various local and autochthonous [indigenous] peoples (Hewitt 2002:142). The term “race,” she argues was not known to the Greeks and Romans. It developed in the 16th century to designate such groups as the Normans as a group who were distinct from the Celts, and the Franks as distinct from the Slavs. Hewitt attributes to Cheikh Anta Diop the thesis that this social fissure begins with historic contact patterns between culturally distinguishable groups and ends with amalgamation, thus bringing cultural conflict and tension to an end. Relations of domination, however, are said to continue between classes, which, however, are distinguished by culture (Hewitt 2002:142).

Race in this theory emerges as an ideological justification for the processes of predatory raiding, settlement, and migration, which form the basis of class society in the capitalist division of labor. This is the framework, Hewitt argues, for the European raids of the Americas, the Indian Ocean, and Africa. The social orders formed by the European empires of the period 1500 to 1800 were organized along the lines of this blood-line stratification order. This social order also included religious distinction as the main cultural division. But in the Spanish and Portuguese empires there was much racial intermarriage such that phenotypically many 16th-century Portuguese were “Negroid” according to Du Bois (1992:47). Furthermore Hewitt cites the recent finding that Black Zimbabweans who self-identify as Hebrew are similar in phenotype to white Jews in Israel. For Hewitt this signifies that racial features are a continuum with differing central tendencies over space and time.

It was the Anglo-American settler colony project that gave the more dogmatic, ideological cast to the concept of “race” via its use of enslaved Africans as laborers in the emerging capitalist division of labor. Quijano and Wallerstein (1992) distinguished between the Spanish and Portuguese who settled among and intermarried with the indigenous people of their colonies and the Dutch and the British in the north who established a New Europe and thus settler colonies, and who used slave labor to produce commodities for the world market. For Hewitt it was this process of commodification of labor that was key to the process of rational calculation regarding quantity and value which led to the necessity to separate the enslaved Africans from their socially given identities and organized social lives. Since enslaved Africans were so central to the emerging stratification system in those colonies, the project of racialization was central to the construction, coherence, and stability of these new societies.

During the early colonial period Hewitt argues, whites, Native Americans, and Africans worked together in coerced labor arrangements. But pressure from the decimation of the Native American population, the need to encourage greater migratory flows from Europe, and the pressure of slave trading interests led to the erection of rigid distinctions between the groups. Hewitt relies on Lerone Bennett’s account of “The Path Not Taken” (Bennett 1993) to explain the development of a total system of domination of subordinate strata using mechanisms of separation and subordination, including the prohibition of intermarriage between whites and Africans, first imposed around 1660 (Hewitt 2002:143).

Bennett argues that this system of total domination penetrated every corner of colonial life, using every institution, leaving absolutely nothing to chance. All legal and moral bonds or obligations between Black and non-Black were brutally and dramatically severed in assemblies, the courts, the churches, and the press. A massive propaganda campaign on one hand, supplemented by the use of private vigilante groups on the other, were instruments of this campaign to promote hate and terror to create and maintain this breach (Bennett 1993:71).

... To mold the minds of whites, to teach them the new ideas, and to let them know who was to be loved and who was to be despised, the planter-merchant aristocracy used every instrument of persuasion and control. In every colony, from New York to South Carolina, the same mechanisms of separation and subordination were elaborated and imposed. From New York to South Carolina, the same penalties were used to keep blacks and whites apart, the same rewards were developed to make poor whites support a system which penalized them, the same statutes were elaborated to crush and diabolify blacks. (Bennett 1993:71)

The language of these statutes (“abominable mixture,” “barbarous,” “savage”) was clearly designed to instill a sense of invidious distinction between Blacks and non-Blacks. It was often a legal requirement that parsons and politicians include the language of these statutes at presentations in public meetings and church services (Bennett 1993:71).

But for Bennett this was obviously only half of the story since rules governing the behavior of whites were of equal importance. The right of the master to free his slaves was curbed, and eventually eliminated. Masters could not teach their slaves nor permit them to gather in large assemblies. Furthermore, “. . . masters used Draconian measures to stop mingling and mating of blacks and whites . . . white women were whipped, banished, and enslaved to keep them from marrying black men.” The increasing number of mulattos through intermarriage and from illicit relationships caused alarm among Puritan advocates of racial purity (Bennett 1993:75).

Steadily and inescapably, a new rhythm was imposed on them, and by the middle of the eighteenth century a solid white front was developing . . . Concerted action by blacks and whites [so common among the multi-racial servant class during the early colonial period] virtually ceased. . . . It was in this crucible that the white identity in America was forged. (Bennett 1993: 77–78)

And in opposition to this process of shaping white identity was the formation of Black identity, “colored indelibly by the fact that blacks were deliberately pushed out of the circle of community” (Bennett 1993:79).

The institution of private property and inheritance insured the continuity of the intergenerational transfer of wealth via familial inheritance. Hewitt contends that the fundamental unit of class membership is the family and not the individual. This is not a simple matter of individual choice, but of a socially constructed solidarity network that frames individual choices, and which constrain interracial marriage between Blacks and whites rather severely. But for Hewitt the issue here is not inter-human relations of love and marriage, psychological response, or prejudice, but the channeling of human behaviors by a racially defined political economy of private property and its effects on the accumulation of land and labor for competition that determined, promoted, and rewarded what she feels is a particular process of solidarity she calls racism. She clarifies that for her there is only one racism, and that is the racism of the pan-European world.

Central to this process according to Hewitt is the process by which status group ownership of capital affects individual outcomes. Hiring in this conception is often based on networks of contacts which include family and co-workers, friends, and neighbors whose residency and relations are structured by a highly segregated organization of community life. While aware of the tendency toward the concentration of capital on a world-scale, Hewitt focuses on the empirical finding that small businesses have continued to be a mainstay of employment in the United States. It is among these 22 million small businesses (defined as those employing fewer than 500 employees) who are most likely to make hiring decisions on the basis of ascriptive characteristics such as family, friends, and co-ethnics. But even among larger corporations, she argues, there tends to exist a homogeneity of whiteness, citing, for example, Dye’s estimate that only 3 percent of all top corporate executives are drawn from the lower 78 percent of the population by wealth and status (Hewitt 2002:148).

In the world-scale status order, Hewitt locates people of African descent at the bottom, and Native Americans just above Blacks in the racial hierarchy. Hewitt attributes this order to the role of the enslavement of Africans in the formation of the capitalist world-economy and the need of Europeans to achieve stratification order on Native American lands and the resultant depressed (underclass status) of Native Americans throughout the hemisphere. Though Native Americans rank clearly on the bottom of Latin American society, their status has not reached the level of opprobrium achieved by Blacks, which is so low that there is a general refusal to acknowledge Black heritage (Hewitt 2002:151).



For Hewitt the existence of racism insures a high degree of endogenous marriage patterns within racial groups, especially among elite groups. Capital acquired by a group defined as a marriage pool early in the process of capitalist development tends to remain concentrated in that group. Only the intervention of the state has been able to distribute aggregations of wealth beyond family control. Curtailment of the impoverishment of racial polarization is only likely to be achieved via the incorporation of lower ranking groups into the marriage circles of the more elite groups; the redistribution of wealth among families; or the separation of control over capital from family ownership by ending the system of private property and inheritance as we know it (Hewitt 2002:162).

Hewitt calls for us to focus in on the significance of racism within a capitalist system as fundamentally a system of exclusion of groups of people from accumulation based upon the sanctity of private property. Thus the focus of the study of inequality and impoverishment should be the institution of private property and the family (Hewitt 2002:163).

This powerful indictment of the exclusion of African Americans via endogenous forms of family formation stands in counterpoint to the alleged “crisis of the Black family” in the rhetoric of the conservative counter-revolution against the egalitarian and inclusive trend set in motion by the civil rights, feminist, and other movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

### **FAMILY VALUES AND THE RACE CARD IN THE UNITED STATES**

The discourse on the underclass and family values so prominent since the 1980s emerged out of the 1960s debate about poverty and race, but the conservative turn in the debate cannot be understood outside the impact of the Black insurgency on the social psychology of rebellion throughout the entire society. The conservative backlash, however, did not simply line up against the enemy of the moment. By its very nature it sought to reassert the foundation of the social order by reasserting the relations of honor that put the most dishonored section of the population back in their places. It is not difficult to discern that the ideological discourse of the conservative backlash was part of a broad counterinsurgency designed to turn the nation away from a commitment to the general welfare, to a focus on the survival of the fittest, defined as those who had earned their social positions because of their adherence to the work ethic, their cultural and family values, etc. It is key that we pay close attention to the evolution of relations of force in this historical moment. My point is that the rise of the most dishonored sections of our population in itself leads inexorably to the elaboration of a variety of counter-hegemonic discourses that constitute a fatal threat to centrist liberalism and the geoculture of the modern world-system. We cannot understand the conservative backlash of the post-1965 period without understanding the meaning of the postwar period for the world and the United States.

Wallerstein holds that the 19th century saw the emergence of two kinds of antisystemic movements: the social movements of the working classes against the bourgeoisie, and the national movement of the underdog peoples (or minorities) against dominant groups. Both kinds of movements took some kind of organizational form almost everywhere in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century (Wallerstein 1991:68). The period from 1945 to 1968 was, according to Wallerstein, a period of remarkable achievement for these movements, which came to power in a large number of countries all around the world. By 1968, however, these movements were no longer in the mobilizing phase, and the youth who came to the fore at this time found those movements wanting, in part because of

the social psychology of demobilization, and in part because of the historical trajectory of these movements, which were able to take power in a large number of states but who were not able to complete the second part of the two-stage strategy, which was to change the world. These movements did make some changes, but nowhere near the depth of change that they had envisioned. This of course was a component of demobilization as people scaled back their militance because they now confronted a state that argued that it was the state of the oppressed groups.

There has been a tendency among intellectuals in the United States to exclude the United States from this scenario. But if we put aside the ideological battles within the Left we can conceive of the communists in much of the semiperipheral zones of the world-economy, national liberation movements in the periphery, and social democrats in the core as members of the family of antisystemic movements which does include the U.S. Democratic Party from the advent of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal.

While the U.S. New Deal was implemented in a manner that maintained the hierarchical racial order, I believe it was a fundamental component of the social democratic compromise. Indeed Beverly Silver and Eric Slater (1999:204) contend that it was the United States who sponsored global reform in the postwar period and the nature of this reform was greatly influenced by the New Deal experience. In response to the wave of labor militancy in the core during the 1930s and 1940s, reformists advocated an accord (or social contract) in which government and business accepted the permanence of unionism and workers accepted the right of business to manage production and make changes in the organization of production to facilitate productivity. Gains in productivity would then be the basis of higher wages, which would allow workers a much higher level of consumption. This constituted a dramatic increase in access to the American Dream.

Silver and Slater argue that the co-optation of the "responsible" elements of the labor movement was supplemented by the fierce repression of the radical and communist Left who were purged from the labor movement. We know that this process began in 1947 with the Taft Hartley Act's "loyalty oaths" and culminated in 1949 with the exclusion of communists and communist sympathizers from the CIO executive board, and the purging of 11 unions with a membership exceeding one million from the ranks of the CIO (Silver and Slater 1999:206).

In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party took power in the world's most populous country. While Japan had long signaled the rise of the dark world, China would take on this role in a far different political space, one much more appropriate to the subordinate position of the people of the dark world. But this event shook the capitalist world to its foundations. Decolonization and development became the strategy of the United States to control the pace of change in the third world and to create conditions to maintain indirect (or neo-colonial) control over the people of the third world. This appeal was directed to the nationalist elite who had not aligned themselves with the social revolution.

In the United States, the rebellion in 1968 was directed against the administration of Lyndon Baines Johnson, who presided over the greatest extension of the welfare state and of civil rights for Blacks in the history of the country (Wallerstein 1990:39). But the context in which this expansion took place is important. There was the civil rights movement, which captured the soul of the United States. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech marks symbolically the high point of the American Century. This expansion of the New Deal into a more inclusive social contract had many limitations, but it established a precedent that would allow for increasing pressure for more, and it stemmed from a social base that surely articulated an egalitarian ideology, which it cast as the "true expression of the American

creed.” The pressure for more was certainly on the move as the Black urban masses responding to de facto discrimination outside the Jim Crow areas expanded the Black Freedom Struggle to challenge the deeper roots of social and racial inequality in the nation. While Malcolm X argued that he did not see an American Dream but an American nightmare, on the contrary it might be more accurately observed that he co-opted the American Dream and replaced it with a dream for all humanity.

While King did not fear to appropriate the American dream as the legitimate right of Black people, he did not hesitate to chastise America for failing to deliver on her promise. Within a year or so after the 1963 March on Washington, legislation had been passed that broke the back of Jim Crow and de jure segregation. The civil rights revolution had overcome the reactionary caste system of the Old South.

But what of those outside the South, where a segregated and marginalized urban proletariat lived in squalid conditions despite their access to formal citizenship rights? The sentiments of this segment of the Black population have been more accurately expressed by Malcolm X, who argued that Black people should have no illusions about being included in the American Dream. Rather, the reality of Black people in America was an American nightmare. He said, “Just because kittens are born in an oven, you don’t call them biscuits. You can’t sit at the table and throw us a few crumbs from the table and call us Americans. You could not go to the criminal and ask for civil rights, you had to take the criminal to the World Court and sue for denial of our human rights.” Malcolm X was clearly involved in a process of rearticulating the American Dream, or even of transcending the American Dream.

Some in the generation that emerged as the radical leadership of the Black Freedom Struggle in the 1960s recalled the anti-colonial movement formed within the Council of African Affairs led by Paul Robeson, Alphaeus Hunton, Shirley Graham, E. Franklin Frazier, and W.E.B. Du Bois and allied with Walter White’s NAACP. This movement argued powerfully for the essential linkage between the liberation movements in Africa and Asia and the struggles of the African American people for civil and democratic rights. The repression of Robeson and Du Bois served to disconnect this linkage and was an object lesson to the civil rights mainstream to stay within the parameters of the cold war consensus.

But the rising tide of decolonization in the post–World War II period was to reinforce the radical elements within the African American population who linked civil rights with liberation movements and radical states such as China, Cuba, Algeria, and Ghana. Malcolm X, Ella Baker, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Huey P. Newton, Angela Davis, Amiri Baraka, Kwame Ture, and others were eloquent advocates of global solidarity with those whom Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to as “the barefoot people of the earth.” These groups sought both to complete the Great American Revolution and to transform the American Century into something more akin to a “People’s Century.” The triumph of the Right in the 1980s was part of a global reversal of these trends, and perhaps predictably took the form of a restoration of the age-old ideological refrain lodging the causes of poverty within the vices and weaknesses of the poor.

We argue the macrosociological framework for this evolution above. That the conclusion to the issues that the country faced was not foreordained can be glimpsed in the career of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and his famous report, *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*. Both careers spanned the height of the global liberalism that promised to expand the benefits of the New Deal to all, and the precipitous drop from those heights, and the corresponding sharp turn to the right of the nation’s political center.

With the passage of both the Civil Rights Bill and the Voting Rights Bill by 1965, the expectation was that Black people would rapidly assimilate into white society on the basis of

equality. The Moynihan Report was a cautionary note arguing that such assimilation could not be expected because of the crumbling of the family structure among the Negro lower class. The family is said to have been the basic unit of American life, and to have been central in promoting the rapid progress of those immigrant groups that have been most successful in American life. But the demand for equality of results central to the Negro Revolution would be frustrated because of the sad plight of the lower-class Negro family. In attributing this state of affairs to 300 years of almost unimaginable treatment, Moynihan held that the historical record justifies compensatory policies that would achieve equality of results as demanded by Bayard Rustin. If we do not achieve equality of results, Moynihan argues, there will be no social peace (Moynihan 1967:2–3).

It should not be lost that Moynihan located the Negro Revolution within the same landscape as India's struggle against British colonialism, the decolonization of Africa, and the increasing tensions between the white world and people of color the world over. So it is within this broader geopolitical arena that Moynihan worries about the political culture of lower class Negroes, specifically the Black Muslim doctrine, based on total alienation from the white world. For Moynihan who has one eye on violent rebellions in Black inner cities and the other on Vietnam, this implies the possibility that Blacks may be attracted to Chinese communism. He argues that the course of world events will be profoundly affected by the success or failure of the Negro Revolution in seeking peaceful assimilation of the races within the United States (Moynihan 1967:1).

The continued oppression of the Negro (particularly the male) is said to have worked against the emergence of a strong father figure. He thought that "segregation, and the submissiveness it exacts, is surely more destructive to the male than to the female personality. Keeping the Negro 'in his place' can be translated as keeping the Negro male in his place: the female was not a threat to anyone" (Moynihan 1967:16). The Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure, which, because it is so out of line with the rest of American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole.

He tells us that ours is a society that presumes male leadership in private and public affairs, and a subculture in which this is not the pattern is placed at a distinct disadvantage. This matriarchal society is what Moynihan deems "the tangle of pathology." In contrast to the Negro family, the white family, despite many variants, remains a powerful agency, not only for transmitting property from one generation to the next, but also for transmitting contacts with the world of education and work.

[T]hree centuries of injustice have brought about deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American. At this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. The cycle can be broken only if these distortions are set right . . . a national effort must be directed towards the question of family structure. (Moynihan 1967:47)

We should recall that *The Negro Family* was written during the most dramatic expansion in the economy in history. This expansion was the context of the social democratic strategy in the core states. Between 1967 and 1973, the economy began to stagnate and the ensuing profit squeeze was compounded by a geopolitical crisis in Vietnam and a crisis of governability because of the unruliness of the inner-city poor and their radical allies.

In line with the changes going on at that time, Moynihan's position would shift. He edited a volume entitled *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Science* in which he argued in his introduction, entitled "The Professors and the Poor," that the fashionable poverty ideology promoted by intellectuals within the poverty program was a disservice to the poor. He had nothing but contempt for these "white radicals" who gained positions of

authority within the Office of Economic Opportunity and who perpetrated the notion that the poor are in poverty because the power structure deprived them of opportunity. In support of this position he cites Walter Miller's contention that

Opportunity is not something that people are either inside or outside of. Americans may achieve widely varying degrees of success or failure in a thousand different spheres and in a thousand different ways. Beaming to lower status people the message that one can attain "success goals" by breaching, demolishing or otherwise forcing the "walls" that bar them from "opportunity" conveys a tragically oversimplified and misleading impression of the conditions and circumstances of success, in addition to fostering an imagery with potentially destructive consequences. (Moynihan 1968:32)

Moynihan argues that the function of many of the community action program was to raise the level of perceived and validated discontent among poor persons with the social system about them, without actually improving the conditions of life of the poor in anything like a comparable degree. For Moynihan, to blame the system is not an analysis, but its opposite.

In 1967 Moynihan delivered an address to the national board of the Americans for Democratic Action entitled "The Politics of Stability." He attempted to understand the violence that the nation faced in the inner cities and in Vietnam as a consequence of liberal actions or caretaking.

Liberals must see more clearly that their essential interest is in the stability of the social order; and given the present threats to that stability, they must seek out and make more effective alliances with political conservatives who share their interest and recognize that unyielding rigidity is just as great a threat to continuity of the social order as an anarchic desire for change.

Liberals must divest themselves of the notion that the nation—and especially the cities of the nation—can be run from agencies in Washington. (Moynihan 1975:188)

Liberals must somehow overcome the curious condescension that takes the form of defending and explaining away anything, however outrageous, which Negroes, individually or collectively, might do. (Moynihan 1975:191)

In tracing Moynihan's career, Darryl Michael Scott argues that in February 1964 as the Johnson administration planned the War on Poverty, Moynihan argued that welfare had made poverty more endurable instead of providing an escape from it. As the War on Poverty progressed, Moynihan argued that welfare was a great achievement, but it must not be allowed to become the economic system of a permanent subculture. Men need jobs, families need fathers, communities need independence (Scott 1997:155). The War on Poverty is said to have substituted the chimera of political empowerment (the citizen participation stipulations of the Office of Economic Opportunity, known as the Community Action Program) for the time-tested process of social mobility. Scott argues that he wanted the state to assist the poor in their quest for social mobility, not to forge them into a self-conscious and politically active group.

But the conflict between Moynihan's class-conscious liberals (who view the path of individual social mobility as the best road to social justice) and racial liberals would soon take a back seat to the conservative backlash, which emerged front and center after the 1965 Watts uprising. After Watts, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an article with the headline "Family Life Breakdown in Negro Slums Sows Seeds of Race Violence: Husbandless Homes Spawn Young Hoodlums, Impede Reforms, Sociologists Say." The *Wall Street Journal* relied on academic authorities who were decidedly outside the group of racial liberals who had been most active in social policy making and deliberation in Johnson's Great Society Programs. Thus the conservatives claimed the Moynihan Report as their own and elaborated a new genteel racism that asserted that unemployment is a result of the breakdown of the Black family, poor

education a result of cultural deprivation among Negroes, and slum conditions the lack of acculturation among Southern Negro migrants to the urban North.

Patricia Hill Collins (1991) held that such discussions about the Black family used a convergence of race and gender to explain the social class position of Blacks. Racial difference is used to explain class disadvantage, and gender deviance is used to account for racial difference. Social class is not viewed as a causal variable that actively shapes the life chances of Black people, their family life, or their attitudes and values. The image of the welfare mother, furthermore, provides ideological justifications of interlocking systems of gender, race, and class oppression.

The War on Poverty, short-lived though it was, is often blamed for the conditions in today's inner cities. While it is true that the War on Poverty did not really end poverty, it had a striking impact. The number of poor fell from 18 percent in 1960 to only 9 percent in 1972 (Quadagno 1994:175). Child poverty rates declined from 27 percent in 1960 to 15 percent in 1974. The percentage of Blacks enrolled in college increased from 13 percent in 1965 to 22.6 percent by 1975. By 1989 the number of Blacks holding white-collar jobs had increased by 522 percent. But poor Blacks did not fare nearly so well. Between the early 1970s and the late 1980s, the percentage of two-parent Black families fell from 63.4 to 40.6 percent. The labor force participation rate of Black high school dropouts fell by 25 percent. Jobless rates for Black men rose from 4.7 to 13.6 percent, and the percentage of Black children born out of wedlock increased from 35.1 percent to 62.6 percent.

When Reagan took office in 1981, he proceeded to roll back the welfare state. Funds for job training declined from more than \$6 million in 1980 to less than \$2.5 million in 1984. In 1981, federal aid to cities was reduced to 1968 levels. Support for low income housing was reduced markedly from 183,000 starts in 1980 to 28,000 starts in 1985 (Quadagno 1994:178).

Some advocates of the family values crusade argued that the absence of a biological father in the home has replaced race and class as the major cause of socioeconomic inequality and psychological disadvantage in America. Traditional conservatives, such as George Will, held that what is called the "race crisis" is in reality a class problem arising from dysfunctional families and destructive behaviors. But the conservative contention that Blacks are lacking in family values does not square with studies that show that traditional family ideology is as strong as or stronger among some Blacks than among whites, and indeed to be quite strong among low-income Blacks as well (Staples 1994).

The defenders of historical capitalism have always blamed poverty on the poor rather than the system of structural inequality in which they live. The attack on the Black family is simply the focal point of the capitalist attack on any form of egalitarianism, an attempt to rationalize the structural inequality that is inherent to capitalism. Spiraling poverty would discredit the system save for finding an explanation that is ideologically acceptable to large numbers of its supporters. This is precisely the role that racism plays. But the rebellions of the inner city threatened to breach the social reforms used to contain the dangerous classes.

Since this was the era of the rising of the women, Black feminists have argued most forcefully for a strategy based on race, class, gender, and sexuality as interlocking forms of oppression. This contribution by Patricia Hill Collins, Angela Davis, and Rose Brewer adds a depth to the Black Liberation movement and its potential for unifying broader emancipatory forces that portends an uncompromising break with the U.S.-centric perspective that the ruling class labored so hard to install across the political spectrum from the Right to the social democratic Left during the postwar period. It was Malcolm X's insight that most effectively demolished the power of that consensus among African Americans when he argued that the Negro problem was not simply an American problem or a Black problem, that it was an issue

of the haves against the have-nots on a global scale—an issue not of civil rights but of human rights. An anti-racist movement must oppose pan-European racism on a global scale and fight to make this a contending element in our common sense to counter the U.S.-centric consensus. This strategy must be central to all our efforts, and compromise on this position is a dead end for progressive social change, pure and simple.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, Robert, "Reassessing the Internal Colonialism Theory," *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 2–11.
- Bush, Melanie, *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.
- Collins, Patricia Hill, *Black Feminist Thought*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Collins, Patricia Hill, "A Comparison of Two Works on Black Family Life." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1989, pp. 875–884.
- Du Bois, W.E.B., *The World and Africa*. New York: International Publishers, 1992.
- Du Bois, W.E.B., *The Souls of Black Folks*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1961.
- Grant, Madison, *The Passing of the Great Race or the Racial Basis of European History*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1920.
- Grosfoguel, Ramon, Introduction: "'Cultural Racism' and Colonial Caribbean Migrants in the Core Zones of the Capitalist World-Economy," *Review*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1999, pp. 409–434.
- Grosfoguel, Ramon and Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodriguez, "Unthinking Twentieth-Century Eurocentric Mythologies: Universalist Knowledges, Decolonization, and Developmentalism," in Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez (eds.), *The Modern/Colonial/Capitalist World-System in the Twentieth Century: Global Processes, Antisystemic Movements, and the Geopolitics of Knowledge*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002.
- Harrison, Hubert Henry, *When Africa Awakes*. Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 1997.
- Hawkins, Clifton C., "Race First versus Class First": *An Intellectual History of Afro-American Radicalism, 1911–1928*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2000.
- Hewitt, Cynthia Lucas, "Racial Accumulation on a World-Scale: Racial Inequality and Employment," *Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2002, pp. 137–171.
- James, Winston, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Verso, 1998.
- Kousser, J. Morgan, *Colorblind Injustice: Minority Voting Rights and the Undoing of the Second Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Makalani, Minkah, *For the Liberation of Black People Everywhere: The African Blood Brotherhood, Black Radicalism, and Pan-African Liberation in the New Negro Movement, 1917–1936*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2004.
- Malcolm X, *The End of White World Supremacy: Four Speeches*. New York: Merlin House, 1971.
- Marable, Manning, *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1982*. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1985.
- Mignolo, Walter, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 101, No. 1, Winter 2002, pp. 57–96.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*, in Lee Rainwater and W.L. Yancey (eds.), *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, "The Professors and the Poor," in Moynihan (ed.) *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*. New York: Basic Books, 1968.
- Newton, Huey, *To Die for the People*. New York: Random House, 1972.
- Perry, Jeffrey, *A Hubert Harrison Reader*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
- Quadagno, Jill, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Quijano, Anibal, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from South*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2000, pp. 533–580.
- Quijano, Anibal and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanness as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World-System," *Social Science Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 1992, pp. 549–557.

- Santiago-Valles, Kelvin, "Racially Subordinate Labour Within Global Contexts: Robinson And Hopkins Re-Examined." *Race Class*, Vol. 47, 2005, pp. 54–70.
- Santiago-Valles, Kelvin, "'Race,' Labor, 'Women's proper Place,' and the Birth of Nations: Some Notes on Historicizing the Coloniality of Power," *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 47–69.
- Scott, Daryl Michael, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880–1996*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Silver, Beverly and Eric Slater, "The Social Origins of World Hegemony," in Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly J. Silver (eds.), *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 131–206.
- Singh, Nikhil Pal, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Staples, Robert (ed.), *The Black Family: Essays and Studies (5th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994.
- Stoddard, Lothrop, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1921.
- Von Eschen, Penny, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel and Terence K. Hopkins, *The Age of Transition: Trajectory of the World System, 1945–2025*. London: Zed Press, 1997.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel, "The Racist Albatross: Social Science, Jorg Haider, and Widerstand." 2000a (Lecture at the Universität Wien, Mar. 9, 2000, in the series, "Von der Notwendigkeit des Überflüssigen-Sozialwissenschaften und Gesellschaft." An abridged version appeared in the *London Review of Books*, May 18, 2000. Also as "Racism: Our Albatross" in Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World*. New York: The New Press, 2003).
- Wallerstein, Immanuel, "Cultures in Conflict? Who Are We? Who Are the Others?" Y.K. Pao Distinguished Chair Lecture, Center for Cultural Studies, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Sept. 20, 2000b.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel, *Historical Capitalism and Capitalist Civilization*. New York: Verso, 1995.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel, *The Capitalist World-Economy*. Boston: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Wynter, Sylvia 2003, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—an Argument," *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 257–337.



## CHAPTER 19

# Pathways to Downward Mobility: The Impact of Schools, Welfare, and Prisons on People of Color

ROGELIO SAENZ, KAREN MANGES DOUGLAS  
DAVID GERONIMO EMBRICK,  
AND GIDEON SJOBERG

Throughout the course of American society, racial stratification has been a fact of life. Indeed, the founding of the nation occurred alongside the extermination and subjugation of indigenous people. Through the centuries other groups, most notably blacks, have been subjugated and oppressed. While race is well embedded in the foundation of American society, organizational arrangements and the occupants of positions within them have contributed to continued stratification.

W.E.B. Du Bois predicted that the major issue of the 20th century in the United States would be the color line. Little did Du Bois realize that his prediction would be realized into the 21st century (Darling-Hammond 2004). The 20th century began with the clear demarcation of the races with people of color cut off completely from societal opportunity structures. The period extending from the late 1950s to the early 1970s witnessed a ray of hope for minorities, particularly in the areas of education and civil rights. These gains, however, were short-lived as the closing decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have involved significant retrenchment to earlier epochs.

While such trends have occurred across all societal institutions, we focus on three that have experienced especially grave changes over the last few decades—education, welfare, and prisons. These institutions are intimately linked, with education thought to be the great equalizer (or enabler), welfare the safety net, and prisons the social control. In recent times,

---

ROGELIO SAENZ • Texas A&M University

KAREN MANGES DOUGLAS • Sam Houston State University

DAVID GERONIMO EMBRICK • Loyola University-Chicago

GIDEON SJOBERG • University of Texas at Austin

the educational and welfare institutions have decreasingly served their designated functions while increasingly being subjected to social control.

This chapter has three objectives. First, we provide a theoretical overview, drawing on perspectives from the race/ethnic and organization literatures, to ground our analysis. Second, we provide an in-depth overview of each of the three institutions focusing on changing trends and the significance of race. Finally, we close with a discussion of the implications of our analysis.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Scholars of racial and ethnic relations recognize how firmly race is embedded in the structural foundations of American society. We draw here primarily on the works of Joe Feagin's systemic racism and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's racialized social systems perspectives.

### Systemic Racism

In his book, *Racist America: Roots, Realities, and Future Reparations*, Feagin (2000; see also Feagin 2005) develops a conceptual framework that explains the current conditions of blacks in the United States—a theory he refers to as systemic racism. Systemic racism emphasizes the structural, institutional, and systemic elements present in a racialized and oppressive system. In essence, Feagin (2000) argues that the present state of blacks and other non-whites in the United States is a result of a system that has deep historical roots in preserving white privilege through the exploitation and discrimination of non-whites. Systemic racism, according to Feagin (2000:16), includes “a diverse assortment of racist practices; the unjustly gained economic and political power of whites; the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies, attitudes, and institutions created to preserve white advantages and power.” The adverse effects of systemic racism do not merely manifest themselves in blacks' everyday lives and whites' group identity, but systemic racism is also ever changing so that the structural and institutional vestiges of racial discrimination against non-whites continue to evolve, and therefore persist, with society. Thus, major institutions such as education, prisons, and welfare systems in the United States continue to hold on to racial stereotypes and engage in racial practices that negatively impact the lives of racial minorities.

### The Racialized Social System

The racialized social system theory, according to Bonilla-Silva (2001), explains racism as a global phenomenon that affected all societies that came into contact with European whites. The racialization of the world system was, and still is, based on social, economic, political, and psychological relations of domination and subordination between social groups defined as superior “races” and groups defined as inferior “races” (Omi and Winant 1994; Bonilla-Silva 2001). Bonilla-Silva (2001) argues that the racialization of the world created “racialized social systems” where the dominant race has developed various practices and mechanisms to maintain its social standing and subjugated racial groups have struggled to attempt to change their position in the social order. Racism has a material or structural foundation, that is, “racial” matters in societies reflect the interests of the parties in conflict. Thus, Bonilla-Silva (2001, 2006) notes

that while prejudice in all its variants can be regarded as an expression of dominant group interests, effective racial control benefits not from a plurality of highly racialized individuals in society, but from the passive and tacit support of the racial order by most members of the dominant race—in the case of the United States, whites. Because racialized social systems work to preserve white privilege, progressive attempts to create a more balanced and egalitarian society are often ideals in theory, yet failures in practice. For example, although there is debate surrounding the notion that schools and educators are necessarily privileged sites or actors for progressive social change, in truth, they usually function, despite contradictions, to reproduce the racialized social system (Althusser 1977).

### **The Need for Organizational Understanding in Race and Ethnicity**

The foundational elements of race in societal institutions are well established. However, in order to delve deep in understanding how racial inequality is sustained, we turn to insights from the organizational literature. Our conception of organizations moves beyond Weber, so as to incorporate the role of human agency as elaborated by John Dewey and George Herbert Mead (see Sjoberg et al. 2002). In brief we find that human agents within organizations shape and are shaped by the nature of organizational structures; so too human agents (e.g., clients) who interact with organizations shape and are shaped by the complex organizational arrangements in question. While attentive to the larger organizational complexes, we focus primarily on how impoverished minorities interact with the lower echelons of organizations such as education, welfare, and prisons.

Formal organizations are characterized by rules and norms (formal and informal), and typically these rules or norms are organized so that some persons have more knowledge and power than do others. Modern-day organizations are typified by, for instance, hierarchy, a complex division of labor, and standardization and routinization of many everyday activities. Assuredly the manner in which hierarchy, the division of labor, and routinization are put together can vary considerably. Still the principles remain rather intact. There is a great deal of talk nowadays about the leveling of organizational hierarchy, but that thesis does not square with the fact that managers—in large corporations and even in universities—are rewarded, socially and economically, more handsomely than ever before.

The hierarchical patterns generally mean that the leadership of organizations strives to sustain a monopoly of knowledge about how the system actually works. Concomitantly, school, prison, or welfare officials are keenly aware of their larger constituency. And persons outside organizations who interact with members of organizations vary considerably in the social and cultural capital they possess as they strive to cope with the rather technical rules to which educational, welfare, and prison personnel are expected to adhere.

One defining characteristic of educational, welfare, and prison organizations is that the rules and norms are fewer and vaguer for the managers of organizational power than for the personnel who staff lower-level positions, the latter typically being engulfed by rules or norms that are more constraining and confining. This pattern is heightened by leadership's delegation to personnel below of blameability under the guise of responsibility. A simple illustration may clarify our argument. The managers of school systems theoretically delegate responsibility to street-level workers below—to teachers in particular—who must interact with students and often family members. But if the school is criticized for its performance, it is often the teachers or other lower-level personnel, not the upper-level personnel, who bear the brunt of the attack—in part because the lower-level personnel

interact directly with the clients, in part because the leadership is able to deflect attention away from its own failings.

A salient feature of organizations such as schools, prisons, and welfare agencies is that persons who are most bound by the rules are those who most frequently interact with the poor from racial and ethnic minority groups. Consequently, impoverished minorities, who are the least knowledgeable about how the system functions, are called upon to interact with persons who are the least able to bend the rules. Certainly, street-level workers are constantly called upon to interpret the rules relating to how they should cope with clients (rules do not interpret themselves), but street-level workers possess only limited freedom to reinterpret the rules so as to accommodate the special circumstances in which poor people find themselves. Yes, it is said that the cop on the beat has considerable discretion. But this is typically carefully bounded. We know that the police in Texas are prone to stop, often in an arbitrary manner, Latino drivers in Texas, and they are far less likely to arbitrarily stop privileged whites. The latter command the economic resources along with social and cultural capital to challenge the system, their views being looked upon favorably by judges and others who would resent being hassled by officers in the manner racial and ethnic minorities are hassled.

Clearly, middle-class parents typically understand that administrators are less bound by the rules, and thus their children's special needs are more likely to be addressed by upper-echelon administrators rather than by lower-level employees. In the case of public schools, middle-class parents can, come election time, contribute money to candidates for the school board (and mobilize so as to elect the candidates that support their views), and in the case of private schools, the parents pay the bill rather directly and often expect to receive privileged treatment. Put simply, according to business protocol, "the customer is always right."

What we should recognize is that persons who interact with the educational, welfare, and prison systems do so in terms of their social and cultural capital—concepts that Pierre Bourdieu (1986) introduced into the sociological lexicon. We use "social capital" to refer to the social networks that persons are able to tap for learning about how to cope with organizations, whereas "cultural capital"—as we employ the term—involves knowledge (formal and tacit) as to how organizations operate. Clearly impoverished minorities are embedded in social networks, but these, while supportive of their everyday activities, often cannot be relied upon to provide knowledge of how to understand and cope with the rules of formal organizations. Lacking such resources, economically strapped minorities find themselves vulnerable in societal institutions as they are forced to interact directly with lower-level occupants of organizations who have little power and are positioned to apply the rules in a rather narrow manner. The data strongly suggest that organizations, even those in the areas of education and welfare, which are designed to assist economically strapped minorities improve themselves, may also serve to keep them in their place. Although ideal values or beliefs call for equal treatment and equality, actual practices vary considerably from these ideals.

We shall also briefly introduce a more specialized topic relating to social organizations—namely privatization, which has received little attention by scholars who write about racial and ethnic minorities. When the general public or sociologists discuss privatization, they generally think about the private sector taking over activities traditionally defined as governmental in nature. This pattern has been widespread in the past quarter-century, as we have witnessed major efforts to privatize schools, prisons, and the welfare system. Further, it is frequently assumed that the governmental sector is bureaucratized and the private sector is not. But that thesis is unsustainable empirically. Large corporations—including those whose business is education, prisons, and welfare—are typified by hierarchy (note the power and earnings of managers), a complex division of labor, and routinization and standardization (the ideal of

efficiency being widely invoked). Admittedly, private- and public-sector organizations differ considerably in their objectives, but significant organizational similarities between the private and public sectors can be delineated. In addition to moving educational, welfare, and prison activities from the public to the private sector, we can isolate another feature to privatization, overlooked by most sociologists. Although we are unable to pursue the issue in detail herein, students of race relations will need to address the matter of transferring risk from both public and private organizations onto individuals. In recent decades sociologists such as Anthony Giddens (1998) and Ulrich Beck (1992) have, in a highly innovative manner, highlighted the need to investigate the issue of risk. What they have not done (given their inattention to formal organizations) is to examine how we have witnessed a systematic effort to shift risk—regarding, for instance, health insurance and retirement benefits—from organizations onto individuals with potentially grave implications for racial and ethnic minorities. This effort was highlighted by the intense political debate in the United States in 2005 regarding the future of social security, during which time strategic elements of the U.S. public acknowledged that it is easier for organizations (in this instance the government) to bear the burden of risk for future payment of retirement benefits than it is for individuals to do so.

In sum, we envisage our discussion of formal organizations as a loose framework (having drawn on Sjoberg et al. 1966, 2002; and Tan and Sjoberg 2005) within which we analyze the research that has emerged with respect to how impoverished minorities are called upon to interact and cope with schools, welfare agencies, and prisons. After an overview of the literature and historical trends, we draw out more fully, in the concluding sector of this chapter, the implications of our analysis for the study of race and ethnic relations in the United States and elsewhere.

### **THE SWEET ENCHANTMENT OF COLOR-BLIND EDUCATION**

Education has historically been viewed as the great equalizer or enabler—the route through which people can gain access to societal opportunity structures and through which inequality can be reduced. It is viewed as the primary vehicle through which people achieve upward mobility. Human capital theory, for example, emphasizes the importance of education in maximizing benefits from labor markets. It is commonly assumed that everyone has equal access to education. Thus, educational outcomes are seen in personal terms, with blame placed on students and their families when they fail or drop out of school.

Despite the notion that education is the great equalizer, the reality is much different, particularly in the case of minorities. At the beginning of the 20th century, the schooling of blacks occurred in apartheid conditions—separate schools for blacks and whites. Today, despite efforts to provide minority students—primarily black and Latino—with greater access to education, these students continue to be schooled in apartheid-like environments. The color line in American education is alive and well in the beginning of the 21st century.

### **The Reproduction of Inequality in Education**

Sociologists recognize the intergenerational stratification of education (see Feagin 2005). For example, status attainment scholars have noted the importance of parental socioeconomic status (SES) on the educational, occupational, and earnings outcomes of their offspring

(Blau and Duncan 1967; Sewell and Hauser 1975). Economists have also indicated that people with greater socioeconomic resources have relatively few children, but invest heavily in their education (Becker and Lewis 1973; Blake 1981). Hence, well-off parents pass on their advantages to their children.

Yet, affluent parents invest in their children in other ways, too. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) demonstrate how these parents provide their children with social connections and cultural sophistication, which can help them navigate the educational system. Thus, well-off parents give their children access to valuable social capital (social connections) which they can tap to succeed in schools. For instance, these children live in prosperous neighborhoods and have friends who are affluent and have high academic aspirations. They also have a wide network of adult role models who can assist them in countless ways. Such students can bank on these social connections to take advantage of educational opportunities that are beyond the reach of poor and minority students.

Moreover, well-to-do parents also invest in the cultural capital (knowledge, preferences, skills, and cultural tastes) of their children. For example, such parents can enroll their children in specialized academic programs; take them on trips domestically and abroad; take them to museums; and provide them access to books, newspapers, magazines, and computers. These students also gain the cultural polish (e.g., clothing, speech, and manners) that makes them acceptable to mainstream society, including their teachers and administrators (Morris 2005). In sum, high-SES children possess cultural capital that can help them succeed in the educational system.

Furthermore, affluent parents can draw on their own social and cultural capital in managing their children's educational careers (Lareau 2000; Useem 1992). They have themselves succeeded in the educational system and know the "ropes" of the system and how the "game" is played (Ainsworth and Roscigno 2005; Lareau and Horvat 1999). Due to their high SES, these parents represent a powerful voice that educators cannot easily dismiss. Such parents can advocate for their children's place in the educational system, as they have been shown to intervene to place their children in higher academic tracks (Baker and Stevenson 1986; Lareau 2000; Lucas 1999, 2001).

While we have emphasized above the advantages that parents transmit to their children, it is apparent that such transmissions extend back numerous generations. Feagin (2005) has eloquently described how the racist foundational aspects of American society allowed whites to gain economic resources that were easily transmitted to their children and to future generations. Indeed, European immigrants in the establishment of the United States and later on gained valuable economic resources as well as land that provided advantages for themselves and for their progeny, advantages that continue to place whites in the higher spheres of the contemporary stratification system. On the other hand, Feagin (2005) points out that blacks did not have access to economic resources and land because of the institution of slavery, Jim Crow, and racism. As such, blacks did not have the valuable economic, social, and cultural capital that whites possessed that allowed them to provide their progeny with economic and social advantages. The result is that the disadvantaged position of African Americans—as well as those of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans—today reflects the transmission of economic and social disadvantages across numerous generations extending back centuries.

We now turn to a discussion of efforts that have been made to decrease the inequities in the educational system. We will see how many whites—in conjunction with the courts—marshaled resources to reverse gains in school desegregation made following the landmark *Brown* decision.

## The Politics of School Racial Desegregation

There has historically been a deep chasm between blacks and whites in the South, reflecting the deep structural elements manifested in Jim Crow policies and customs that kept the races apart (Myrdal 1944). Racially separate schools existed throughout the South for a large part of the 20th century. Although the segregation of the races occurred in a *de jure* fashion in the South, it largely took place on a *de facto* basis outside this region. Note that Mexican schools emerged in the 1910s in much of the Southwest, notably in Texas and California.

Many supporters of school segregation justified the separation of the races in public schools by arguing that schools could be separate but equal. Yet, Clotfelter (2004) shows that separate schools were unequal with respect to funding, facilities, class sizes, and course offerings. He notes that in most Deep South states, the per-pupil spending in black public schools was less than half of that in white public schools in 1940. In Mississippi, the funding of black schools was only 17 percent that of white schools. Clotfelter (2004) indicates that public school segregation was also significant in the North during the early 1950s.

This is the backdrop that existed when, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court announced its historic *Brown* decision, which sought to dismantle the separation of the races in public schools. Immediate resistance to the ruling arose throughout the South. Thus, southern governors tenaciously resisted desegregating public schools, with Alabama's governor, George Wallace, exemplifying this in 1963 (Clotfelter 2004:13): "I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Southern congressional members signed the Southern Manifesto, condemning the *Brown* decision (Clotfelter 2004; Feagin 2005). Further, white parents and school officials viciously opposed the implementation of the law.

Because the *Brown* decision was weak in enforcement, it allowed southern officials to stall desegregation, resulting in little progress during the 1954–1964 period in the region (Clotfelter 2004). However, increasing pressure from all three branches of government prompted significant change in the 1965–1973 period. Clotfelter (2004) highlights the 1969–1972 period as a time that saw particularly rapid change in desegregation. The percentage of blacks in the South attending schools where blacks accounted for 90 percent or more of the student body fell from 78 percent in 1968 to 25 percent in 1972 (Clotfelter 2004). The South shifted from being the most segregated region in terms of public education in 1968 to the least segregated region in 1972.

Nonetheless, dramatic changes, namely the *Milliken v. Bradley* decision in 1974, stemmed this trend not only in the South but also nationally (Clotfelter 2004). In this case involving Detroit, the Supreme Court ruled that students could not be moved across school districts to achieve school desegregation. Thus, black students could not be moved from central cities to suburbs, where whites were increasingly settling. Clotfelter (2004:31) asserts that *Milliken* "marked the beginning of a retreat from the proactive pursuit of racial balance as a judicial objective."

The early 1990s brought a series of additional Supreme Court rulings that further reversed school desegregation: *Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell* (1991), *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992), and *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995). These cases generally allowed school districts to end desegregation orders. Orfield and Eaton (1996:5) claim that:

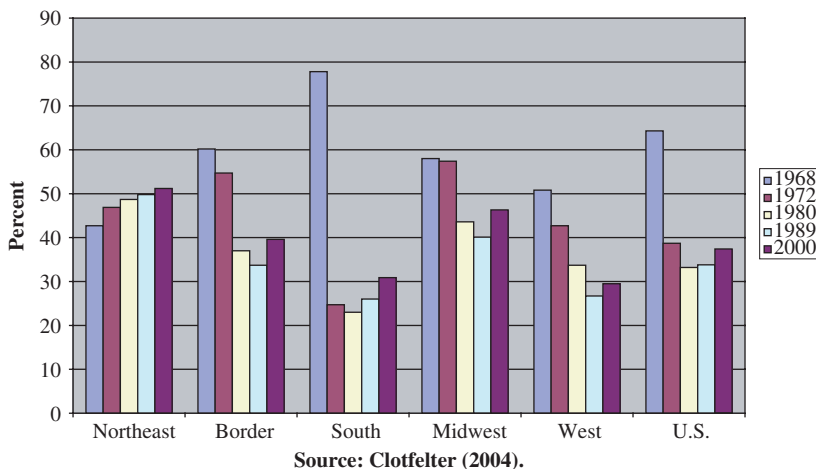
The significance of the *Dowell*, *Pitts*, and *Jenkins* decisions . . . is best understood within the historical context of this long, difficult and yet unfinished post-*Brown* struggle toward desegregated schools. The quiet, gradual movement from the holdings of *Brown* to those of *Dowell*, *Pitts*, and *Jenkins*, expressed allegiance to *Brown* while chipping away at its spirit and its power. In many communities, *Brown* is left intact today in theory only.

Frankenberg et al. (2003:4) summarize the reversing trend in school desegregation:

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, American public schools are now 12 years into the process of continuous resegregation. The desegregation of black students, which increased continuously from the 1950s to the late 1980s, has now receded to levels not seen in three decades. Although the South remains the nation's most integrated region for both blacks and whites, it is the region that is most rapidly going backwards as the courts terminate many major and successful desegregation orders.

Figure 19.1 illustrates further the reversal in the desegregation of public schools. Across regions, the percentage of blacks attending schools that are at least 50 percent or 90 percent nonwhite has risen. The South leads this trend, with the percentage of blacks going to schools where nonwhites compose at least 90 percent of the student body increasing from 23 percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 2000. The segregation of blacks is especially noticeable in the Northeast, where slightly more than half go to schools that are 90–100 percent nonwhite (see Kozol 2005). Also, across regions, between two thirds and four fifths of blacks attend public schools where nonwhites are the majority (data not shown here). Additionally, Latino students are now the most segregated group in public schools (Frankenberg et al. 2003).

While the courts played a major role in the reversal of the integration of public schools in the post-*Brown* period, white parents also played an active role. Clotfelter (2004) asserts that many white parents preferred not to send their children to mixed-race schools and used numerous options at their disposal—including help from state and local officials—to avoid enrolling their children in integrated schools. Clotfelter (2004) identifies strategies that averted integration including private schools, migration to suburbs, academic tracking within schools, gerrymandering of school districts, allowance of student transfers, and the siting of new schools. White parents used all of the resources at their disposal to realize their desires. Illustratively, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995:60), drawing on Harris' (1993) concept of “whiteness as property” (the *right* that whiteness provides), argue that:



**FIGURE 19.1.** Percentage of black students attending public schools that are 90–100% nonwhite for selected years.  
Source: Clotfelter (2004).



In schooling, the absolute right to exclude was demonstrated initially by denying blacks access to schooling altogether. Later, it was demonstrated by the creation and maintenance of separate schools. More recently it has been demonstrated by white flight and the growing insistence on vouchers, public funding of private schools, and schools of choice. Within schools, absolute right to exclude is demonstrated by resegregation via tracking.

### **The Color Line of Public School Funding**

Not only do minority students increasingly attend schools that have few white students, but their schools are also ill-financed. Kozol (1991) vividly portrays the massive inequities in the funding of public education.

As in the case of school desegregation, the courts have debated the funding issue. Kozol (2005) notes the significance of the date of March 21, 1973, when the Supreme Court overruled a Texas district court that had declared unconstitutional the funding of Texas public schools. The case involved Edgewood, a poor largely Latino district. At the time, despite having one of the highest property rates in the area, the district eked out only \$37 per pupil, which rose to \$231 with a grant from the state (Kozol 2005). In contrast, the richest district in the area, a predominantly white district, raised \$543 per student. In the ruling, Justice Powell wrote that education “is not a fundamental interest” in that it “is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution” and continued “the argument here is not that the children in districts having relatively low assessable property values are receiving no public education; rather, it is that they are receiving a poor quality of education than that available to children in districts having more assessable wealth” (Kozol 2005:242).

Huge disparities in public-school funding persist. The Educational Trust (2005) analyzed public school funding data for 49 states to compare the funding disparities in 2003 between the top and bottom quartiles on the levels of poverty and minority enrollment. Overall, 27 of the 49 states spent less on poorer school districts than they did on richer school districts, with the average gap being \$907 per pupil. The gap was greatest in New York (−\$2,280) and Illinois (−\$2,065). In addition, 30 of the 49 states provided less funding to school districts with the highest percentages of minority students than they did to those with the highest shares of white students, with the average gap being \$614 across the states. The gap was greatest in Wyoming (−\$2,416), North Dakota (−\$2,046), and New York (−\$1,965).

Schools with largely poor and minority student bodies suffer in other ways as well (see Bracey 2002). For example, such schools are more likely than richer schools to have inadequate facilities, curricula, educational materials, and technology. They are also more likely to have inexperienced and uncertified teachers (Hochschild 2003; Kozol 2005). Kozol (2005) provides a litany of examples showing the inferior education of minority students. Kozol (2005:163) laments that in the era of testing and accountability, there is not a “misery index for the children of apartheid education.” To illustrate, Cooper (2001), in reporting on court documents on a lawsuit against the state of California, describes “young children picking up beer bottles, condoms and bullets on school grounds,” “special education students assigned to no teacher and roaming the halls,” “rats in cafeterias, one carrying fruit in its mouth, others scurrying around a bread rack,” “chemistry labs with no chemicals at all,” “literature classes without books,” and “computer classes where, according to one student, ‘we sit there and talk about what we would be doing if we had computers.’” Such conditions would be intolerable in schools with largely white and affluent students.

## **Inequality within School Walls**

Inequality is, however, embedded at varying levels of geography, what Hochschild (2003) refers to as “nested inequalities.” Thus, not only does it exist across states, school districts, and schools, but it also occurs within schools. Tracking within schools is fairly widespread, as research indicates that it was used in roughly three fifths of elementary schools and in four fifths of secondary schools in the mid-1990s (Strum 1993).

While popular, tracking reproduces existing inequities (Ainsworth and Roscigno 2005; Ansalone 2001). Indeed, white and affluent students are most likely to be tracked into higher levels, with minority and poor students more likely to be placed in lower tracks (Darling-Hammond 1997; Hochschild 2003; Lucas 1999; Oakes 1995). Ansalone (2001) points out that although tracking may not be done directly on the basis of race and SES, the criteria commonly used are correlated with these attributes. For instance, children entering kindergarten are tracked based on their ability to read upon entering school, with minority and lower-SES youngsters being least likely to read at that stage. Moreover, students are tracked in other ways including cultural norms, language, and disciplinary records, all related to race and social class (Ansalone 2001).

As minority students are sorted into lower tracks, their options narrow tremendously. They do not have access to courses that can prepare them for college, but take courses that train them for low-wage jobs. They interact mostly with students who are similar to themselves. They are not likely to be identified by their teachers for awards or for academic opportunities. Research shows that academic tracking is beneficial to students in higher tracks, but harmful—or not helpful—to those in lower tracks (Ansalone 2001; Hochschild 2003; Lucas 1999). In sum, the cards are stacked against lower-track minority students (Lipman 2003). As Ansalone (2001:44) concludes, tracking “impedes the achievement and future life chances of less-advantaged students.”

## **Accountability and High-Stakes Testing**

One of the major trends affecting education concerns the increasing push for accountability and high-stakes testing. Many states have implemented such corporate-based models (Lipman 2003), which aim to hold schools accountable for the education of their students with the evaluation based solely on student performance on high-stakes tests. Despite the wide disparity in the funding and resources of public schools, all schools and students are assumed to be on an equal playing field. The models emphasize one output (students’ scores) without taking into account inputs. The framework became etched nationally in 2002 when President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind program was implemented.

While accountability programs emphasize academic excellence and the reduction of academic disparities across selected groups of students, the outcome has been far from favorable for many students, especially minorities. There are several ways in which high-stakes tests have especially hurt students of color (see McNeil 2005). First, students who fail high-stakes tests or exit exams are likely to drop out of school, while administrators have incentives to “push” low-achieving students out of school to produce high scores (Lipman 2003; McNeil 2005). Second, students who fail high-stakes exams are subject to grade retention (Lipman 2003), increasing their odds of dropping out. Third, with the emphasis on preparing students for high-stakes exams (Lipman 2003), there is a significant loss in the curriculum. As McNeil (2005:88) points out, “The work of classrooms under the accountability system has shifted

from learning content, ideas, and skills to learning how to take a standardized exam.” The result is that students, particularly minorities, are shortchanged academically.

In contrast, higher-SES students, primarily whites, are shielded from the drudgery of high-stakes tests, as their parents can use their social and cultural capital to intervene on their behalf. For example, Lipman (2003) notes how a predominantly white parental organization consistently pressed school administrators for the highest-quality education for their children, thus minimizing the importance of high-stakes exams on their schooling.

It is important to note that the No Child Left Behind program is based on the Texas model of accountability and high-stakes exams (Valenzuela 2005b). As Texas governor, Bush championed the model. Subsequently, in his presidential administration his two secretaries of the Department of Education were key players in the Texas model. Bush’s first secretary of education, Roderick Paige, was superintendent of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and received praise for his leadership in the district’s supposed success in the state’s high-stakes exams and low dropout rates. Paige’s successor, Margaret Spellings, was Governor Bush’s senior advisor. She was important in the development of the governor’s educational policy, which is the foundation for the No Child Left Behind program. Because of its role as a model for the nation, we now examine the Texas program.

## The Texas Mirage

Texas is a national leader in the accountability and high-stakes testing of public education. Indeed, the state received wide praise for the “Texas Miracle” reflecting high scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test alongside low dropout rates. Upon closer inspection, however, the results were far less positive than what was presented (Haney 2000; McNeil 2005). The mirage is due to various problems including the failure to take into account “missing students”—likely dropouts—and exploiting ways of classifying students to keep them from negatively affecting scores (Haney 2000).

A critical assessment of the Texas program reveals more illusion (see Valenzuela 2005a). We draw here on the analysis of McNeil (2005). The illusion stems, in part, from the use of a sole measure—performance on the TAAS—to assess academic achievement (McNeil 2005; Valenzuela 2005b). Using this indicator, scores rose steadily from 53 percent of students passing the TAAS in 1994 to 85 percent passing in 2002 (McNeil 2005), a trend that occurred across all designated categories of students.

However, McNeil (2005:57) reveals that “*On every other indicator of academic achievement, Texas children are not only showing weak academic performance, but also growing increasingly weak over time*” (italics in original). She highlights several indicators. First, Texas students have declining scores on the Texas Academic Skills Performance (TASP) exam, a less challenging test than the SAT and ACT, which most students applying to Texas public universities need to take. The percentage of test-takers passing the TASP fell from 52 percent in 1995 to 29 percent in 1999, with the percentages of beginning college students requiring remedial training increasing over the course of high-stakes testing (McNeil 2005). Second, the modest gains of Texas students on the SAT I over a 10-year period fell below national trends (Haney 2000), with Texas students ranked near the bottom nationally on SAT I scores. Third, while Texas has tried to validate its rising TAAS scores with its increasing scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (a low-stakes exam that states do not need to administer), there is need for caution (McNeil 2005). While a random sample of students is selected to take the NAEP, administrators are allowed to exclude

students from taking the exam (Amrein and Berliner 2002). Haney (2000) notes that Texas has the highest percentage of students excluded from taking the NAEP and that its percentage of students excluded from taking the exam increased concomitantly with its rising NAEP scores. Finally, Texas continues to have high dropout rates. Overall, two fifths or fewer of students in the six largest school districts graduated in 1999, with Latino students in five of the districts being about half to three fourths as likely as white students to complete high school (McNeil 2005). In sum, the Texas miracle turns out to be a mirage and one that has been detrimental to the education of students, most notably minority students.

Having overviewed the structural forces operating in the educational sphere which set the parameters for the education of students, we now turn our attention to the micro world where students operate. As Reay (2004:1019) asserts, inequalities are “made and remade at the micro level, in and through innumerable everyday practices.”

### **The Micro World of Minority Students**

The schools where minority students disproportionately attend, the curricula that guide their studies, the courses that they take, and the school environments all work to marginalize them at many levels. They tend to be marginalized from the larger society, schools they attend, high-achieving peers, and teachers and administrators. Minority students tend to bear the stigma of their segregated schools and their lower academic tracks. In the era of high-stakes testing, many bear the label of “failure” either directly or through the schools that they attend. Delgado (1995) reveals the extreme forms of marginalization that some minority students experience through the notion that society sees some kids as being “beyond love.” For example, Delgado (1995:49) asserts that blacks, particularly the poor:

... have so few chances, so little interaction with majority society, that they might as well be exiles, outcasts, permanent black sheep who will never be permitted into the fold. Majority society has, in effect, written them off.

Minority students tend to be unduly labeled as low achievers and at-risk students and to be sorted into lower academic tracks. Undoubtedly, these labels influence the opinions and expectations that teachers and administrators form of them (Ansalone 2001; Rosenbloom and Way 2004; Wheelock 1992). Because minority students tend to lack mainstream forms of social and cultural capital, they are unable to avert the low opinions and expectations that many educators have of them. In the case of students who are “written off,” educators shift the focus from academics to discipline (Fernandez 2002). Accordingly, students are taught skills that will make them reliable and obedient workers who will hold low-skill, low-wage jobs when they leave school (see Kozol 2005).

Reyes (2006) examines the links between race and discipline and its consequences which question the democratic nature of education. Drawing on data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, Reyes (2006) points out that African American and Latino students are disproportionately disciplined in schools and receive harsher discipline than do white students. Indeed, Ansalone (2001) reports that teachers in lower tracks spend twice as much time disciplining students as do those in higher tracks. He notes that it is, thus, not surprising that higher-track students tend to view their teachers as “warm” and “fair,” while lower track students see their teachers as “punitive” and “unenthusiastic.” In addition, in the mid-1990s as part of accountability policies, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) started the first two military high schools in the country (located in African American neighborhoods), started a military

middle school, infused military programs in high schools, and initiated zero-tolerance discipline rules (Lipman 2003; see also Reyes 2006). Yet, another example of discipline imposed on minority students derives from their clothing and mannerisms. Morris (2005) observes that African American girls are constantly told to “act like young women,” while Latino boys, who receive the harshest discipline, are consistently told to “tuck in that shirt!” Similarly, Ferguson (2000) shows how educators target African American males for discipline due to their clothing and behavior.

Critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical theory (LatCrit), with their emphasis on giving “voice” to marginalized people, offer another glimpse of the world of minority students. We highlight here the counter-story of Pablo from the work of Fernández (2002). Pablo, a student at a Midwestern university, provides a personal account of his experience as a student in the Chicago public schools. He recalls that many of the mostly white teachers did not care whether students learned, did not enjoy their jobs, and exhibited racist views. Pablo also observes that the focus of schools was on vocational skills and discipline rather than on academics. He also describes how students resisted their treatment at school by skipping classes.

Yet, Pablo reports that there were some teachers who cared about students. For example, he credits a certain teacher for assisting him in getting the courses he needed to prepare for college after the teacher recognized Pablo’s math skills. Moreover, he remarks that some teachers had high expectations of them and tried to focus more on academics than on discipline. This is reminiscent of the “authentic care” that Valenzuela identifies as key in teachers making true connections with their students. However, Pablo mentions that caring teachers encountered barriers related to curricular requirements and resistance from colleagues and students. This is a story that is repeated in the literature. The agency, professionalism, and integrity of teachers, overwhelmingly those in predominantly poor and minority schools, are restricted severely by school administrators who place emphasis on preparing students to do well on high-stakes exams. Indeed, policies are made by administrators who are shielded by numerous levels of subordinates in the system. In the end, it is students themselves and their teachers—those at the bottom of the hierarchy—that are held accountable for the outcome on high-stakes tests.

In sum, while the educational system has been seen as the great equalizer and the vehicle for upward mobility, the reality is quite different. Minority students have faced tremendous obstacles in attaining an equitable education. They continue to lag significantly behind and have been disproportionately tracked into low-skill, low-wage jobs that do not offer social mobility. We turn our attention now to the welfare system, which has been seen as the safety net that can cushion the fall of the poor and help them get back on their feet.

## **THE RACIAL DIMENSIONS OF THE AMERICAN WELFARE STATE**

The body of scholarship on the American welfare system is immense and most is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, we focus on illustrating the racial dimensions that are explicitly and implicitly embodied within social welfare programs and the ways that organizations reproduce and structure interactions in order to maintain the racial status quo. As we will document, race has always been a factor in social policies and programs although not one that has been readily acknowledged. Quadagno (1994:3) makes the point that “. . . during the 1960s social policy became linked to race in consequential ways.” Indeed the social policies of the civil rights era were linked to race in consequential ways. But so were the social policies of

Roosevelt's New Deal during the 1930s and 1940s as were the Civil War pensions of the 1870s before that were linked to race in consequential ways. As Katz (2000:117) explains:

Although the history of the American welfare state is not primarily a story about race, race remains deeply imbricated in its origins and development. . . . The programs and agencies of America's public and private welfare states have served African Americans both identically to and differently from whites. The original structure of some key programs guaranteed blacks different treatment while debased images of African Americans have dominated discourse around welfare reform.

### Early Forms of Social Support in the United States

While many scholars date the advent of social welfare in the United States to the New Deal policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) during the 1930s, as the works of Katz (1986), Skocpol (1992), Gordon (1994), and Goodwin (1997) expand upon, federal social welfare programs existed in the United States well in advance of the New Deal policies during the 1930s. In fact, between 1880 and 1910 the federal government dispensed some one quarter of its annual expenditures to Civil War veterans and their widows (Skocpol 1992). Further, while the organization responsible for administering war pensions was not formally racist, racial disparities were apparent nonetheless. In actuality, in that day, as today, racism appears most fully, not in the formal legislation, but in its implementation.

In the period prior to the New Deal, the issue of gender also came to the fore in a variety of ways. Gordon documents how white, middle-class female reformers shared the conservative position with male politicians in defining two categories of women: those most deserving of aid such as widows (largely white), who, through misfortune, were left alone to care for their children in contrast to the undeserving women, divorced or deserted women (largely black), many of whom were wage-earners. Not surprisingly, social policies relating to welfare encouraged men to be wage-earners and women to be stay-at-home mothers.

It is not our intent to flesh out the details of the racial and gender disparities in the pre-New Deal welfare programs. Rather, we note only that scholars have documented in fine detail their presence in the pre-New Deal welfare programs.

### Race and the New Deal Policies of FDR

In *When Affirmative Action Was White*, Katznelson (2005) explicates the ways that race shaped Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs. He argues that assessing the impact of affirmative action by looking only at policies instituted during the 1960s' civil rights era obscures the ways the economic playing field had already been tilted in favor of whites well before this time. Katznelson provides an answer to the paradox of how during one of the most prosperous periods in U.S. history (post-WWII) the racial gap between whites and blacks grew. The answer, per Katznelson, lies in the political leverage held by racist southern Democrats during the crafting of the New Deal policies.

The New Deal, beholden to southern votes, . . . could not, undercut segregation and the ancillary denial of civil and political rights. There would be no anti-lynching law on President Roosevelt's watch; nor would racial hierarchies in the armed forces or federal agencies be disturbed in any basic way. The administration was trapped . . . by the pervasive legacy of Jim Crow. Any crusade to break out of its power restraints would have been doomed to fail. . . . Such a campaign would

have risked undercutting the wide array of social and economic programs the New Deal advanced. So a trade-off seemed an offer to black America: abjure too strident a claim for civil and political inclusion in exchange for assured and concrete material benefits. (p. 29)

Many programs that emerged from FDR's administration—from the highly touted GI Bill to workplace protection provisions—were deeply embedded in racist ideology. Katznelson documents that in each case, southern Democrats were able to minimize the social safety net for African Americans by either limiting the scope of the program, limiting its reach, or both. In the case of assistance for the elderly poor, for example, southern Democrats were able to get the administration of this program, including the determination of benefit levels, shifted to state and local levels. With all-white local staffs administering benefits, program acceptance rates for African Americans in the South were considerably lower than for whites despite their higher levels of need.

Southern Democrats also left their calling card on the Aid to Dependent Children's (ADC) program. ADC nationalized the state-level mothers' pension programs. ADC was structured as an entitlement program—anyone meeting the eligibility criteria was entitled to receive assistance (Mink 2003). However, because administration of the program was left to states, many states introduced restrictions on eligibility (Katznelson 2005). State officials designed qualifications around white, widowed women with children adopting "suitable" home requirements to limit black enrollment. Additional ploys used by southern politicians to exclude blacks from assistance included seasonal employment policies that cut ADC recipients off welfare rolls during cotton-picking season and "man of the house" rules that allowed social workers to make unannounced home visits and purge from welfare rolls women found living with a man (Quadagno 1994). The policies worked. In the South, black families, despite greater hardships, were underrepresented on ADC rolls (Quadagno 1994).

## The 1960s' War on Poverty and Social Welfare

The enduring legacy of racial prejudice and discrimination significantly impacted the lives of African Americans—most acutely in the southern states where poverty rates were high but public assistance rates were low.

For more than a century, the southern welfare system had reinforced the racial caste system. Fifty-five percent of Mississippi residents had incomes below the poverty level but only 14 percent received assistance; less than 10 percent of Mississippians participated in federal free lunch programs. In 1970 929,000 Alabamians lacked the income necessary for a marginal diet, yet only 277,000 benefited from the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food-assistance programs (Quadagno 1994:128).

Southern officials used black poverty as a mechanism of social control that was neither benign nor accidental. Whites warned blacks to "surrender their uppity ideas about changing the local balance of power" (Quadagno 1994:129). Blacks would be systematically terminated from welfare rolls and other forms of assistance for registering to vote. Blacks were "relegated to decrepit housing in the worst sections of cities, forced to send their children to inferior schools, and locked out of opportunities with upward mobility . . ." (Quadagno 1994:29). Instead of uplifting a poor population, southern-style welfare "reinforced social cleavages" and maintained the racial, social, and economic stratification system.

LBJ's War on Poverty offered corrective measures to the racist policies of the New Deal. At best, Quadagno argues, FDR's New Deal policies "frustrated" anti-poverty efforts. Only

by removing social programs from the yoke of “old-line” agencies could the “apathy and resistance existing institutions generated be transcended” (Quadagno 1994:30).

Further, it was during the 1960s that welfare rights groups began agitating for “increased benefits, jobs, and the removal of a host of odious statutes that prevented women from receiving benefits” (Quadagno 1994:120). Consequently, Congress loosened the restrictions for assistance. However, continuing the trend begun with mothers’ pensions, the notion that welfare mothers should work was solidified with an amendment to the Social Security Act in 1962 to allow states to use ADC funds to pay for child care, and the enactment of the Work Incentive Program (WIP) in 1967 served as an inducement for mothers to work.

As a result of policy liberalization, welfare rolls increased from 7.8 to 8.4 million in one year. For the first time, many of those receiving assistance were black, Latina, urban, single, and divorced mothers—all groups which had previously been limited. Johnson’s programs opened doors for blacks that had previously been shut. The percentage of blacks enrolled in college and their representation in white-collar jobs increased significantly; and the wage differential between whites and blacks began to narrow (Quadagno 1994).

“We have just lost the South for a generation,” folklore says LBJ muttered to an aide after signing the Civil Rights Act. Provision of basic democratic rights to a group long denied these rights sparked a backlash that welfare reform is but one manifestation.

### **Pre-1996 Welfare Reform Debates**

The backlash against social welfare policies began before the ink had even dried. Criticisms that welfare fostered dependency, usurped fathers’ responsibilities, rewarded laziness, and promoted immoral behavior emerged even before the first piece of legislation was passed. Between 1967 and 1988, federal welfare policy was modified six times—each time getting progressively moralistic and punitive for policy noncompliance—this despite already harsh penalties for noncompliance in most states. Most states already had laws enabling welfare agencies to end non-marital motherhood by sterilizing mothers. Southern states were particularly punitive. For example, in 1958 Mississippi policy denied welfare benefits to children whose parents were not married; in Louisiana and Mississippi, unmarried mothers could be subject to criminal penalties for having a child out of wedlock. By the 1960s, half of the U.S. states could limit welfare to those deemed “morally unfit” (Mink 1998).

Beginning in 1950, federal welfare laws began requiring states to report to law enforcement officials when a child who had been abandoned by one of the parents (presumably the father) received welfare benefits. Some states categorized welfare recipients into one of two categories—employable mothers (minorities) and unemployable mothers (whites). In some instances, employable mothers were disqualified from receiving welfare, or as in the case of Arkansas, welfare grants to employable mothers were suspended during planting and harvest times (Mink 1998:37). The ensuing years saw a steady move toward requiring all welfare recipients to work, but ambivalence remained for women with small children. Per Mink (1998:38),

From the 1960s to the present, work provisions in national welfare policy have equivocated about recipient mothers’ work outside the home, mandating maternal employment in principle while exempting mothers of young children and emphasizing the wage work obligations of fathers.

The ambivalence between mothering and working continued into the 1980s. A change in welfare legislation in 1981 required certain welfare recipients to “work off their benefits” via



workfare programs (work, education, or employment-related training programs). However, the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 exempted poor married women from work requirements and entitled welfare recipients of preschool-aged children or younger to child care if the mother could not participate in workfare programs as a result. As Mink points out, many of the FSA provisions, particularly the child care provision one, “codified the assumption that poor single mothers *should* work outside the home” (Mink 1988:41).

The long-waged war to “end welfare as we know it” ended in 1996 when President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). We turn to this radical transformation in social welfare next.

### 1996 Welfare Reform

Keeping his 1992 campaign promise to “end welfare as we know it,” President Clinton passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, ushering in a new era of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Four main purposes of TANF include: (1) to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and (4) to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families (Mink and Solinger 2003).

Welfare reform shifted funding from open-ended dollar-per-dollar matching grants in AFDC to block grants in which the federal government allocated a fixed annual dollar amount to states to administer the TANF program. In that TANF block grants are fixed with no inflation adjustments built in, so over time they lose value. Between 1997 and 2002, TANF block grants lost 12 percent of their value and are projected to be 22 percent lower in value in 2007 than in 1997 (Weaver 2002).

Most radically, PRWORA replaced federal entitlement to assistance with temporary, time-limited participation: “This part shall not be interpreted to entitle any individual or family to assistance under any State program funded under this part” (Mink and Solinger 2003:645). Administration of welfare is now largely at the discretion of each state—in essence creating 50 separate programs.

Welfare reform resolved the ambivalence between mothering and working squarely in favor of work. Indeed, the law requires a state to reduce a household’s TANF grant for failure to comply with work requirements. Furthermore, federal law requires that at least half of the families receiving TANF must be engaged in some kind of work-related activity for at least 30 hours a week. Single parents with children under the age of six must engage in work-related activities for at least 20 hours per week. States not meeting these thresholds can lose 5 percent or more of their TANF grant. However, states can offset these work requirements with caseload reduction credits (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities 2002).

The act specifies the parameters for receiving TANF assistance. There is no federal assistance for more than five years; for a teenage parent who does not attend high school (or its equivalent); for a teenage parent who is not living under some type of adult supervision; for those convicted of felony drug charges; or for immigrants. Further, households may lose

assistance if children fail to attend school on a regular basis; or, if they, or anyone in the household, fail to comply with their individual responsibility plan.

Welfare reform disqualified from food stamps all able-bodied adults without dependents who had received food stamps for at least three months over a preceding 36-month period but had worked less than 20 hours per week. The act also required that the states remove from food stamp rolls most permanent resident aliens also previously eligible under AFDC provisions.

States are provided financial incentives to decrease illegitimacy rates (without a concomitant rise in abortion) and reduce welfare caseloads. However, states can be penalized for failing to meet work participation rate thresholds; failing to comply with paternity establishment and child-support enforcement requirements; or, failing to limit overall cash assistance to 60 months. And in keeping with the broader trend toward the privatization of governmental services, PRWORA authorized states to contract with charitable, religious, or private organizations for the provision of TANF, food stamp, and Medicaid services.

### **TANF Programmatic Features and Organizational Culture**

Most states strongly endorsed the principles of welfare reform—both the promotion of work and the programmatic leeway it allowed. This section highlights some of the common features of states in the development of their TANF programs. Unless noted otherwise, the Welfare Rules Database developed by the Urban Institute and the Committee on Ways and Means' *2004 Green Book* are the source of the data discussed here.

**WORK-FIRST POLICIES.** Work programs vary widely from state to state regarding who must work, how much work is required, and what activities constitute work. States may (but are not required to) exempt certain individuals or groups from participating in work-related activities. States have broad discretion in determining noncompliance with work-related requirements as well as in the type of sanction to impose for failing in this area. Work-related activities include job skills training, job readiness activities, job development and placement, and job search. Education and training are allowed in most states to satisfy work-related activities but generally for a restricted period of time.

While welfare reform mandates work as a requirement of receiving cash assistance, many states have adopted “work-first” policies that “emphasize the expedient placement of recipients in whatever jobs are available” (Hays 2003:27). Texas provides a procedural illustration of “work first.” Qualitative interviews conducted with welfare caseworkers, supervisors, and administrative personnel in San Antonio reveal that “work first” equates to strong informal diversion away from cash assistance (see also Hays 2003; Hancock 2002). Before potential clients can apply for TANF, they must complete a detailed work history and availability form and are then directed to a Resource Room or Career Center where a caseworker assists them with interviewing skills, helps them with resumes, and assists in locating job vacancy information from the Internet (Bell 2001).

**SANCTIONS.** TANF law requires states to penalize families for refusing to engage in work-related activities without good cause. Additionally, federal law requires that states reduce a family's TANF benefit by at least 25 percent (or remove them altogether) for not cooperating with establishing paternity or ongoing efforts in this regard. The severity of the sanction for

noncompliance with work requirements varies from written warnings to reductions in household benefits. The most severe sanction for noncompliance is permanent forfeiture of cash assistance.

The adoption of family-cap policies is another sanction on welfare recipients. In an attempt to legislate and regulate sexual norms, family caps hold constant a household's TANF benefit in the event of the birth of a child while a mother is already receiving TANF. As a further deterrent, some states reduce cash assistance amounts in the event of a new birth. Some states do not allow pregnant women without other children to be eligible for cash benefits until after the child is born; other states restrict enrollment anywhere from one to nine months into the pregnancy.

**WELFARE DIVERSION POLICIES.** Diversion programs are designed to discourage application for cash benefits. At present, more than half of the states have created formal diversion programs. One diversion from benefits is the one-time payment program. Families can choose to receive a lump-sum cash payment in lieu of monthly TANF benefits but are then barred from TANF for a specified period of time. Requiring a job search upon application is another diversion mechanism. To encourage work, many states have instituted a job-search application provision either before a TANF application is submitted or while the application is in process.

In addition to formal diversion mechanisms, states also employ a variety of informal diversion methods. In Texas "work-first" policies translate into "redirecting" the needy from cash assistance. As incentive, the regional office that "redirected" the most potential clients away from TANF was rewarded with the Commissioner's Cup (Bell 2001).

Time-limiting welfare benefits are the penultimate deterrent to cash assistance (Fitzgerald 2004). Procedures requiring onerous time commitments or excessive documentation reduce program participation (Zedlewski et al. 2006). "Work-first" policies mandate that potential recipients enter work-related activities within a specified period of time or forsake assistance. The TANF application process is itself time-consuming with some extreme cases taking upwards of half a day spent in the welfare office (see Hays 2003; Schexnayder et al. 2002; Waterhouse 1992).

### **Life under Welfare Reform: Caseworkers and Clients**

The welfare experience itself is best described by Sharon Hays (2003) in a chapter entitled "Fear, Hope, and Resignation in the Welfare Office," within her book *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*: "The world of welfare is a world of mirrored dualisms—the Work Plan and the Family Plan, the punishments and rewards, cold bureaucracy and caring maternalism, individualism and family ties, social inclusion and exclusion" (p. 95). The fundamental shift in welfare necessitated significant changes in the administration of welfare itself. "Texas adjusting to welfare rule shift," declares a July 9, 2006, headline of the Austin American-Statesman online (MacLaggan 2006:B1) as the state attempts to adjust yet again to additional changes to the PRWORA that occurred as a result of its reauthorization in late 2005. The job titles assigned to welfare caseworkers reflect this changed environment as well. For example, welfare caseworkers are now "financial planners" in New York and "work advisors" in Texas.

Accordingly, the process for determining welfare eligibility was modified to reflect a changed welfare culture of work, family (narrowly defined by politicians as two-parent traditional families), and social control. Adding to the complexity for both caseworkers and clients alike is that historically each time the rules for welfare were reformed, very few of the rules that were in place before the reform actually changed and instead were simply built upon. The results of the 1996 reform were significantly increased rules and regulations that almost doubled the size of state procedural manuals (Hays 2003:47). Bell (2001:8) provides an illustrative example of what these new procedures translate into in Texas:

Mandated clients first went to WOA, Workforce Orientation, a three-hour session where they heard about time limits, the hours of mandated participation (35 hours/week for two parents, 30 hours/week for single parents) and the activities in which they must participate, such as job readiness and job search. At the end of the WOA, they were then given a written appointment letter/notice for a two-hour EPS (Employment Planning Session), which included further assessment and planning for employment including the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to assess their skill level in math, language, and reading. At that time each was assigned to an E & T caseworker that conducted a more thorough assessment of the client's history, goals, and abilities.

Qualitative interviews conducted in Texas confirm that the time requirement for determining welfare eligibility (and re-eligibility) is particularly problematic for clients seeking services: “. . . the hardest thing about it is the amount of time you have to take off [work] in order to get it. And I mean even if you have an appointment, it still takes about five hours” explains one respondent (quoted in Schexnayder et al. 2002:75). These onerous, diversionary tactics are effective. As Hays notes, many women simply leave the welfare office without making an application; only the truly needy (and hardy) actually go through the process.

In addition to the time needed to make a welfare application, the process itself is also unpleasant for many caseworkers and clients. For welfare recipients, their experiences in navigating the system differed depending upon their “education, health, employment history, childcare situation, and other circumstances” (Hays 2003:96)—in short, their social and capital skills. Clients face a barrage of discomforting and intrusive requests. For example, they are asked to produce many documents—e.g., children's social security cards, birth certificates, immunization records, and school enrollment records; rent receipts, utility receipts; bank statements; insurance statements; child care contracts; to name a few. In addition, they encounter great redundancy in requested information between the application and questions asked by the caseworker (part of the verification process that caseworkers must undertake). Moreover, they face a multitude of highly intrusive questions—e.g., do you have any cash in your purse at this time? do you receive income from farming, fishing, raking leaves, mowing lawns, any kind of odd jobs like that? does your mother receive welfare? (Hays 2003:45). Caseworkers, fairly low-level employees in the welfare administrative hierarchy, have little choice but to ask what they consider in many instances to be “completely unnecessary” questions but are bound by the rules to do so anyway (Hays 2003).

Further, the privatization of some services and particularly the lack of control over any aspect of these outsourced services were also problematic for caseworkers. As Hays documents, caseworkers knew that outsourced programs were ineffective for welfare women but had little authority to do anything about it. Bell also documents problems in Texas with privatization of some services: “. . . Too many middle men. Too many chiefs and not enough Indians, is what it boils down to” is how one caseworker described the results (as quoted in Bell 2001:12).

The results of this process are a fairly high turnover rate for welfare caseworkers as they realized their capacity to actually make a difference in the lives of the women they were attempting

to help was limited, and that the system itself was more harsh and punitive. Per Hays (2003:101), the “caseworkers who remained tended to be those with thicker skins.” Further, as the disconnect between the ideals of welfare reform (largely supported by caseworkers and clients alike) and the reality of its implementation, optimism was soon replaced with resignation that little had actually changed except their work load, which had increased and gotten more complicated by the additional layers of bureaucracy imposed by welfare’s reform. Coping mechanisms involved a redefinition of their original optimism of self-sufficiency to more modest goals like finding any job or increasing levels of sanctions as a means of shock therapy for welfare mothers who seemed to be in denial about welfare’s time limits (Hays 2003). Bell (2001) documents that Texas caseworkers defined welfare “successes” and “failures” largely along client motivational lines—those more motivated left welfare, leaving behind the unmotivated—all of which justified the increasingly punitive interactions that resulted from those still on the rolls.

Overall, as Hays (2003:97) describes “the story of welfare reform is . . . simultaneously a tale of hassles, hardships, and the road to resignation, and a vivid cultural representation of the lengths to which people will go to discover and enact shared ideals.” Despite the numerous and onerous eligibility requirements, welfare recipients remained by and large supportive of welfare reform, reaffirming what has been confirmed in numerous other studies of welfare recipients: namely, that “failure to embrace the values of the nation is clearly not the malady from which these women suffer” (Hays, 2003:53). Instead, Hays continues, “the problem for most welfare clients . . . is finding a job that pays enough to bring them out of poverty, offers benefits, and is flexible enough to make room for the circumstances of single parenting” (2003:55) and in an environment which continues to discriminate on the basis of both race and gender. With the welfare population overwhelmingly female and increasingly non-white, the odds of achieving anything close to the American Dream remain as illusive post-welfare reform as prior.

## Understanding Welfare Reform

“A nation’s laws reflect a nation’s values” intones Sharon Hays (2003:3) in *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. The signing of PRWORA signaled that what FDR had begun 60 years prior with the passage of Aid to Dependent Children was no longer—the federal government was getting out of the social welfare business and returning it to the states. The nation was being indoctrinated into the southern way of life.

Historically, expansion of the American welfare state has occurred during times of both economic recession and economic growth. It was the Depression of the 1930s with its massive levels of unemployment and human suffering that provided the backdrop for passage of the first federal social welfare programs. Such massive levels of unemployment and human suffering temporarily halted the “poverty as moral failing” arguments. Over subsequent years, federal budget surpluses provided justification for increased social welfare spending; budget deficits provided the rationale for social spending retrenchment. How then to explain a radical retrenchment in social welfare during a time of federal budget surpluses?

Katznelson shows that in the negotiations surrounding FDR’s policies, southern legislators were able to safeguard the racial status quo and economic stratification system through several mechanisms including exclusion and devolution of program administration to state and local levels. He also details the complicity of others in this shaping of the political landscape. With regards to welfare reform, we see similar features.

As Alice O'Connor (2001) documents, social scientists have been muzzled in criticizing the redefinition of poverty assistance either because they agreed with cultural characterizations of poor people or because they were caught in a funding treadmill that kept them responding to a changing political climate that forsook their own independent policy agenda in exchange for continued federal support.

Support for reforming welfare cut across both political party and gender lines. Despite top officials in Clinton's Department of Health and Human Services resigning their positions in protest of welfare reform, their voices came too late to stem the groundswell of public support favoring welfare reform. Similar to the split noted first during the mothers' pension debates between women, Mink (2003) documents the ways that feminists jumped aboard the welfare reform bandwagon, noting that four of five Democratic women in the Senate voted for welfare reform, as did 26 of 31 women in the House.

It is impossible to divorce social welfare legislation from race relations. The urgency to reform welfare received its greatest momentum after welfare became an entitlement for previously excluded minorities. From that point, cash aid has been reduced; fraud deterrence efforts increased; and racial stereotyping of welfare recipients has become commonplace (Hancock 2004). As Hancock demonstrates, in the charge to reform welfare a "politics of disgust" campaign was waged that demonized welfare recipients in general and black women in particular. In fact, as Lynell Hancock (2002:6) points out, "disparagement of welfare was so accepted that members of Congress were calling recipients 'alligators' and 'wolves' on the floor of the House of Representatives." Indeed, racial stereotypes provided welfare reformers with much currency. Clinton capitalized on racial stereotypes to move his agenda of "ending welfare as we know it" forward.

One assumption motivating welfare reform was that unless forced to do so, women simply will not take "personal responsibility" and work to support their children. Numerous studies (Edin and Lein 1996; Ehrenreich 2001; Hancock 2002; Hays 2003; Secombe 1999) reveal the falsity of these assumptions, showing instead that women cycle into and out of work (and cash assistance) as their personal conditions dictate. Because the experience at the welfare office itself is so unpleasant, it is *only* for the sake of their children that women endure the demeaning treatment to which they are routinely subjected.

Welfare reform replaced universalism with particularism and continues the trend of shifting the societal risks previously borne by the federal government to individuals. Indeed, welfare no longer offers the safety net it once did. As Katz documents, while touted as highly successful because it dramatically reduced welfare rolls, welfare reform exacerbates the problems for both the poor and working poor. According to an Urban Institute report (2005), in 2000, about half of all eligible families were receiving cash assistance compared to 85 percent in 1994. According to the Center for Public Policy (2004), between 2000 and 2003, the percentage of single mothers living in poverty increased while the percentage of employed single mothers fell. Additionally, poverty among children rose while the number of children living below half the poverty line increased by nearly one million. In response, food stamp and Medicaid rolls rose but TANF rolls continued to decline, providing assistance to 845,000 *fewer* people in 2003 than in 2000.

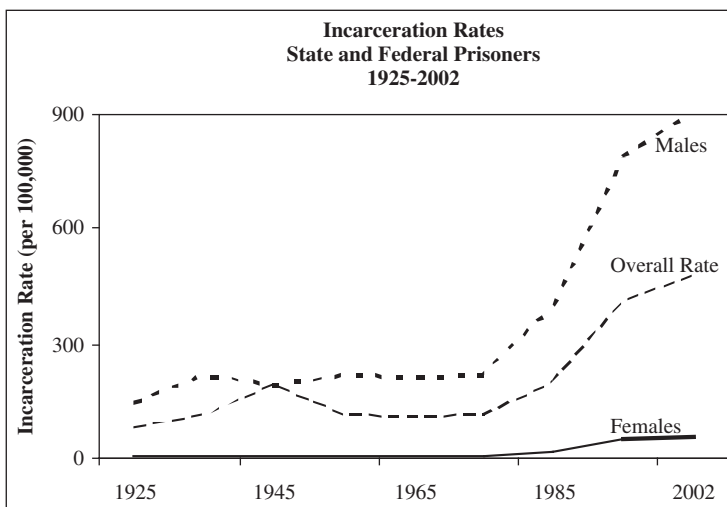
According to Katz (2000), "the American welfare state has sustained an attack that has not only rolled back some benefits but, even more important, redefined the principles on which it rests." Citizenship, he points out, is now determined by market participation rather than birthright. Women of color are particularly impacted. During the 1994–2001 period, the percentage of non-white TANF recipients grew from 58.7 percent in 1994 to 67.8 percent in 2001 (Committee on Way and Means 2004). And another report found that blacks are the

only racial group to have experienced a growth in the number of non-welfare-receiving poor (Peterson et al. 2002). Invoking the preoccupations of W.E.B. Du Bois, Katz (2000) points out that if alive today, Du Bois would “. . . confront the paradox that a welfare state scarred by institutional racism remains essential to the survival of millions of African Americans with minimal comfort and dignity, and he would surely worry about the impact of its transformation” (p. 126).

In December 2005, the TANF program was reauthorized until 2010. The policies were made more restrictive. The message is clear: “shape up or ship out.” But to where? As the next section illustrates, for some prison is the likely destination.

### THE RISE OF THE PRISON BUSINESS

The phenomenal rate at which the United States is imprisoning segments of its population is both unprecedented and alarming. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ website, as of June 20, 2005, there were almost 2.2 million prisoners in federal or state prisons or in local jails—some 488 inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents. As the following chart indicates, in 2002



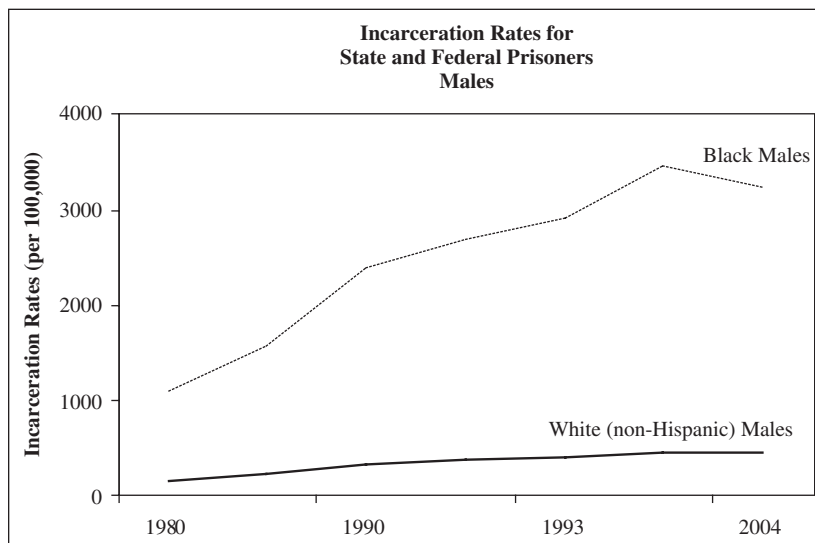
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2002.

Editors: Kathleen Maguire and Ann L. Pastore.

the rate of sentenced males in state and federal prisons was a phenomenal 906 males per 100,000 males in the population. This compares to 191 per 100,000 in 1970.

According to Marc Mauer of The Sentencing Project, indeed, the United States leads the world in overall incarceration rates, which in 2004 stood at 725 incarcerations per 100,000 residents, outpacing Russia and South Africa (400). Walmsley (2005) reaches the similar conclusion. Still, Wacquant (2002) goes somewhat further in averring that the prison population of the United States appears to be larger than for the Russian gulag and the South African apartheid regime at their height.

In fact, the incarceration rates of black men resemble apartheid-like conditions. The rate of incarceration is especially alarming for black males as the following chart illustrates. For example, in 1980, the rate of black male incarceration was already a phenomenal 1,111 men per 100,000 in the population—almost seven times higher than the rate of white male incarceration (168 per 100,000). However, by 2004, the black male incarceration rate exploded to an astounding 3,218 black males per 100,000. White male incarcerations rates have also increased substantially, from 168 per 100,000 in 1980 to 463 white males per



100,000 in 2004. Nevertheless, black males are still incarcerated at seven times the rate of whites.

The sharp rise in incarceration rates in America has had a number of major consequences. One is the massive re-entry of ex-prisoners into communities, particularly certain metropolitan centers, in the United States. Although we shall not pursue the social implications of this particular transformation herein, we should take note of several patterns. When talking about the massive rise in the prison population, we also must consider a flood of ex-prisoners returning to American communities. Only recently have scholars begun to piece together the social consequences of this return. We rely upon a recent Urban Institute report titled “Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry” (Solomon et al. 2006). The report indicates that:

In 2003 alone, more than 656,000 state and federal prisoners returned to communities across the country, affecting public safety, public health, economic and community well-being, and family networks. The impact of prisoner reentry is further compounded by the returning jail population with its distinctive challenges and opportunities. (p. 2)

The report goes on to state:

Two-thirds of released prisoners are rearrested within three years of release. One and a half million children have a parent in prison. Four million citizens have lost their right to vote. (p. 2)



That these ex-prisoners by and large encounter almost insurmountable economic and social obstacles is founded on firm sociological principles.

## The Transformation of Prisons and the Role of Race

The negative consequences of imprisonment are all the more reason for attempting to understand the reasons for the transformation in the nature of punishment. There is general agreement regarding the evidence on the historic explosion in the United States of the prison population in the past quarter-century or so. Admittedly scholars disagree about certain features of the data presented above, for, as Chambliss (1999) and others have reasoned, criminal justice system data often contain built-in biases. One of the difficulties concerns the lack of any substantial data on what Dow (2004), a journalist, contends is the secret immigration prisons that have emerged in recent years. With these caveats in mind, scholars agree on the general contours of the prison population as outlined above. At the same time fundamental disagreements are rife among sociologists, criminologists, and legal scholars regarding explanations for the dramatic increase in the number of inmates in the United States. This issue leads us to consider, theoretically and empirically, the nature of punishment in advanced modernity.

Janet Lauritsen and Robert J. Sampson (1998) have provided us with an instructive overview of the empirical findings contained in the vast literature on minority experiences with the criminal justice system. One of their objectives is to:

summarize the research on minorities in the criminal justice system, emphasizing the conditions under which differential treatment is most likely to occur and the various theoretical approaches for understanding such differences. (p. 58)

Although Lauritsen and Sampson did not zero in on the rise of the prison population per se, their analysis of the larger criminal justice system is relevant for coming to terms with the rise of prisons.

However, it is Lauritsen and Sampson's general conclusion that captures our attention.

Our review of the literature on minorities and criminal justice suggests that racial discrimination emerges some of the time at some stages of the system in some locations, but there is little evidence that racial disparities reflect systemic, overt bias on the part of the criminal justice decision makers. Rather the most compelling evidence concerning racial discrimination in the administration of justice involves community and moral constructions of "moral panics" and political responses to those contexts. (pp. 77-78)

After advancing their thesis they appear to back off from it somewhat when they contend that "Although overt race discrimination in criminal justice processing appears to be a problem restricted to specific spatial and temporal contexts, the fact remains that racial disparities in serious crimes have reached a critical state in the United States" (Lauritsen and Sampson 1998:78).

We have dwelt on the views of Lauritsen and Sampson for several reasons. Sampson is a highly distinguished sociologist/criminologist. More to the point Lauritsen and Sampson articulate, in soft terms, a view of the criminal justice system that is rather embedded in an important sector of the scholarly and legal literature.

In part the authors articulate their perspective because they are working within the pre-suppositions of the narrow confines of the criminal justice system. The ideals of the criminal justice system are founded on the presupposition underlying the rule of law: in effect the

legal system is fair and just. Indeed a number of members of the criminal justice system are reluctant to question its foundational premises.

Courts, in examining the criminal justice system, are often called upon to address the matter of intent, and intent (or motive) is difficult to ascertain with respect to racial matters. Moreover, Cole (1999), a legal scholar, highlights another facet of belief in a color-blind legal order, as he examines the case of *McClesky v. Kemp*. In this case the Supreme Court ruled (in the face of massive statistical evidence regarding discrimination against blacks) that Georgia could continue to enforce the death penalty. The Court (in a 5–4 decision) acknowledged that if it had accepted McClesky's claim, then this reasoning "carried to its logical conclusion, throws into question the principles that underlie the entire criminal justice system." If the Court had ruled in behalf of McClesky, it would have been called upon to address the structural (or racial) arrangements of power that inhere in the criminal justice system itself and to reshape the manner in which racism undermines the claims of fairness and equality that are the basis of its legitimacy in a democratic order. In actual practice we can expect the leadership of few formal organizations in modern society to fess up to racial discrimination.

David Garland (1990), a sociologist/legal scholar, has been in the forefront of scholarship regarding punishment, having written an outstanding book in which he examines various sociologically grounded theories of punishment. In another of his works Garland (2001) attempts to account for the increased concern with crime in the United States and Great Britain. Although he does not focus on the statistical evidence per se, his analysis bears on our understanding of the criminal justice system and the rise in the number of prison inmates. While Garland weighs the role of both cultural and structural factors, he places, by his own definition, a cultural explanation in the forefront of his analysis. His is a highly nuanced account of changes in the cultural system that have occurred over the past half-century. One of Garland's strengths is his review not only of changes in the cultural patterns but also of some of the built-in contradictions that have accompanied this transformation.

Garland speaks of the declining influence of social expertise, the increased salience of crime, and the new middle-class attitudes toward crime and control. Regarding the latter, he observes that in the postwar years "the structure of everyday life became more porous, more open-textured, more generative of opportunities for criminal victimization" (Garland 2001:155), with crime becoming a source of anxiety. He is attentive to how the increase in the crime rate (which other authors raise questions about) has been fostered by an anxiety generated by the mass media. Garland also singles out the rising concern with victims' rights and a growing definition of the perpetrator as a distant "other." Within this context he writes of the reinvented prison. More generally he perceives a decline in state control and the rise of private security arrangements, an issue to which we return below. In the main, Garland slides by racial and ethnic relations as he grapples with how to understand the growing culture of control in the United States and Great Britain.

Other sociologists have also sought to account for the massive growth of the prison population. Western et al. (2004a) draw upon Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939), early Frankfurt School theorists, for inspiration in understanding the "whys" and "wherefores" of punishment. Rusche and Kirchheimer relied heavily upon class, emphasizing that the prison system had become a repository for members of society who had no means of effective employment in the community. Western et al. (2004b) conclude, with due qualifications, that social class is a major factor in understanding the burgeoning of the prison population in recent decades. What is troubling about their analysis, however, is that early in their essay they present data highlighting the fact that, based on their time-series analysis, "black men were about seven to eight times more likely to be in prison or jail than white men" (p. 774). In their reliance on class

analysis as a basis for explaining the rise in the prison population, they gloss over this racial component. Such reasoning follows the logic of Rusche and Kirchheimer, who, like other members of the Frankfurt School, were influenced by Marx. These scholars have been unable to square class stratification with racial stratification.

However, intensive reviews of the published literature reveal that the majority of studies published in the 1969–1989 period (Pope and Feyerherm 1990) and the 1989–2001 period (Pope et al. 2002) indicate that race has a significant effect on the treatment of juveniles in the criminal justice system. In addition, sociologists have confronted the role of race with respect to the criminal justice system and the burgeoning prison population. Chambliss (1994) has highlighted some of the observations that he and his students made of police encounters with blacks in Washington, DC. Certain groups of blacks were singled out by the police in a discriminatory fashion. In his book on the impact of power and politics on crime, Chambliss (1999:63) states:

The poor, especially, urban poor African Americans, are disproportionately the subjects of how enforcement activities at all levels, from arrest to imprisonment. . . . The poor, especially urban poor African Americans, are disproportionately the subjects of law enforcement. . . . The urban poor minorities are stereotyped as inherently criminogenic. . . . [C]rime in the ghetto is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Chambliss understands what few sociologists discuss: when the police sweep up the poor, particularly poor blacks, they do so with impunity. The poor lack the economic, social, and cultural capital by which to effectively resist the system. Serious challenges to the system would clog the courts in ways unacceptable to the management of the criminal justice system. Such challenges are costly and also contain the potential for exposing questionable police practices, something managers of the criminal justice system prefer to avoid.

On a more macro level Chambliss is sensitive to the odd coalition of southern conservatives who left the Democratic party with more traditional Republicans in the political arena, as well as the role of the mass media and the criminal justice establishment in advancing the prison agenda.

Chambliss' critical stance seems to be sidestepped by a number of mainstream scholars. For Chambliss the focus on street crime and young black men as superpredators serves to deflect attention from the crimes of enforcement officials, politicians, and corporations.

Wacquant (2002) conducts an excellent analysis of the prison system. In his reading of the data, he finds that “since 1989 and for the first time in national history, African Americans make up a majority of those entering prison each year,” despite the fact that the actual crime rate of African Americans has been fairly stable over a few decades (see Tonry 1995). If we are to grapple with this phenomenon, we need to break out of the narrow “crime and punishment” framework and instead analyze the role of the penal system in managing dispossessed and disadvantaged groups within the social order. To achieve this objective, Wacquant examines how historical forces have shaped current arrangements. Nowadays, in Wacquant's view, we are witnessing the prisonization of the ghetto and the ghettoization of the prison, as the ghetto has lost its capacity to buffer its residents from the powerful external forces afoot in the nation and the global sphere. The length of sentences appears today longer than ever, and surveillance over ex-cons appears to be continually extended. The new system intensifies the centuries-old association of blackness with criminality and violence.

We note here the importance of social and cultural capital in negotiating the criminal justice system, focusing particularly on juveniles. Minority youth are disproportionately represented among youth offenders at almost every step of the process from committing a

crime, to being arrested, to being processed through the criminal justice system, to being sentenced (see Pope and Feyerherm 1990; Pope et al. 2002). Certainly, white parents are using their human, social, and cultural capital to free their children from facing severe forms of punishment compared to minority parents who lack such resources. Furthermore, as in the case of education, white youth as well as adult offenders are able to tap into their social and capital arsenal to conform to the expectations of the criminal justice system. On the other hand, minority youth tend to lack such resources, which places them at greater vulnerability to reaching the sentencing stages of the system compared to their white counterparts. Indeed, racial profiling plays a significant role to begin with in placing minorities in the grasp of the criminal justice system.

Hence, impoverished minorities interact more frequently than whites with the lower levels of the criminal justice system (the police, bailiffs, jail-house lawyers, etc.), and they do so without the requisite social and cultural capital to grasp the meaning of the organizational rules. Members of their social networks possess limited technical knowledge of how the system operates. This brings us back to our theme that persons who command the least knowledge of the rules of the criminal justice system, for instance, are called upon to interact with the different layers of the criminal justice system most committed to applying the rules in a rather narrow manner.

### **The Rise of Corporate Prisons**

What we find missing from the current analysis of the prison system is a general failure to explore the relationship between the modern economy, dominated by large corporations and the prevailing ideology of individualism and the free market—both salient features of the neo-liberal model (cf. Garland 2001:174ff). In this section we outline only the barebones features of this argument.

We begin with the matter of corporations. Joseph Hallinan (2001), a world-class journalist, has written a highly instructive work on prisons in the United States. In it he captures a crucial facet of the prison system that tends to be left out of current writings by sociologists, criminologists, and legal scholars we have read. Hallinan (2001:174), rather dramatically, paints a picture of what he observed, “The appearance of the prison millionaire marked a turning point in American penology. Never before had it been possible in this country to become rich by incarcerating other people. Now, it is commonplace.” Furthermore, he continues:

The consequence of this change has been subtle but profound. The staffs of public prisons have, in effect, become farm teams for private prisons. Public prisons are now places where the ambitious can hone their financial skills before moving on to really big money in the private sector. No longer is it solely in the interest of the state to run a profitable prison—it is in the self-interest of the warden as well. The blending of personal and public interest has changed the way the country’s prisons are run. Public prisons now openly emulate private ones.

Using Hallinan’s observations as a point of departure, we find that the prison industry is increasingly populated by large-scale corporations. Private prisons are owned and managed not by individual entrepreneurs but by corporate entities that are bureaucratic in nature. With respect to public prisons, the contracts for supplying the prison population with food and clothing are typically let to large corporate organizations not to lone individuals. In the latter case in particular, the taxpayers foot the bill for the costs of incarceration, not the lowly prisoners who inhabit the lower reaches in the social order. Yet, as Hallinan (2001) emphasizes, we are also witnessing the rise of private prisons as well as the rise of prison labor, as

prisons become production units out to make a profit, with prisoners being extremely low wages (cf. Price 2006). Hallinan (2001:147) contends that the prison-industry program in South Carolina is self-sustaining (though we must be careful here, for the supply of prisoners seems largely the product of the state apparatus).

Nils Christie (2000), a Norwegian criminologist, has spoken of the new social arrangements as the “crime control industry.” In practice this pattern is a sub-feature of a larger social process occurring internationally wherein one finds the rise of a corporate control industry whose activities range from carrying out key supportive activities in Iraq to managing law and order in a number of “failed states” (cf. Singer 2004; Koppel 2006). The above patterns reflect the privatization of social control not only in the United States but also globally.

The rapid rise of prisons has occurred at a time when individuals are expected to assume increasingly greater responsibility for their own social destiny—to bear the risks of modern industrial-urban life. The privatization movement in the neo-liberal era has been accompanied by the re-emergence of utilitarianism—particularly as expressed nowadays in neo-classical economics and rational choice theorizing. In idealized terms, individuals are called upon to assume greater risks for their own employment, their own health care, etc. Such ideals are articulated in a social order that idealizes “free market relations,” including the widespread flow of free labor.

We use the concept of utilitarianism (a rather unfashionable term today) to encompass both Adam Smith’s thinking (with his emphasis on the natural identity of interests) and the thinking of Jeremy Bentham (with his stress on the artificial identity of interests). A version of utilitarianism dominates neo-classical economics and has become a part of the overall ideology (or belief or value system) in the United States. It is reflected in sociology by the theorizing of James Coleman (1990). To his lasting credit, Coleman acknowledges the power of large corporate actors (be these states or corporations); nonetheless individuals (or natural actors) are the foundation stone of his theorizing.

Within this intellectual tradition, human beings are characterized by their search for pleasure and their avoidance of pain. In practice the activities of individuals derive not from their social or cultural circumstances but from their inherent biopsychological condition. Thus punishment tends to be grounded in the fact that persons act in terms of their basic biopsychological dispositions. This perspective pervades the influential work of Wilson and Herrnstein (1986). With this as a premise we should not be surprised that one version of this intellectual heritage nowadays, as it has in the past, conceives of a criminogenic personality. Once committed to a biopsychological perspective, scholars and the broader citizenry can rather readily perceive of different racial and ethnic groups as characterized by different dispositions to commit criminal acts. That rehabilitation has declined as an ideal in the criminal justice system is in keeping with this overall emphasis on the individualism associated with the market model and a biopsychological conception of human nature.

Perhaps we should elaborate somewhat more fully on these two processes: the emergence of profitable large corporations that thrive on the commitment to a market and the call for individuals to assume responsibility for their actions. Briefly, there is a general assumption afoot that privatizing formerly governmental functions (whether in the educational, prison, or welfare spheres) will generate greater efficiency. But is efficiency, as judged by corporate profits, a major consideration for evaluating effective prisons? A profitable market appears to call for more and more prisoners and punishing persons for longer and longer periods of time, rather than rehabilitating them. Indeed, from a narrow empirical perspective it seems apparent that keeping persons behind bars is safer for the community than in rehabilitating them and running the risk of possible recidivism. Rehabilitation is, after all, future-oriented and more

open-ended with respect to risk than locking people up and throwing away the key. Moreover, a commitment to human nature as founded on basic biopsychological conditions serves to justify the premise that criminological types exist, and their rightful place is the prison. Contrast this with a more thoroughgoing social-cultural view of criminal activity, wherein, if we broaden the scope of the ideas in, say, Matza and Sykes (1961), we discover that criminal activity is generally only a small part of the everyday routines that persons engage in. The violent criminal who holds up a 7–11 store spends most of his (her) waking hours engaged in normal everyday activities—cooking and eating, sleeping, talking with friends and acquaintances, etc. We shall need to reject the narrow biopsychological principles so widely accepted today if we are to understand the complex social and cultural processes that shape the manner in which humans beings (including criminals) come to act as they do.

In a more general sense, the so-called laws of supply and demand, when applied to prisons and prisoners, lead corporations to develop a vested interest in expanding the prison population. Larger numbers of prisoners enhance profits (whether the taxpayers pay the bill or monies are generated via prison labor), not only for the lowly guards but particularly for the managerial sector (and of course investors). A critical analysis of the perverse application of supply and demand principles with regard to prisons is long overdue. Profit making based on prison labor, for instance, appears to undermine the traditional definition of free labor in a free market. Furthermore, corporate vested interests, we would hypothesize, are coming to play a considerable role in the formation and development of the prison system, in ways yet to be explored (Price 2006). Price (2006:127) suggests that the impact of the corporate lobby has been especially effective in the South. After all, large-scale corporate organizations are not organized according to the market model and the pleasure/pain principle; instead they are characterized by hierarchy, division of labor, and an emphasis on routinization. They are oriented toward sustaining not only economic but also political power, illustrated by the monies provided political campaigns and by lobbying (Price 2006).

If our thinking is reasonably correct, the problems faced in downsizing the current prison system have become far more formidable than three decades ago. Powerful vested economic interests have a major stake in the economic survival (even expansion) of a large prison system and its own form of racism. Any substantial reduction in the size of the prison population will involve restructuring not only the larger criminal justice system but also fundamental social arrangements within the broader social order, including the creation of alternative forms of employment and profit for a crucial sector of American society. Any effective resolution of the “ex-prisoner problem” must, it appears to us, reduce the size of the prison population in the United States.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have provided an overview of the literature related to three institutions—education, welfare, and prison—that have undergone significant transformations over the last few decades. The literature clearly demonstrates the strong role that race and ethnicity play in the positioning of people in these institutions. Not surprisingly, minorities (African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans) find themselves at the bottom of the stratification structure of each of the institutions examined. This is the story that we have observed for centuries in this country, as these groups were initially incorporated into American society.

The enduring position of minorities in the United States is consistent with expectations of race/ethnicity and political economy theorists. For example, Feagin (2005) argues that the

current plight of African Americans was sealed centuries ago as whites were given access to economic and land resources while blacks were enslaved and completely shut out from attaining resources. Whites were able to accumulate further riches and to pass these on to future generations, while African Americans did not have such resources. In addition, the current position of minorities in the stratification system reflects their exclusion from the economic spoils that were distributed in the New Deal era, resources that went largely to whites (Katznelson 2005; Quadagno 1994). Civil rights legislation attempted to correct the inequalities that such historical forces had produced. Yet, as our overview of the literature demonstrates, the exigencies of corrective measures gave way to forces that attempted to bring back the “tried-and-true” white-privilege model that sent minorities back to the end of the line, consistent with Bonilla-Silva’s (2001, 2006) argument that the post–civil rights era shifted the American lexicon to overturn the limited gains that minorities made during the short-lived civil rights era.

We find unprecedented and consistent changes in the American educational, welfare, and prison institutions over the last several decades which have served to overturn the small gains that minorities had achieved during the 1960s and 1970s. These draconian, punitive changes have come in the guise of “accountability,” “morality,” and “zero tolerance”—tough talk pushed into laws by conservative forces. The result is that impoverished minorities—the most vulnerable segments of American society—have been placed on a path of downward mobility via the education, welfare, and prison systems. Because of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the educational, welfare, and prison institutions and the increasing privatization that has ensued over the last few decades, we suggest that scholars in race and ethnicity will need to incorporate insights from the organizational literature to better understand—and alleviate—how inequality is supported and furthered by occupants at different levels of organizations.

When we speak of organizations we are not only concerned with the organizational rules but how persons in the organization and outside it come to shape and are shaped by the nature of such organizations. Our concern is on how minority poor who possess the least knowledge about the nature of organizations are called upon to interact with persons who staff the lower echelons of complex organizations where the rules are the most constraining.

A review of the literature reveals that the minority group poor must interact with the organizational arrangements in the spheres of education, welfare, and prisons, and in the process confront the complex interrelationships among these spheres. We find a “circular causation” among educational, prison, and welfare complexes that have yet to be sorted out by sociologists. Unfortunately, only limited data and studies exist on how economically strapped minority group members cope with, much less understand, these organizational complexes. For example, Alice O’Connor (2001) has written a wonderful book on the knowledge social scientists have acquired about the poor, but it is flawed in a striking way. Her work *Poverty Knowledge* examines the study of poverty almost solely from the perspective of the experts. The knowledge that impoverished minorities possess about the social organizations in which they are embedded is hidden from view.

The matter of the earned income tax credit underscores the saliency of technical knowledge as poor racial and ethnic minorities strive to acquire much needed economic resources to which they have a rightful claim. Persons with limited education find the rules undergirding this notion so difficult to comprehend that they typically are obliged to seek out someone with a knowledge of accounting if they are to secure the funds that are their due, and there is a segment of the poor who do not know of the monies provided by the earned income tax credit.

More generally, if social scientists take human agency seriously, they must necessarily consider in some depth how the lack of social knowledge undermines the lives of economically disadvantaged minorities. By doing so, sociologists will come to understand how various organizational complexes can assist the poor and so often keep the poor, notably racial and ethnic minorities, in their place. As social scientists come to detail these patterns, they will find, we aver, how the formal and informal rules of organizations often are employed to sustain built-in patterns of race and ethnic discrimination.

Early on we raised the issue of privatization, which has moved forward at a rapid pace in recent decades with far-reaching consequences for impoverished minorities. There are several dimensions to this process, and these have yet to be sorted out sociologically. First, there is the matter of shifting activities from the public to private sector—this process having received the bulk of attention. Privatization is well along in the realm of welfare, prisons, and schools (with, say, its voucher system). Although most state organizations have never lived up to their ideals, the increased privatization of schools, welfare, and prisons has resulted in these organizations being less accountable to the “public interest” than ever before, with deep-seated consequences for economically strapped minorities.

The paradoxes involving privatization are brought starkly to the fore in the prison industry. At one time prisons occupied a marginal role in the social order, but nowadays prisons have become big business, with a managerial sector that thrives economically at the expense of black males and increasingly Latino males. Still this prison takeover by the private sector does not square with the law of supply and demand in any meaningful way. For instance, if one makes the case that inexpensive prison labor should be employed to create goods and services that pay (at least in part for the cost of the prisons), then one undercuts the principle of free labor. Alternatively, if prison labor is not productive, the public must pay the bill (either directly or indirectly) for the private prison industry. Either way, free-market principles appear more as a convenient justification for privatization, for the economy of the prison has little or no relation to the laws of supply and demand—except that the private sector has a considerable vested interest in sustaining a sizeable supply of prisoners.

Second, there is another dimension to privatization that has received almost no attention by sociologists (though some journalists and a few political scientists have written on the topic)—notably the shifting of future risk from the governmental sector to individuals. Unquestionably this has occurred in the area of welfare, where the government no longer is expected to assist impoverished minorities who encounter major economic crises. Instead the emphasis is placed on individual—or personal—responsibility. Admittedly a commitment to personal or individual responsibility is advantageous in the formation of a disciplined labor force and is necessary when individuals are faced with decision-making in complex social situations. However, the personal responsibility of the privileged is founded not only on economic resources but on social and cultural capital. The privileged set the standards for the nature of personal responsibility, and the codes of conduct that are associated with individual responsibility are enforced within the context of organizational complexes. While many minority poor may be deeply committed to personal responsibility, they lack the economic capital and above all the social and cultural capital (e.g., social knowledge of organizational rules) to adhere to the standards espoused by the privileged middle class. This issue is underlined in the educational system wherein sizeable sectors of drop-outs and pushed-outs are minorities.

Let us for a moment examine the issues we have raised from a different vantage point—in this instance, the interrelationship of educational, welfare, and prisons systems. Certainly the impact of the prison system on destitute minority males (especially blacks and increasingly



Latinos) appears to be disastrous. The labeling of persons as “convicts” or “ex-cons” (and their resultant social and legal ostracism) places a special burden on the educational system. And we surmise that the educational system will reinforce—rather than overcome—existing racism. The isolation of indigent minorities from the mainstream social order is in the process of being accentuated rather than lessened as a result of the incarceration pattern during the last few decades. The plight of impoverished minorities becomes more severe as the government has retreated from providing financial assistance in times of crises. The patterns we have isolated lend support to Joe Feagin’s (2005) conception of systemic racism.

The rise of the prison industry reflects the current harshness of American society toward economically impoverished minorities. And for anyone concerned with the furtherance of a democratic order, current imprisonment arrangements require special consideration. We believe it is difficult to justify the principle that democracy is being furthered by the fact that the United States has the largest prison population, on a per-capita basis, in the world. The current prison system poses a grave social crisis for U.S. society and calls for fundamental restructuring. To do so, however, requires that members of society think carefully about the risks that result from how crime is defined and punished. Present-day practices of incarceration—sweeping as they are in their ramifications—pose grave risks for the foundations of democracy itself.

## REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, James W. and Vincent J. Roscigno. 2005. “Stratification, School-Work Linkages and Vocational Education.” *Social Forces* 84 (1):257–284.
- Amrein, Audrey L. and David C. Berliner. 2002. “High-Stakes Testing, Uncertainty, and Student Learning.” *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 10 (18). Retrieved on June 1, 2006. Available at: <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n18/>.
- Althusser, Louis. 1977. *Posiciones (1864–1975)*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.
- Ansalone, George. 2001. “Schooling, Tracking, and Inequality.” *Journal of Children & Poverty* 7 (1):33–47.
- Ansalone, George. 2000. “Keeping on Track: A Reassessment of Tracking in the Schools.” *Race, Gender and Class* 7:108–132.
- Baker, David P. and David L. Stevenson. 1986. “Mother’s Strategies and Children’s School Achievements: Managing the Transition to High School.” *Sociology of Education* 59:156–166.
- Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *The Risk Society*. London: Sage.
- Becker, Gary and H. G. Lewis. 1973. “On the Interaction between the Quantity and Quality of Children.” *Journal of Political Economy* 81 (2, Part 2):S279–S288.
- Bell, Holly. 2001. *Caseworkers and Welfare Reform: How’s It Working?* Paper presented at the National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics. Baltimore, MD. August 21. Available at: <http://www.nawrs.org/Baltimore/Papers/t2f1.pdf>.
- Blake, Judith. 1981. “Family Size and Quality of Children.” *Demography* 4:421–42.
- Blau, Peter and Otis Dudley Duncan. 1967. *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2006. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2001. *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post Civil Rights Era*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction.” Pp. 487–511 in A. H. Halsey and J. Karabel (eds.), *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1990. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage.
- Bracey, Gerald W. 2002. “The 12th Bracey Report on the Condition of Public Education.” *Phi Delta Kappan* 84 (2):135–150.
- Castro, Eva DeLuna. 2005. “Texas and the TANF Block Grant.” Center for Public Policy Priorities Policy Brief. November 11. Available at: [http://www.cppp.org/files/3/TANF%20Nov%2005\\_8by11.pdf](http://www.cppp.org/files/3/TANF%20Nov%2005_8by11.pdf).

- Chambliss, William J. 1994. "Policing the Ghetto Underclass: The Politics of Law and Law Enforcement." *Social Problems* 41 (May):177–194.
- Chambliss, William J. 1999. *Power, Politics and Crime*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Christie, Nils. 2000. *Crime Control as Industry: Towards Gulags, Western Style*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Clotfelter, Charles T. 2004. *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Segregation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cole, David. 1999. *No Equal Justice*. New York: The New Press.
- Coleman, James. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (supplement):95–120.
- Coleman, James S. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cooper, Claire. 2001. "Lawsuit Offers Litany of School Woes." *Sacramento Bee* 21 September 2001.
- Coven, Martha. 2005. "An Introduction to TANF." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Revised on November 22. Available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/1-22-02tanf2.htm>.
- Committee on Way and Means. 2004. "Section 7: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)." *The "Green Book" Background Material and Data on Programs within the Jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means*, 19th ed. U.S. House of Representatives. Available at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/greenbook/>.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda. 2004. "The Color Line in American Education: Race, Resources, and Student Achievement." *Du Bois Review* 1 (2):213–46.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda. 1997. *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for Creating Schools That Work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Delgado, Richard. 1995. *The Rodrigo Chronicles: Conversations about America and Race*. New York: New York University Press.
- Dow, Mark. 2004. *American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein. 1997. *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Education Trust. 2005. *The Funding Gap 2005: Low-Income and Minority Students Shortchanged by Most States*. Washington, DC: Education Trust.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Owl Books.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2005. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2000. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe. R and Clarice Booher Feagin. 1978. *Discrimination American Style: Institutional Racism and Sexism*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2000. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Fernández, Lilia. 2002. "Telling Stories about School: Using Critical Race and Latino Critical Theories to Document Latina/Latino Education and Resistance." *Qualitative Inquiry* 8 (1):45–65.
- Fitzgerald, Janine. 2004. "The Disciplinary Apparatus of Welfare Reform." *Monthly Review* November; 56: 53–62.
- Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Random House.
- Frankenberg, Erica, Chungmei Lee, and Gary Orfield. 2003. *A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?* Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University.
- Fremstadt, Shawn, Sharon Parrott, and Arloc Sherman. 2004. "Unemployment Insurance Does Not Explain Why TANF Caseloads Are Falling as Poverty and Need Are Rising." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/10-12-04tanf.htm>.
- Garland, David. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and the Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Garland, David. 1990. *Punishment and Modern Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Giddens, Anthony and Christopher Pierson. 1998. *Conversations with Anthony Giddens*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Golden, Olivia A. et al. 2005. "Assessing the New Federalism: Eight Years Later" Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Available at: [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311198\\_ANF\\_EightYearsLater.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311198_ANF_EightYearsLater.pdf).
- Goodwin, Joanne L. 1997. *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1911–1929*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gordon, Linda. 1994. *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890–1935*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hallinan, Joseph T. 2001. *Going Up the River: Travels in a Prison Nation*. New York: Random House.
- Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2004. *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*. New York: New York University Press.

- Hancock, Lynnell. 2003. *Hands to Work: Three Women Navigate the New World of Welfare Deadlines and Work Rules*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Haney, Walt. 2000. "The Myth of the Texas Miracle in Education." *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 8 (41). Retrieved on June 1, 2006. Available at: <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n41/>.
- Harris, Cheryl. 1993. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106 (8):1707–1791.
- Hays, Sharon. 2003. *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hochschild, Jennifer. 2003. "Social Class in Public Schools." *Journal of Social Issues* 59 (4):821–840.
- Katz, Michael B. 2000. "Race, Poverty, and Welfare: Du Bois's Legacy for Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568:111–127.
- Katz, Michael B. 1986. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Katznelson, Ira. 2005. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Koppel, Ted. 2006. "These Guns for Hire." *New York Times*. May 22: A25.
- Kozol, Jonathan. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria and William F. Tate. 1995. "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education." *Teachers College Record* 97 (1):47–68.
- Lareau, Annette. 2000. *Social Class and Parent Intervention in Elementary School*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lareau, Annette and Erin M. Horvat. 1999. "Moments of Social Inclusion and Exclusion: Race, Class and Cultural Capital in Family School Relationships." *Sociology of Education* 72:37–53.
- Lauritsen, Janet L. and Robert J. Sampson. 1999. "Minorities, Crime, and Criminal Justice." Pp. 58–84 in M. Tonry (ed.), *The Handbook of Crime and Punishment*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schenxnayder, Deanna, Daniel Shroeder, Laura Lein, Karen Douglas, and Freddie Richards. 2002. *Texas Families in Transition: Surviving without TANF*. Texas Department of Human Services. Available at: <http://www.ncsl.org/statefed/welfare/texas02.htm>.
- Levin-Epstein, Jodie. 2003. "Lifting the Lid off the Family Cap: States Revisit Problematic Policy for Welfare Mothers." Center for Law and Social Policy: Childbearing and Reproductive Health Series. Brief No. 1 December. Available at: [www.clasp.org/publications/family\\_cap\\_brf.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/family_cap_brf.pdf).
- Lipman, Pauline. 2003. "Chicago School Policy: Regulating Black and Latino Youth in the Global City." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 6 (4):331–355.
- Loprest, Pamela, Stephanie Schmidt, and Ann Dryden Witte. 1999. "Welfare Reform under PRWORA Aid to Children with Working Families." Wellesley College Working Paper 99–12, October. Available at: [http://www.wellesley.edu/Economics/wkpapers/wellwp\\_9912.pdf](http://www.wellesley.edu/Economics/wkpapers/wellwp_9912.pdf).
- Lucas, Samuel. 2001. "Effectively Maintained Inequality: Education Transitions, Track Mobility, and Social Background Effects." *American Journal of Sociology* 106:1642–1690.
- Lucas, Samuel. 1999. *Tracking Inequality: Stratification and Mobility in American High Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- MacLaggan, Corrie. 2006. "Texas Adjusting to Welfare Rule Shift." *Austin American-Statesman*. July 9, B1.
- Matza, David and Gresham Sykes (1961). "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values." *American Sociological Review* 26:713–719.
- Mauer, Marc. 2003. "Comparative International Rates of Incarceration: An Example of Causes and Trends." Presented to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, June 20, 2003. Available at: <http://www.sentencingproject.org/pdfs/pub9036.pdf>.
- Mink, Gwendolyn. 1998. *Welfare's End*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mink, Gwendolyn and Rickie Solinger. 2003. "Part I: 1900–1940." Pp. 1–2 in G. Mink and R. Solinger (eds.), *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*. New York: New York University Press.
- McNeil, Linda McSpadden. 2005. "Faking Equity: High-Stakes Testing and the Education of Latino Youth." Pp. 57–111 in A. Valenzuela (ed.), *Leaving Children Behind: How "Texas-Style" Accountability Fails Latino Youth*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Morris, Edward W. 2005. "'Tuck in That Shirt!' Race, Class, Gender and Discipline in an Urban School." *Sociological Perspectives* 48 (1):25–48.
- Myrdal, Gunnar. 1944. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Oakes, Jeannie. 1995. "Two Cities' Tracking and Within-School Segregation." *Teachers College Record* 96:681–690.

- O'Connor, Alice. 2001. *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in the Twentieth-Century U.S. History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- O'Connor, Alice. 2000. "Poverty Research and Policy for the Post-Welfare Era." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26:547–562.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Orfield, Gary and Susan E. Eaton. 1996. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*. New York: New Press.
- Pastore, Ann L. and Kathleen Maguire (eds.). 2003. *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*, 31st ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. Available at: <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/>.
- Peterson, Janice, Xue Song, and Avis Jones-DeWeever. 2002. "Life after Welfare Reform: Low-Income Single Parent Families, Pre- and Post-TANF." *Research-in-Brief: Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication #D446*. May 22. Available at: <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/d446.pdf>.
- Piven, Frances Fox. 2003. "Forward." Pp. xix–xxii in G. Mink and R. Solinger (eds.), *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*. New York: New York University Press.
- Pope, Carl E. and William Feyerherm. 1990. "Minority Status and Juvenile Justice Processing." *Criminal Journal Abstracts* 22 (2):327–336 (part I); 22 (3):527–542 (part II).
- Pope, Carl E., Rick Lovell, and Heidi M. Hsia. 2002. *Disproportionate Minority Confinement: A Review of the Literature from 1989 through 2001*. OJJDP Publication # NCJ 198428. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.
- Price, Byron Eugene. 2006. *Merchandising Prisoners: Who Really Pays for Prison Privatization?* Westport, CT: Praeger.
- "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996." Pp. 642–647 in G. Mink and R. Solinger (eds.), *Welfare: A Documentary History of U.S. Policy and Politics*. New York: New York University Press.
- Quadagno, Jill. 1994. *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reay, Diane. 2004. "'Mostly Roughts and Toughs': Social Class, Race, and Representation in Inner City Schooling." *Sociology* 38 (5):1005–1023.
- Reyes, Augustina H. 2006. *Discipline, Achievement, and Race: Is Zero Tolerance the Answer?* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Rosenbloom, Susan Rakosi and Niobe Way. 2004. "Latino Adolescents in an Urban High School." *Youth & Society* 35 (4):420–451.
- Rowe, Gretchen with Jeffrey Versteeg. 2005. *Welfare Rules Databook*. The Urban Institute. Available at: <http://www.urban.org/publications/411183.html>.
- Secombe, Karen. 1999. *"So You Think I Drive a Cadillac?" Welfare Recipients' Perspectives on the System and Its Reform*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sewell, William and Robert M. Hauser. 1975. *Education, Occupation, and Earnings: Achievement in the Early Career*. New York: Academic Press.
- Singer, P. W. 2004. *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1992. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sjoberg, Gideon, Elizabeth A. Gill, and Joo Ean Tan. 2002. "Social Organization." Pp. 411–432 in L. T. Reynolds and N. Herman-Kinney (eds.), *Handbook of Symbolic Interaction*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Sjoberg, Gideon, Richard A. Brymer, and Buford Farris. 1966. "Bureaucracy and the Lower Class." *Sociology and Social Research* 50 (Apr.):325–337.
- Solomon, Amy L., Christy Visher, Nancy G. La Vigne, and Jenny Osborne. 2006. *Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry: Research Findings from the Urban Institute's Prisoner Reentry Portfolio*. Washington DC: Urban Institute.
- Strum, Charles. 1993. "Schools' Tracks and Democracy; Sorting Students by Performance: Efficiency or Elitism?" *New York Times* 1 April 1993.
- Tan, Joo Ean and Gideon Sjoberg. 2005. "Development and the Lifeworld: Individuals, Interstitial Social Relationships, and Large-Scale Organizations." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 25 (1/2):145–170.
- Tonry, Michael. 1995. *Malign Neglect: Race, Crime, and Punishment in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. 1997. "Temporary Assistance for Need Families Policy Announcement." No. TANF-ACF-PA-97-1; January 31.
- Useem, Elizabeth L. 1992. "Middle Schools and Math Groups: Parents' Involvement in Childrens' Placement." *Sociology of Education* 65:263-279.
- Valenzuela, Angela (ed.). 2005a. *Leaving Children Behind: How "Texas-Style" Accountability Fails Latino Youth*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Valenzuela, Angela. 2005b. "Introduction: The Accountability Debate in Texas: Continuing the Conversation." Pp. 1-32 in A. Valenzuela (ed.), *Leaving Children Behind: How "Texas-Style" Accountability Fails Latino Youth*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Valenzuela, Angela. 1999. *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Wacquant, Loic. 2002. "Deadly Symbiosis: Rethinking Race and Imprisonment in Twenty-First-Century America." *Boston Review* Apr./May 2002. Available at: <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR27.2/wacquant.html>.
- Walmsley, Roy. 2005. *World Prison Population*, 6th ed.. London: International Centre for Prison Studies.
- Waterhouse, Mary. 1992. *Farewell Welfare*. Seattle: Peanut Butter Publishing.
- Weaver, R. Kent. 2002. "The Structure of the TANF Block Grant." The Brookings Institution. April. Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/es/research/projects/wrb/publications/pb/pb22.htm>.
- Western, Bruce (ed.). 2004. *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Western, Bruce, Meredith Kellykamp, and Jake Rosenfeld. 2004. "Crime, Punishment, and American Inequality." Pp. 771-796 in K. M. Neckerman (ed.), *Social Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Wheelock, Anne. 1992. *Crossing the Tracks: How "Untracking" Can Save America's Schools*. New York: Norton Press.
- Wilson, James Q. and Richard J. Hernstein. 1986. *Crime and Human Nature*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

## CHAPTER 20

# Research Literature on Haitian Americans 1996–2006: Trends and Outlook

YANICK ST. JEAN

*It's a matter of [whether] you want to stay home and perish or whatever, and be hungry and not have a future, or you want to seek a life where it will be better for you. But with the hope that maybe you can return home to bring . . . back or to open up opportunities for all those who can't leave.*

*I want as many Haitians here as possible. Yes I do. As many . . . if for any reason, the more there are here, the better it is for Haiti two ways. Those people's misery is alleviated, number one. And number two, by them being here they can surreptitiously provide some help to the mother country, to Haiti. So as many as possible. . . . As many Haitians that we can have here the better it is for Haiti.*

[Remarks by Haitian Americans interviewed in 2004]

Recent interviews with Haitian Americans reveal positive views on immigration and an inside knowledge that immigrants living in two worlds benefits the homeland. While transnationalism does not appear in these remarks, transnationalism is what these respondents are thinking and operationalizing.

This chapter peruses key literature on Americans of Haitian origin, published from 1996 to 2006. The purposes are to identify the major trends in this literature and to draw attention to the benefits of research that targets Caribbean groups separately. First, however, it is necessary to define the Caribbean context from which these Americans originate, context for the most part ignored by American social scientists (see Portes et al., 1997).

## THE CARIBBEAN

Definitions of the Caribbean vary. When one thinks of the Caribbean, the mass of Greater and Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean Sea immediately comes to mind. But regional boundaries are fluid—not immovable. Some definitions push boundaries beyond traditional expectations.

For instance, while acknowledging definitional problems, Hillsman and D'Agostino, authors of *The Contemporary Caribbean* (2003), expand their designation to include not only Greater and Lesser Antilles, which they term *insular*, but also the *circum-Caribbean*, “typically Caribbean enclaves in the Atlantic Ocean and on the South American and Central American coasts” (2003: 10). Greater Antilles of the insular Caribbean are

Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic), and Puerto Rico, lesser Antilles, the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands. The Leewards include Montserrat, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Martin, and St. Barthelemy . . . the Windwards . . . Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada, the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Netherlands Antilles (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao) complete the insular Caribbean. (2003: 10)

The *circum-Caribbean* is composed of

[t]he Bahamas, Bermuda, and the Turks and Caicos Islands [that] although not within the Caribbean Sea have much in common with the region. Similarly, Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname have more in common with the Caribbean than their neighboring South American countries. The same can be said for coastal enclaves in Venezuela and Colombia on the Caribbean coast of South America, as well as the Panamanian, Costa Rican, Nicaraguan, Honduran and Belizean, coasts of Central America. (2003: 10)

Extending further the boundaries of their Caribbean, Hillsman and D'Agostino (2003) incorporate parts of the United States by attaching Miami and South Florida and suggesting Miami as capital of the Caribbean. This expansion of the region beyond traditional boundaries of Greater and Lesser Antilles reminds one that these socially constructed borders are subject to even more redefinitions. If geographical boundaries follow the flow of immigration, and South Florida and Miami have become part of the Caribbean, why not New York, Boston, Toronto, Montreal, Paris, and other major cities with large concentrations of Caribbean immigrants? Should not the Caribbean extend to these cities as well?

### **Tropical Paradise: The Stereotype**

Sunny beaches, waterfalls, palm, coconut, and mango trees, flora, architecture, meringue, reggae, salsa, carnivals, friendly people—the Caribbean region is noted for its fun and beauty, and tropical paradise is its reputation (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003). For those who can afford the adventure, these islands are a perfect getaway—a freeing from American obsessions with time and structure.

Exotic as it is, this popular image of the region blurs its serious side, as it suppresses important contributions made to the area and to the world. Blurred are the reactions of the world to political and ideological movements in the region. Blurred is the bravery of Caribbean populations as they worked to free themselves from various forms of exploitation including colonialism and slavery. Blurred is the global impact of Caribbean literature. That the United States intervened more here than anywhere in the world attests to the strategic importance of the region. However, as accomplishments are forgotten stereotypes prevail. Increasingly, an inter-reliant world calls for researchers to turn away from stereotypes and turn minds and methods to the Caribbean (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003).

Caribbean cultures are misunderstood and sensationalized by the media, which accent the region's political and economic difficulties, problems of immigration and drugs. Undermined are "the valiant Caribbean efforts to define uniquely Caribbean identities and create autonomous institutions" (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003: 9). Media stereotypes are one common problem that nations of the Caribbean suffer, including Haiti.

Another issue is this: there is no general framework to explain the Caribbean. Current analyses focus on one nation at a time. This methodology leads to a focus on differences, a focus that lacks depth because it conceals what these nations have in common. Identifying patterns could help solve some problems of the region. In sum, common stereotypes, media sensationalization, and the absence of a general framework provide grounds for studying the region as a whole—a region, despite important contributions to the world, suffers from neglect (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003).

### The Single-Case Study

The idea of studying the Caribbean as a unit is reminiscent of Emile Durkheim. For Emile Durkheim, as in *The Contemporary Caribbean*, the whole is not the sum of its parts; thus the need for a holistic view of the region. However, focusing on this regional whole does not (should not) preclude studying each part (each nation and/or culture) and what each contributes to the Caribbean unity. While the region is not the sum of its parts, in its own way or ways, each Caribbean nation contributes uniqueness to the whole. Thus, it is possible to begin the work of developing a paradigm for the entire region, by isolating first the particularities of nations. Discovering and setting aside such particularities places any residue (the common side of Caribbean nations) into focus. Additionally, a closer look at particularities can help identify the role that difference plays in the dynamics of nations.

A good illustration of the importance of particularities is D'Agostino's chapter on "Caribbean Politics," where he argues similarities in Caribbean political systems and demonstrates this by exploring separately the political systems of various nations—that of Puerto Rico (p. 91), Cuba (p. 97), Dominican Republic (p. 102), Jamaica (p. 104), Grenada (p. 113), Haiti (p. 119). Only after this single-case exploration does he conclude that

[d]espite their divergent origins and structures, political systems throughout the Caribbean have much in common. All have been influenced by the legacies of colonialism—slavery, economic exploitation and dependence, external domination, and elite-dominated exclusionary rule. (2003: 124)

To understand similarities that bind these political systems, D'Agostino found it necessary to investigate these unique political situations. Alejandro Portes, Carlos Dore-Cabral, and Patricia Landolt (1997: 1564) also underscore the single-case approach. In *The Urban Caribbean* these authors stressed "the political and economic differences between Costa Rica, Haiti, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica in order to assess the importance of common findings" (see Shefner, 1998).

Haiti and Americans of Haitian origin share with the rest of the Caribbean that they are neglected by mainstream American social scientists. In this review article, I isolate the literature on Haitian Americans looking for trends and what these trends suggest not only about Haitian Americans but also the Caribbean.



## HAITIAN EXPERIENCE: A SINGLE-CASE STUDY

While the whole of the Caribbean region shares with Haiti the experience of colonialism and slavery, the Haitian experience in many ways is unique enough to isolate from that of regional sister states.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic share *Hispaniola*, the second largest island of the Antilles. Haiti (formerly St. Domingue) was France's richest colony in the late 1700s, status that earned her the title *La Perle des Antilles* (Pearl of the Antilles). On January 1, 1804, Haiti distinguished herself after a successful slave revolt that started in 1791, becoming the first black country (and only the second country in the Western Hemisphere after the United States) to become independent from France (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003; see also Pamphile, 2001; Zephir, 2004). François Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803), leader of the Haitian Revolution, was a former slave of the Bréda plantation. Gaou Guinou, Toussaint's grandfather sold to the Comte of Bréda, came from a West African tribe (Herkovits, 1941). This successful revolt is a unique historical event of which Haitians are very proud. So is the rest of the Caribbean. And so is the African world (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003).

The successful defeat of Napoleon's troops by the enslaved—defeat followed by Haitian independence—is an example of extraordinary resilience. But regardless of historical magnitude, this revolution is not the only event that makes Haiti unique. Haiti is also the only country in the Caribbean made infamous as the origin of the AIDS epidemic, in the early course of the disease when it was known as a killer. Haitians were the only Caribbean group placed by the Centers for Disease Control, with homosexuals, hemophiliacs, and heroin addicts (the four H's as they were called), in a high risk category for AIDS [(for a review of the early literature on AIDS, see, for example, St. Jean, 1996; St. Jean, 1984)]. Moreover, while Cubans refugees have been given asylum in the United States, Haitians are returned to their country of origin.

The differential treatment of Haitian immigrants is in the following example:

A woman who was pregnant and ill among the Haitians had been allowed to remain in the United States but had been separated from her young children, who were sent back to Haiti. This revelation led to a public outcry and the eventual decision to reunite the two children with their mother in the United States. [Yet,] when little Elian was discovered off the Florida coast, the reaction of people in the United States was to embrace this child. (Dawkins, 2000: 120)

Raising its ugly head, discrimination nurtures the racist/ethnic stratification. Even immigration incarceration is unequal for, as elsewhere, Cubans and Haitians are not subject to the same treatment (Simon, 1998). Negative stereotypes and representations of Haiti are common also (Dubois, 1996).

Fame (successful revolution) and infamy (CDC classifications, differential treatment) have meanings and consequences for Haiti and Haitians, Haitian Americans, the Caribbean region as a whole, and the world; consequently, these experiences must be studied within their larger Caribbean and world contexts. But, experiences must also be understood in Haitian and Haitian American contexts for reasons already explained.

To understand the Caribbean and Caribbean Americans, it is important to know, for example, why the successful revolt and infamous CDC classification were unique to Haitians. Such particularities of the Haitian experience and particularities of each Caribbean nation in terms of language, religion, colonization—in sum what each nation brings or does not bring to the Caribbean table—allow a firm grasp of the region and its people. For this reason

researchers must consider the single-case study of Haiti, Haitian Americans (and other groups of Caribbean Americans). A single case shines upon the whole region.

We live in a co-dependent world.

The Haitian people have historically been deprived and abused. Never has there been a period of stability and social change when the general population could expect its government to provide the resources necessary to enhance social and economic growth, and yet it is this distinct history and culture which sustains and connects all Haitians to one another. (Pierce and Elisme, 1997: 52)

In many ways, the Haitian and Haitian American situations are unlike that of the rest of the Caribbean. Thus Haitian Americans, different from other Caribbean Americans, are the focus of this article. Awareness of differences provides superior grasp of the interdependent Caribbean whole.

### HAITIAN EXPERIENCE AND SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE

*Sociological Abstracts* is an international catalog of key publications in sociology. A search of abstracts for materials on Haitian Americans published in the past decade produces few peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and book reviews.

Major trends in the literature on Haitian Americans include the second generation of immigrants, transnationalism networks, identity and citizenship, the diaspora of people, the diaspora of religions, the long-term impact of the AIDS stigmatization, and ethnic disparity in writings on the Caribbean (see Hillman and D'Agostino, 2003, especially pages 229–235). There are several articles on health issues, including one comparison. There are articles on slave revolutions and the African Diaspora. Writings about slavery include the significance of the Haitian Revolution, how it profoundly affected the Americas, and the role of the extraordinary leader Toussaint L'Ouverture in the Haitian defeat of Napoleon's troops (Myers, 1996). Discussions of adolescent alcohol abuse are in line with a focus on the second generation. The most consistent finding in this literature, however, is the link between local and global reflected in every aspect of immigrant life. I select some articles that, in my view, illustrate well the major trends in that literature.

#### **Diaspora and Transnationalism**

Transnationality typifies Caribbean Americans. Transnationality means an immigrant group lives simultaneously in two different nations-state. This global flow leads to the formation of enclaves abroad and links families in two or more nations. Transnationality has consequences for the transfer of funds and goods from hostland to homeland. Funds sent to families in the homeland are used for basic necessities (Hillsman and D'Agostino, 2003). Though Haitian Americans have unique characteristics, they share this transnational experience with other Americans from the Caribbean.

An insider look into Haitian American life and a good starting place for this research is Flore Zephir's *The Haitian Americans*. Observer of the Haitian diaspora, Zephir defines this diaspora as "continuity between the land of origin and the land of resettlement . . . interconnectedness between events at home and the sociopolitical reality of this country" (2004: 10).

Though Zephir writes about Haitian American life, depictions of premigratory and postmigratory experiences link her volume to the issue of Caribbean and Caribbean American transnationalism in Hillsman and D'Agostino. In the Haitian American case, too, there is continuity between the land of origin and the land of resettlement. Also in the Haitian American case is a collective memory of place, of socialization, of experience, and of institutions. Geographical boundaries are no longer relevant.

Zephir's exploration of Haitian immigrant life begins with a review of the history and policies of immigration in the United States and the reason why Haitian Americans immigrate. Haitian Americans immigrate for prosperity and happiness. But, this explanation is not complete without traveling to the old place of memory; thus, knowledge of the glorious Haitian past is necessary to understand the Haitian diaspora. There are discussions of Catholicism, the Vodou religion, the Haitian economy, the Duvalier and post-Duvalier years, the political and economic nightmares pushing Haitians out of the country and pulling them into the United States. There are discussions of prejudice and discrimination in the United States. On page 19 of *The Haitian Americans* is a telling photograph with the following inscription: "Haitian boat people intercepted and 'inspected' on October 29, 2002, by police officers wearing masks." Immediately, I associated this picture with a Haitian respondent I interviewed in the early 1980s. The respondent reported seeking treatment at a hospital. Although he had no symptoms of AIDS, once he identified himself as Haitian, he was met by masked and gloved hospital personnel.

Haitian Americans use coping mechanisms in their new environment. One mechanism is the establishment of ethnic communities. As for ethnic options:

Haitians have managed to visibly recreate the cultural habits of their homeland. . . . Haitian immigrants' notion of ethnicity is shaped, on the one hand, by values directly inherited from the homeland and, on the other, by the realities of the American context. As such, Haitian ethnicity is transnational. (Zephir 2004: 117)

Some of these ideas are in Zephir's earlier *Haitian Immigrants in Black America: A Sociolinguistic Portrait* (1996), about "the process of identity formation among Haitian immigrants in the US." These writings show the Haitian American identity complex, hybrid and transnational. This identity is neither an old Haitian identity, nor an American identity. Instead, this identity represents a mix of old and new—a Haitian American identity. Haitian Americans share the transnational nature of identity with other Caribbean Americans. Again, the key word in this literature is transnationalism. What follows describes some forms transnationalism has taken in the literature of the past decade.

## Generations and Transnationalism

First- and second-generation Haitian Americans differ in many ways. First-generation Haitian American immigrants are characterized by "racial pride and a sense of belonging to a Nation" (Zephir 2004: 119). These Haitian Americans want to retain their identity, for " 'l'haitien sait son chez lui, et il connaît ses racines' (the Haitian has a home that he or she can call his or her own, and he or she knows his or her roots)" (2004: 121). Linguistically, this first generation uses French and Creole. Creole, spoken by 100% of Haitians, is also a mark of ethnicity. French, spoken by educated Haitians, marks social class. The first generation uses French to improve their situation. Other issues discussed are the French literary heritage and Haitian authors such as Jacques Roumain, Jean Price-Mars, and the more recent Danny Laférière and Lilas Desquiron.

Another characteristic of this first generation is their distancing from native Black Americans (Pamphile, 2001; Zephir, 1996, 2004). However, distancing “neither means a rejection of Blackness nor the absence of racial consciousness on their part. Their sense of Blackness is linked to Haitian history through Africa and not to the black experience in the United States” (Zephir 2004: 127). Distancing from native Black Americans does not extend to Haitians in leadership positions. “[O]ne can witness the high level of interactions between Haitian American and African American leaders in their struggle for racial equality” (Zephir 2004: 128). This first generation of Haitian Americans is different from, and not quite as popular in this literature as, the second generation.

The second generation . . . do not speak English with an accent (or the same heavy accent as the parents) and have a great deal of familiarity with the American way. Because of these characteristics, they are certainly not overtly distinguishable from American Blacks. In consequence, second-generation seem to have more ethnic options at their disposal than do the parents. (Zephir 2004: 130)

A transnational perspective takes account of the history in and of the country of origin. Transnational relations shape the second generation considerably. “[T]ransnational relations form a significant part of second generation identities, particularly for Haitian Americans” (Levitt and Waters, 2002). The theme of transnationalism is consistent in this literature.

It was noted earlier, except for Haitian Americans in leadership positions, that the first generation distances itself from African Americans. We would also expect this distancing attitude from second-generation Haitian Americans, who display strong haitianness. It must be stressed, however, that despite their distancing, Haitian Americans see themselves as black (see Zephir, 2004).

Recent research by Feagin and Dirks (2005) demonstrates that especially white students and powerful whites tend to classify Haitian Americans with African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Indian Americans as non-white. This research concludes that the black/white dualistic categorization prevails in the populations interviewed. Haitian Americans also place themselves in the non-white category with other groups traditionally viewed as non-white. The perceptions of Haitians by powerful whites and white students do not alter that first-generation Haitians, and perhaps some in the second, see themselves as a separate group from African Americans. Additionally, while a segment of this second generation may deny haitianness (see, for example, Zephir, 2004; Stepick, 1998), others from that generation display strong to weaker haitianness. They know themselves to be black. They are proud of their racial identity. Still, they are likely to see themselves as a separate group from African Americans. This view of haitianness as separate from the African American identity is not likely influenced by perceptions in the host society.

Given that transnational relations significantly shape the identities of the second generation, what behaviors demonstrate Haitian Americans are affected by these relations? One telling example is the reaction of the second generation to the AIDS labeling of Haitians.

Many of the Haitian young people who took to the streets of New York to protest against the stigma of the AIDS label began supporting transnational projects to rebuild Haiti. The second generation in Haiti meanwhile learned to look to the diaspora for the political power to change Haiti. . . . Youngsters in Haiti, faced with the barriers of class, color, gender discrimination, political turmoil, and the lack of economic opportunity, saw migration to the United States and the Haitian diaspora as the hope for both themselves and Haiti. (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1998: 197)

Thus, from the United States, the second generation turn their eyes to Haiti, while from Haiti, the second generation look to the diaspora-reference group. The second generation in

Haiti and in the United States “share a claim to a Haitian homeland and nostalgia for a Haiti that never was, binding them across national borders and across generations” (Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 1998: 198). Clearly, this claim to the Haitian land has meaning for the political and nation-building future of Haiti. In this claim is a potential for the globalization of Haitian politics through transnationalism. The globalization of politics also means increased flow of remittances. One scholar discussed this transnational politic and its meaning for the sending country in terms of funds (Itzigsohn, 2000). These suggested economic and nation-building benefits could be observed at the beginning of the administration of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the deposed president of Haiti, when

links between the diaspora and the Haitian government constituted an important source of funds and personnel. After the coup of 1991, the unity of individuals in the diaspora and those remaining in Haiti strengthened, particularly in the form of leadership in US Haitian organizations. . . . It is concluded that the ideology of the transnational nations-state has become a powerful resource for immigrant-sending countries to develop a new rhetoric of national independence. (Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 1998)

Transnationalism, an important source of funds for Haitian families, also increases Haiti’s Gross National Product (GNP) and may work to reduce one of the popular stereotypes of Haiti in the American media. This stereotype is “poorest country of the Western Hemisphere.” While economic poverty is indeed rampant in Haiti, the media avoid discussions of colonization, the early extraction of resources from Hispaniola, and, after independence, the 50 plus years of isolation from international powers that led to the disintegration of infrastructures and political instability. Moreover, the ransom Haiti paid to France for independence and diplomatic recognition contributed further to an early start in the economic collapse of the nation. These reasons for Haiti being the “poorest” in the Western Hemisphere remain backstage. The sources of poverty are left to the American imagination. One Haitian American jokingly refers to the “poorest country” stereotype as Haiti’s family name in the American media. To the extent that transnationalism contributes to economic well-being and nation-building, transnationalism can improve the American media image of that nation.

The impact of transnationalism on the second generation provides hope to Haiti and Haitian families. Through transnationalism, the second generation seems to hold the key to the economic and political future of Haiti. Second-generation Haitian Americans are a popular and important topic in the literature of the past decade. The spirit of the Haitian revolution is alive in this generation, wishing to reclaim the land of their ancestors.

Whether first or second generation, Haitian Americans are influencing American society as they shape “a community of a larger memory.”

As the Haitian community matures and as the second and third generations come of age, perhaps they will be seen as less alien and more American. After all, America is a permanently unfinished society, where the new and old always blend to produce a much larger and better nation, one out of many, “the varied carols of America.” (Zephir 2004: 149)

This transnational perspective on the Haitian experience is a major theme in articles published between 1996 and 2006. To understand Haitian Americans, one must first understand their past in the country of origin, their present in the receiving country, their current interrelations and interactions with the sending country, and the transnational nature of their identities. Zephir provides an insightful interpretation of Haitian American life from a Haitian American point of view.

## Citizenship and Transnationalism

Transnationalism impacts citizenship. Diasporic citizenship is “a set of practices that a person is engaged in, and a set of rights acquired or appropriated, that cross nation-state boundaries and that indicate membership in at least two nation states” (Laguerre 1998: 90). After tracking various definitions of immigration in the United States, Laguerre presents readers with a range of perspectives on international migration and introduces the concept of diasporic citizenship—a concept that takes into account the transnational aspect of citizenship. One example of diasporic citizenship is the Haitian American involvement in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Most of those who brought the case to the Supreme Court were Haitian Americans continuing the fight for equality that started the Haitian revolution (Laguerre, 1998).

The concept of diasporic citizenship is composed of diaspora and citizenship. These terms have different meanings:

Diaspora means displacement and reattachment. It refers to rerootedness, that is living in another state, and implies transnationality in its relations with the homeland. . . . Diaspora . . . is a mechanism that expands the space of the nation beyond the borders of the state. . . . By diaspora, we refer to individual immigrants or communities who live outside the legal or recognized boundaries of the state or the homeland, but inside the reterritorialized space of the dispersed nation. (Laguerre 1998: 8)

Improved means of communications facilitate social contacts between homeland and hostland.

When a member of the Haitian diasporic community in New York City calls a family member still in Haiti to advise her how she should vote in the Haitian elections on the basis of information garnered in New York, the social distance is small in comparison with the geographical distance that separates the callers. (Laguerre 1998: 9)

While diaspora means activity, citizenship is fixed within a nation. Thus there is a need for a concept of citizenship that reflects more accurately the movement in diaspora. The new immigration requires new terminology. Diasporic citizenship takes into account the transnationality of the diasporic experience.

An interesting point made by Laguerre is this: Haitian Americans “escape complete minoritization since the link with the homeland allows one to enjoy the majority status one cannot exercise in the adopted country” (Laguerre 1998: 192; Pedraza 1999: 380). This majority status might play into the strong haitianness of some Haitian Americans—haitianness, except for Haitians in leadership positions, can promote distance from African Americans. This idea deserves further research.

## Religion and Transnationalism

Transnational religion and beliefs generate social capital. For example, religion (especially Catholicism) produces social capital for Haitian immigrants in Miami, Montreal, and Paris. Social capital is “access to valuable resources attained by virtue of membership in social networks.” Religious institutions impact on their members’ social networks. Assimilation and segmented assimilation theories should be modified to take into account the impact of religious beliefs and religious institutions in the social advancement of their members (Mooney, 2004). Religion is a topic traditionally neglected by sociologists. Yet, Mooney’s work is important given the meaning of religion for new immigrants (Leonard et al., 2005; Ebaugh, 2000)

and the relationship between social ties, social capital, and religion. These ideas about the meaning and benefits of religion are also consistent with trends in the literature on Haitian Americans.

Is it possible to relate the idea of reciprocity to transnationalism? A study comparing the helping behaviors of Haitians, Christian fundamentalists, and gang members suggest their helping behaviors are based upon the same belief that “what goes around comes around” (Shaw, 2004). Reciprocity, too, seems a form of social capital that can be linked to Mooney’s work on religion. I say this because, if “what goes around comes around,” then building social networks and capital may well depend upon reciprocity. However, I am not so sure why the comparison of these groups brings to mind the earlier Haitian classification of Haitians with Hemophiliacs, Heroin addicts, and Homosexuals (three H’s) as high-risk groups for AIDS. This discussion does not offer a transnational perspective and, for that reason, is somewhat different from trends observed so far in the literature. But, it is possible to stretch this idea and imagine the consequences of reciprocity that takes a transnational character.

Religious life (perhaps reciprocity also) is transnational. To understand immigrant religion, it is necessary to understand how immigrants interact with the religious culture(s) of the sending country. Following is an interesting account of religious transnationalism.

Fet Viej Mirak on East 115th Street is a religious event whose meaning also spans New York and Haiti. But rather than substituting the New York feast for the one they left behind at Sodo, Haitians add the Harlem location as another possible site of spiritual work. In this way East 115th Street is opened up as one more site in the expanding “religioscape” of transnational Haitian religious culture. During the pilgrimage for Notre Dame du Mont Carmel in New York, the Haitian population reterritorializes spiritual practice, reinscribing sacred space onto their new landscape of settlement. (McAlister 1998: 155)

Here again is an expansion of the homeland to the United States. And here again, one sees the potential benefits of transnationalism. The diaspora established social networks. These networks potentially increase social capital (Mooney), reciprocity (Shaw), and economic capital.

The pilgrimage to Mont Carmel in East Harlem expands the saint’s influence in the Haitian world. Haitians in diaspora reach out to Mont Carmel and Ezili Danto, both nationalist divinities, extending prayers for family and friends throughout the diaspora and in Haiti. By attending the feast by the thousands, the New York Haitian population has collectively placed the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on an invisible community map. In stepping onto the public state of the Catholic feast, they orient themselves within the shifting “ethnoscape” of New York City. They make sense of the confusing complexity of this ethnic landscape by locating the church as a center of spiritual power where they will be welcome. (McCallister 1998: 154)

The formation of diasporic ethnic communities also reinforces the sense of being a majority, even if only in a symbolic way. This transnational religious phenomenon is apparently common among Latin Americans:

When national populations spread through migration to new localities, they bring their divinities with them, re-territorializing their religious practices. The supernatural world assents, and comes to bear up communities in transition. (p. 154). . . . Religious sites in the United States become added to the American landscape; they multiply, rather than replace, spiritual centers of the home country. (McCallister 1998: 125)

The fluidity of the concept of transnationalism makes it difficult to study. But it is clearly a representation of the immigrant experience superior to the concepts of assimilation and multiculturalism. In comparison to transnationalism, assimilation and multiculturalism seem static (on assimilation and multiculturalism, see Alba, 1999). Transnationalism leads to a

view of immigration and the experience of immigration, as process and continuity. Transnationalism attests that, while the past alone cannot explain the present, past is a part of present. To understand the present, it becomes necessary to consider the past, as well as interactions in the present with a present elsewhere. Yet, Alba (1999) predicts also that

the concepts assimilation and multiculturalism are likely to figure importantly in the American future. Assimilation has been the predominant pattern among the descendants of earlier immigrants, as we now recognize in retrospect; and it is likely to be a highly prevalent one among the descendants of contemporary immigrants, though not as paramount as it has been. . . . Assimilation does not require the absolute extinction of ethnic difference, in other words. (Alba, 1999: 21)

## Health and Transnationalism

Consistent with the transnational phenomenon, Haitian parents who look for a cure for their family use “a combination of biomedical health care services and traditional health care practices for preventive health care and illness care” (Folden 2003: 67). Thus, in matters of health, as elsewhere, transnationalism breeds hybridity. These parents link place of origin to new home. They combine their new world with the old. Transnationalism is reflected in health care.

Transnationalism means that health care professionals need to understand the Haitian view, especially the role that the supernatural plays in mental health and illness (Desrosier and Fleurose, 2002). Understanding health care utilization requires an understanding of cultural beliefs (Wuart, 1997). Different health beliefs and health care options are the outcome of ethnic differences. For example, Haitian Americans, African Americans, and Jamaicans have different beliefs and approaches to health care based upon national origins (Orezzoli, 2000). These findings further reaffirm the importance of ethnicity and health beliefs in the utilization of health services and treatment of patients.

Transnationalism means what happens in the homeland impacts immigrants in the host nation. One research study shows the early AIDS classification of Haitians having an impact on Haitian women who perceive this stigma as having an influence on their lives, including their social relationships in the United States (Santana and Dancy, 2000). Early in its course, AIDS was said to have originated in Haiti. Haitians were classified as carriers of AIDS regardless of length of residence in the United States. Several decades after this classification, Haitian American women still felt the stigmatization that followed them in the receiving country. Stigmatization in the sending state travels to and impacts residents of the host state.

## Service Utilization

Other service utilization also reflects the pattern discovered in the literature. One study of Haitian social service utilization in South Florida finds many Haitians not taking advantage of government services to the poor even though they qualify. Moreover, persons who share “households with unqualified persons are less likely to access services than are other qualified immigrants and are more likely to experience hardships that impede their ability to find stable employment” (Kretsedemas, 2003).

Haitian American lack of enrollment in social services does not come as a surprise and may be partially explained by religious social capital. Catholic and other churches may be providing new Haitian American immigrants help with transitioning in the society. Haitian immigrants may have established strong religious and social networks that produce social



capital. However, cultural factors of pride and dignity are also to be taken into account in explaining this lack of enrollment.

Ethnicity impacts both “the quality of service delivery and perceptions of caseworker bias.” Research in South Florida concludes that evaluating delivery and perceptions requires a focus on “migration histories and patterns of racial ethnic stratification” (Kredemas, 2003: 10). Here, too, is a link between global and local. Here, too, transnationalism echoes.

## Other Topics

The topics selected for presentation in this analysis are far from exhaustive. Other topics found in the literature are racism and stereotypes (Dubois, 1996); new models of fatherhood (Bibb and Casimir, 1996); and ethnicities and families (Auerbach et al., 1997). Even education is an issue. Making the curriculum relevant to immigrant students’ lives requires a transnational perspective (McIntyre et al., 2001). Whatever the topic, the key to these issues is transnationalism. *Immigrant Faiths* (2005), an edited book that offers a transnational perspective on immigrant religion with a chapter on Haitians, observes a growing complexity in studying new immigrants, and the need to frame these groups and their religious lives in the context of hybridity and diaspora. Transnationalism, which permeates the immigrant literature, is the concept of the decade.

## CONCLUSION

In no way does this review of the literature exhaust the ideas published in *Sociological Abstracts* between 1996 and 2006. Rather, I selected a few publications that best represent transnationalism.

The present article focuses primarily on Haitian Americans. I reason what makes these Americans unique would also help isolate characteristics that tie them to the broader Caribbean and to other Americans of Caribbean origin. While the Caribbean region is not the sum of its parts, in its own way or ways, each nation contributes its uniqueness to the region. I also reason that the isolation of what is unique eventually advances the development of a paradigm to explain the region and its immigrant populations in the United States.

As the story of a single island-nation contributes to the story of the Caribbean, individual life stories also contribute to the story of a society. The life story of an immigrant reflects the period and places in which that immigrant lived. While the details of each story may vary in some ways, these stories are also similar in many ways. They weave patterns that can blur differences. So, to know one story is to know another. To know one immigrant is to know another. The “similar” in these stories is also the story of the society that produced these immigrants. To recognize this interaction of parts is to practice imaginative sociology.

I illustrate this idea with a quote from the Haitian American author Edwidge Danticat. In *A Very Haitian Story*, Danticat (2004a) writes a narrative of immigration. The title itself—*A Very Haitian Story*—illustrates the imaginative sociology, for even as the story is Danticat’s own, it points to a pattern that is very Haitian. The story is about Danticat’s uncle and his experience with immigration authorities upon entering the United States.

When immigration officials at Miami International Airport asked my uncle how long he would be staying, he explained that they [he and his son] would be killed if he returned to Haiti and that he and Maxo [his son] wanted asylum. They were arrested and taken to the Krome Detention Center,

where, my uncle told his lawyer three days later, the medicine he had brought with him from Haiti—a combination of both herbal and prescription medicines for an inflamed prostate and high blood pressure—was taken away from him. Twenty-four hours later, still in custody, he died at a nearby hospital.

[W]hile the American government just reviewed, for the fourth time, another 18-month term of the Temporary Protected Status granted to approximately 85,000 Hondurans and Nicaraguans after Hurricane Mitch in 1998, it will not give the same status to 20,000 Haitians living here. It denies Haitians this status even though the interim government in Haiti (with the backing of both Democratic and Republican officials in the United States) appealed for the measure to give Haiti time to stabilize its security system and recover from a severe housing shortage resulting from the ravages of [hurricane] Jeanne.

This story, seemingly unique to Danticat and her uncle, is shared by many a Haitian American. While the details are different, there is a core. In the country of origin some experiences push; in the receiving country there is also the perception that immigrants are not pulled but, instead, pushed by differential treatment—treatment, according to Danticat, that is due to the American government’s fear of mass migration from Haiti.

The experience of her uncle affected Danticat. To leave out that story, which originates in the country of origin and continues in the host, would disrupt the continuity of history and place that is a part of the transnational experience. However, in that story is also an ideal-type story of Caribbean immigrants. “If you are an immigrant in New York, there are some things you inevitably share. . . . You probably left behind someone you love in the country of your birth,” writes Danticat (2004a: 1). Also ideal-type story is how she imagines the United States prior to immigrating from Haiti. “When we fantasized, we saw ourselves walking the penny-guilded streets and buying all the candies we could stuff into ourselves. Eventually we grew to embrace the idea that New York was where we were meant to be, as soon as the all-powerful gatekeepers saw fit to let us in” (2004a: 1). Danticat’s pre-migratory American dream is also likely the American dream of pre-migratory Caribbean Americans. This idea deserves further research.

I include the family story of Danticat in this conclusion, because it illustrates so well the idea of transnationalism that permeates the literature of the decade. Another illustration of the personal in the transnational experience is “Georges Woke Up Laughing” (2001) where the authors paint the Haitian experience of transnationalism from a personal standpoint (Fouron and Glick-Schiller, 2002). There is a link between old place and new place, resulting, again, in the experience of transnationalism.

Transnationalism is closely related to the idea of collective memory, even though more than memory is involved. Transnationalism links communities and interactions in two or more nations. “Memory [which] needs continuous feeding from collective sources is sustained by social and moral props. Just like God needs us, so memory needs others” (Schwartz, 1992). Transnationalism provides the props.

Collective memory can be seen in the second generation’s hope for reclaiming the old country. If, indeed, these younger Haitian Americans do claim the motherland, it would begin fulfilling the promise of Toussaint L’Ouverture during his capture by the French. Toussaint, who died in 1803, predicted:

En me renversant, on n’a abattu que le tronc de l’arbre de la liberté des négres. Celui-ci repoussera par les racines, parce qu’elles sont profondes et nombreuses. (In overthrowing me, you have only cut down the trunk of the tree of liberty. It will grow again for its roots are deep and numerous).

The second generation is one of many roots of this tree of liberty.

What follows from this literature? I avoid predictions. However, if the trend toward looking at transnationalism continues, an increase in the volume of writings by Haitian American and Caribbean American authors can also be expected. This literature will likely be insightful. The writings of Michel Laguerre and Flore Zephir about the Haitian and Haitian American experience reveal layers and layers of depth rarely seen in the works of American sociologists who write about issues concerning Haitian Americans. As experts in their fields, Laguerre and Zephir write from outside in, but also inside out. The American sociological literature on Haitian Americans needs this “inside out” perspective and depth.

It seems, too, that this transnational literature will continue to focus on the second and later generations. Moreover, since transnationalism can involve more than two nations-state, transnationalism will complicate the study of Haitian Americans and other Americans of Caribbean origin. Further, more and more, fluency in local languages will be needed in order to access the transnational character of the immigrant experience. These ideas support the point made earlier, that writings on Haitian Americans will see an increase of Haitian American authors and researchers. The same will apply to studies of other Caribbean groups. These writings, too, will be more comprehensive and more accurate, and an insider look will make them more interesting. These insider looks with a focus on difference will provide grounds for developing a paradigm to explain the Caribbean region, however defined.

The transnational phenomenon means concepts such as assimilation and multiculturalism, though probably here to stay (see Alba, 1999), will decrease in importance. Though integral parts of the transnational phenomenon, it seems assimilation and multiculturalism do not grasp it entirely and may be displaced in importance by such concepts as collective memory, ethnogenesis, hybridity, and others that more fully represent the transnational character of the immigrant experience.

Transnationalism may reduce interactions with other ethnic groups within in the United States, given the immigrant’s closeness to the homeland, and interactions between the homeland and hostland. Likewise, transnationalism may slow the assimilation of new immigrants, particularly in terms of learning the English language.

Diversity is here to stay, Richard Alba suggests:

As long as contemporary immigration continues at a robust level, it will expand and reinforce diversity even if assimilation is a major pattern among second- and third-generation individuals. . . . [D]iversity is sustained by aggregate processes—especially high levels of immigration and the resulting communities and infrastructures. (1999: 22)

This new, transnational approach to studying ethnic communities is challenging but also exciting. More and more diversity is to be expected. However, as Alba predicts, “Racial and ethnic stratification is . . . part of the bedrock of the American social structure, and there is little prospect that this fact will be altered substantially in the foreseeable future.” But, too, I suggest, as ethnic communities see themselves part of a majority elsewhere, that ethnic stratification in the United States will impact these groups differently. Seeing themselves as part of a transnational majority will be a powerful coping mechanism that helps deal with the hostland’s ethnic stratification. These ideas, too, need further research.

For Haitian immigrants, transnationalism is not a new phenomenon. Whether symbolically or in fact, Haitian Americans have lived, and know themselves to live, simultaneously in their homeland and host society. To illustrate this thinking, I conclude by repeating the remarks of Haitian Americans, already shared at the beginning of this article.

It's a matter of you want to stay home and perish or whatever, and be hungry and not have a future, or you want to seek a life where it will be better for you. But with the hope that maybe you can return home to bring . . . back or to open up opportunities for all those who can't leave.

I want as many Haitians here as possible. Yes I do. As many . . . if for any reason, the more there are here the better it is for Haiti two ways. Those people's misery is alleviated, number one. And number two, by them being here they can surreptitiously provide some help to the mother country, to Haiti. So as many as possible. . . . As many Haitians that we can have here the better it is for Haiti.

Haitian Americans, ahead of the literature, have always been aware of living in two worlds as expressed in their preference for *Haitian American*. For these Americans, transnationalism and its practice go side by side with their immigration.

## REFERENCES

- Alba, Richard. 1999. "Immigration and the American Realities of Assimilation and Multiculturalism." *Sociological Forum* 14: 3–25.
- Auerbach, Carl, Louise B. Silverstein, and Martin Jean Zizi. 1997. "The Evolving Structure of Fatherhood among Haitian Americans." *Journal of African American Men* 2: 59–85.
- Bibb, Amy and Georges J. Casimir. 1996. "Haitian Families." Pp. 97–111 in *Ethnicity and Families*, edited by Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, and John K. Pearce. New York: Guilford.
- Cook, Kaye V. 2000. "You Have to Have Somebody Watching Your Back, and if That's a God, Then That's Mighty Big: The Church Role in the Resilience of Inner-City Youth." *Adolescence* 25: 717–730.
- Danticat, Edwidge. 2004a. "A Very Haitian Story." *The New York Times*, Editorial Desk, Section A: 23.
- Danticat, Edwidge. 2004b. "The Next Wave." *The New York Times*, Section 14: 1–13.
- Dawkins, Marvin P. 2000. "Rethinking U.S. Immigration Policy." *Black Issues in Higher Education* 17: 120.
- Desrosiers, Astrid. 2002. "Treating Patients." *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 56: 508–522.
- Dubois, Laurent. 1996. "A Spoonful of Blood: Haitians, Racism and AIDS." *Science and Culture* 6: 7–43.
- Ebaugh, Helen Rose and Janet Saltzman Chafetz. 2000. *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*. Latham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Feagin Joe and Danielle Dirks. 2005. "Who Is White? College Students' Assessments of Key US Racial and Ethnic Groups." *Southern Sociological Society (SSS)*: Charlotte, NC.
- Folden, Susan. 2003. "Health Seeking Behaviors of Haitian Families for Their School Aged Children." *Journal of Cultural Diversity* 10: 62–68.
- Fouron, George and Nina Glick-Schiller. 2002. "The Generation of Identity: Redefining the Second Generation within a Transnational Social Field." Pp. 168–208 in *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*, edited by Peggy Levitt and Mary C. Waters. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Glick-Schiller, Nina and Georges Eugene Fouron. 2001. *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Herkovits, Melville. 1941. *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Boston: Beacon.
- Hillsman, Richard S. and D'Agostino, Thomas J. 2003. *Understanding the Contemporary Caribbean*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Itzigsohn, Jose. 2000. "Immigration and the Boundaries of Citizenship: The Institutions of Immigrants' Political Transnationalism." *International Migration Review* 34: 1126–1154.
- Kretsedemas, Philip. 2005. "Language Barriers & Perceptions of Bias: Ethnic Differences in Immigrant Encounters with the Welfare System." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* XXXII: 109–123.
- Kretsedemas, Philip. 2003. "Immigrant Households and Hardships after Welfare Reform: A Case Study of the Miami-Dade Haitian Community." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 12: 314–325.
- Laguette, Michel. 1998. *Diasporic Citizenship: Haitian Americans in Transnational America*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Leonard, Karen, Alex Stepick, Manel Vasquez, and Jennifer Holdaway. 2005. *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religions Life in America*. Latham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Marcelin, Louis Herns, James Vivian, Ralph DiClemente, James Shultz, and J. Bryan Page. 2005. "Trends in Alcohol, Drug and Cigarette Use among Haitian Youth in Miami-Dade County, Florida." *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse* 4: 105–131.
- McAlister, Elizabeth M. 1998. "The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism." Pp. 123–160 in *Gathering in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, edited by Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- McIntyre, Ellen, Ann Rosebery, and Norma Gonzalez (eds.). 2001. *Classroom Diversity: Connecting Curriculum to Students' Lives*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Orezzoli, Max, C.E. 2000. "Health Beliefs and Health Care Options of Disparate Black Communities in the United States." *Dissertation Abstracts International* 61 (6) Dec., 2476-A.
- Pamphile, Léon Dénius. 2001. *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Pedraza, Silvia. 1999. "Assimilation or Diasporic Citizenship?" *Contemporary Sociology* 28: 377–381.
- Pierce, Walter J. and Erlange Eslime. 1997. "Understanding and Working with Haitian Immigrant Families." Pp. 49–65 in *Cross-Cultural Practice with Couples and Families*, edited by Philip M. Brown and John Shalett. New York: Haworth Press.
- Portes, Alejandro, Carlos Dore-Cabral, and Patricia Landolt. 1997. *The Urban Caribbean: Transitions in the New Global Economy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rumbaut, Ruben G. and Alejandro Portes. 2001. *Ethnicities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Santana, Marie-Anne and Barbara L. Dancy. 2000. "The Stigma of Being Named AIDS Carriers on Haitian-American Women." *Health Care for Women International* 21: 161–171.
- Schiller, Nina Glick and Georges Fournon. 1998. "Transnational Lives and National Identities: The Identity Politics of Haitian Immigrants." *Comparative Urban and Community Research* 6: 130–161.
- Shefner, John. 1998. "The Urban Caribbean: Transitions in the New Global Economy." *Social Forces* 76: 1564–1566.
- Simon, Jonathan. 1998. "Refugees in a Carceral Age: The Rebirth of Immigration Prisons in the United States." *Public Culture* 10: 577–607.
- Stepick, Alex, Carol Dutton Stepick, Emmanuel Eugene, Deborah Teed, and Yves Labissière. 2001. "Shifting Identities and Intergenerational Conflict." Pp. 229–266 in *Ethnicities*, edited by Ruben G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- St. Jean, Yanick. 1996. "American Attitudes towards Haitians: AIDS as Stigma." Pp. 153–164 in *Normative Social Action: Cross-National and Historical Approaches*, edited by David Sciulli. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- St. Jean, Yanick. 1984. "Case Analyses of Haitians with AIDS." Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Texas at El Paso.
- Schwartz, Barry. 1992. "Introduction." Pp. 1–34, in *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Warner, R. Stephen and Judith G. Wittner (editors). 1998. *Gathering in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Wuart, Anthony, T. 1997. Cultural Health Beliefs, Health Care Pluralism, and Patterns of Health Care Utilization among Haitian Immigrants in Metropolitan Boston. *Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*, 58, 2 Aug., 595-A.
- Wikipedia <http://www.answers.com/topic/history-of-the-caribbean>.
- William-Myers, A. J. 1996. "Slavery, Rebellion, and Revolution in the Americas: A Historiographical Scenario on the Theses of Genovese and Others." *Journal of Black Studies* 26: 381–400.
- Zephir, Flore. 2004. *The Haitian Americans*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Zephir, Flore. 2001. *Trends in Ethnic Identification among Second-Generation Haitian Immigrants in New York City*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Zephir, Flore. 1996. *Haitian Immigrants in Black America: A Sociological and Sociolinguistic Portrait*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

## CHAPTER 21

# Antiracism

EILEEN O'BRIEN

Antiracism can be understood in its broadest sense as any theory and/or practice (whether political or personal) that seeks to challenge, reduce, or eliminate manifestations of racism in society. The question of what particular ideas and practices qualify as antiracist is difficult to answer without first acknowledging two important factors. First, scholars in the field of race and ethnic relations operate from several different definitions of racism (Yetman 2004). Thus, to identify something or someone as antiracist necessitates some common understandings of what it means to be challenging *racism*. Indeed, Bonnett (2000) argues that antiracism “cannot be adequately understood as the inverse of racism” (p. 2) because one entity might practice antiracism in a manner that may even perpetuate racism by another definition.

A second factor contributing to murky understandings of antiracism in the social sciences is that there is not a well-developed typology of antiracist theory and practice anywhere in the academic world. On the other hand, feminism enjoyed some good fortune in that many white, middle-class feminist scholars had access to the academy during a good part of the 20th century when feminist thought and politics proliferated. As a result there are now a plethora of textbooks outlining several fairly well-accepted and standardized types of feminism, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, lesbian feminism, and multicultural feminism (e.g., Lorber 2005; Tong 1998). Antiracism, by contrast, first was introduced into the field of sociology by scholars like W.E.B. Du Bois and Oliver Cromwell Cox, who are only recently gaining recognition in their respective fields. Du Bois, although granted a Harvard PhD, did have to publicly accept his degree on stage by “passing” as a white man. Although all African Americans suffered degrading and humiliating racism regardless of their class status in Du Bois’ day, Du Bois himself was of a fairly elite, academic class of African Americans, and one cannot help but wonder how much other antiracist practice and scholarship existed even then that has not been canonized and typologized as feminism has been. Those who publicly and vocally challenge racism have not had as much access to elite academic status as feminist scholars have in the latter decades of the 20th century. While most racial-ethnic relations textbooks now acknowledge some standardized types of racism (e.g., individual, institutional, structural, cultural), the same cannot be said for types of antiracism. As we shall see, several

scholars have begun to outline types of antiracism, but no one scholar's schema has been widely accepted and used in any other context other than his or her own work.

For the purposes of this essay, we will focus mainly on two types of antiracism—individual and institutional—while acknowledging that these types are not mutually exclusive, and that within these two types themselves there are varying approaches to antiracist thought and praxis. To include these various types of antiracism, we will operate from a broad definition of racism; that is, a system of advantages for the dominant racial group (whites) in society (Tatum 2003). This definition of racism encompasses individual prejudices and acts of discrimination that bolster the position of the majority group, as well as material and cultural advantages that flow to the dominant group due to systemic societal arrangements (Feagin 2000). As we shall see, at times antiracist thought and/or practice may focus on one component of this definition of racism, to the detriment of other components. To begin with, we shall explore how scholars have attempted to craft definitions of antiracism by grappling with this multifaceted reality of racism itself.

### TYPES OF ANTIRACISM

Alastair Bonnett, in his work on antiracism from a global perspective, points out that there are seven different reasons “why racism is claimed to be a bad thing.” (2000: 4). Upon examining these reasons, it becomes more evident that antiracism might take incredibly different forms depending upon the definition of racism that underlies it. The seven reasons he outlines are: “Racism is socially disruptive; Racism is foreign; Racism sustains the ruling class; Racism hinders the progress of our community; Racism is an intellectual error; Racism distorts and erases people's identities; Racism is anti-egalitarian and socially unjust” (Bonnett 2000:4–7). The third reason, “racism sustains the ruling class,” is often a reason behind why neo-Marxist and/or socialist activists get involved in antiracist protest. People of color who organize around incidents of racism affecting their community will sometimes find white allies coming from this orientation, and the two may come into conflict if some people of color are highly invested (or dependent upon) their position in the capitalist structure. Much akin to the conflict between liberal and radical feminists, some antiracists simply want a more egalitarian or even colorblind capitalist social structure, while others would like to dismantle capitalism altogether, viewing it as the ultimate economic foundation of racism. The tension between these two goals is perhaps best illustrated in the various branches of black nationalist movements, to which we will return in a subsequent section.

Mark Patrick George (2004) identifies a particular type of antiracism, *critical antiracism*, whose adherents would subscribe to five basic beliefs: (1) race is a social construct that functions to preserve the power of the majority group; (2) whites occupy a privileged position in this power dynamic; (3) there are multiple manifestations of racism, among these are overt hate crimes, cultural racism (in language, history, art, etc.) and institutional racism; (4) whites' place is not to change people of color, but to change others like themselves; (5) antiracism is not diversity or multicultural work, since one of its primary goals is to alter power relationships rather than to merely be more sensitive to the other. Of these five tenets, the second and the fifth ones in particular indicate a particular role for whites in contrast to that for people of color. Several scholars have noted that whites sometimes face challenges in accepting the idea of white privilege and how it applies to them (e.g., Kivel 2002; McIntosh 1998; Tatum 1994). For example, some whites respond with guilt, anger, and denial that disengage them from moving onto an antiracist identity (Tatum 1992, 1994). As a result, George's critical antiracism may be considered less palatable to whites than other forms.

Indeed, O'Brien's (2001) study of two different white antiracist organizations finds that the organization that adheres closest to George's critical antiracism was led by people of color and its membership was more racially mixed than the other predominantly white organization. Most members of the latter organization acknowledged white privilege in the abstract, and in their understanding of the legal institution, for instance, but did not have much of a sense of how that privilege applied to them personally. O'Brien identified this type of antiracism as *selective race cognizance*, and contrasted it with *reflexive race cognizance* in which participants clearly articulated their resistance to how racism operated institutionally as well as how it manifested itself in their own lives, particularly as whites experiencing white privilege. In some other work, O'Brien (2003) demonstrates how reflexively race cognizant antiracists spend a great deal of energy analyzing their personal relationships and how they can reduce the racism they may unintentionally perpetuate in those relationships, both intraracial and interracial. In contrast, O'Brien's selectively race cognizant antiracists deal mainly with challenging police brutality and neo-Nazi organizing in their communities, locating racism as an organizational evil outside themselves.

While O'Brien demonstrates types of antiracism by contrasting different organizations, Scott (2000) examines how a single organization may attempt to practice different types of antiracism simultaneously, with varying degrees of success. In her study of two feminist anti-violence organizations that had antiracism as an explicit part of their mission, Scott found that these groups had strategies to confront racism both structurally and interpersonally in their work settings. Structurally, the organizations took measures in their hiring process to ensure that people of color would be prominently located in key positions in order to effectively reach their diverse clientele ("affirmative action"). Additionally, the groups held "antiracism discussion groups" to share feelings coworkers had about interpersonal racism they had confronted in each other over each period prior to a meeting. One group even had a "calling out" policy where members were expected to interrupt individual racism in that moment. While members had certain criticisms about how both levels of antiracist work operated at their organizations, on the whole Scott's evaluation was that their structural "affirmative action" work was more successful than their interpersonal discussion work. Following points made by O'Brien's work, when the women in Scott's organizations had to look critically at themselves in the context of the discussion groups, it became painful and each "side" effectively shut down. This reaction would counter any shared perceptions of working together toward a common goal that the structural antiracist efforts would be more likely to foster.

While institutional or structural antiracist work might be less emotionally challenging for its participants and thus engender fewer internal difficulties, Feagin and his colleagues would argue that antiracist solutions at *both* levels are necessary to fully address the problem of what he terms *systemic racism* (Johnson et al. 2000; Feagin 2000). In his book, *Racist America*, Feagin concludes by suggesting some antiracist strategies at the individual level, which he describes as "individual whites . . . becoming activists by working on their own racist attitudes, stereotypes, and proclivities" (2000:253). He profiles one group, the Institutes for the Healing of Racism, which forms small discussion groups for the purpose of addressing racism on the emotional level that the above research has deemed rarer and more challenging than other levels of antiracism. Some such groups have white participants emerging and referring to themselves as "recovering racists," borrowing from the Alcoholics Anonymous idea that one can transition into a process of unlearning racism, but that people cannot be suddenly "cured" of the racism in one short period that they have socialized into for their entire lifetimes. Some of O'Brien's (2001) respondents who were reflexively race cognizant took a similar view. For example, one member of the organization the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond



declared that, as a white person, she would always be a racist, but that she could also be an antiracist and work against that. Coming to this realization was the "healing" aspect for her, to heal the typical guilt that tends to be associated with whites learning about racism in a deep way.

Johnson et al. (2000) also conclude that antiracism can be perpetuated on an individual level when individuals experience *transformative love* across the color line. When individuals traverse the rigid racial boundaries that separate them in the larger society and begin to think of themselves as a single unit (as in a long-term relationship between lovers, or a parent-child relationship), then racism becomes personal even for the white member of the relationship who might not have held a personal stake in eliminating racism prior to their cross-racial relationship. Feagin and O'Brien (2003) propose a term called *autopathy*—stronger than sympathy or empathy, the white member of the relationship would actually experience racism as an actual target, rather than as an empathetic observer. In this work, Feagin gives the example of an elite white man who is married to a black woman (and father of her child). This man enters a predominantly white social gathering with his family, and using the pronoun "we," observes that they are the only non-white people there. Even though he is white, he feels the sense of isolation at a segregated event as if he were a person of color, through the connection to his interracial family. These findings should be interpreted with caution, however, and it is safest to say that cross-racial relationships are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for producing antiracism at the individual level. Work by Childs (2005), Korgen (2002), and O'Brien and Korgen (2007) all point to colorblind racism as an obstacle for cross-racial relationships necessarily leading to antiracist outcomes, but this research will be reviewed in more detail in the next section.

However, Feagin does not end by suggesting these individual-level antiracist strategies. He envisions the several smaller antiracist organizations that exist across the United States networking together into one larger national organization. He cites Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition effort of the 1980s and the New Party as possible models of such a strategy. Johnson et al. (2000) further identify three major U.S. institutions that could be targeted for some antiracist revamping: the political sphere, the educational system, and religious institutions. Following Feagin's earlier suggestion with Hernan Vera in *White Racism* (1995), Johnson et al. (2000) propose holding a new Constitutional Convention that is more representative in terms of gender, race, and other statuses than the original group was when it convened in the late 18th century to write the document that the United States still upholds today. For educational antiracism, these scholars suggest both an overhaul of the curriculum to remove cultural racism and a restructuring of funding so that schools are not perpetuating apartheid-like conditions for students who emerge from them (see also Kozol 2005). Finally, because society's religious institutions often form the basis for its moral compass, and those morals become encoded in law, it is suggested that the high degree of racial segregation in churches be addressed. All of these kinds of antiracist reform strategies parallel the structural antiracism practiced by organizations like those in Scott's (2000) research where shifts in racial-ethnic demographics are encouraged to break up the monopoly held by the majority group.

To summarize, although no standardized typology of forms of antiracism currently exist in the literature as a whole, it is evident that most scholars agree there are different levels or types of antiracism. While each scholar of antiracism tends to use his or her own terminology to describe them (e.g., Feagin's individual and institutional, Scott's structural and interpersonal, O'Brien's selective and reflexive race cognizance), a majority of the work exploring the different types of antiracism focuses on two distinct forms. It may be helpful to conceptualize them using Max Weber's tradition of ideal types (Weber as cited in Edles and Applerouth 2005).

The first ideal type of antiracism functions largely at the level of interpersonal and micro-level interactions. It may even involve individual-level introspection that does not involve anyone but a single actor. This type of antiracism might involve a white person taking stock of all of the ways she unintentionally takes advantage of white privilege, and planning ways she can interrupt that privilege in her everyday life. However, this introspection would soon involve other people. In most situations, a white person would not be self-motivated to undertake this kind of action completely unprompted. She might be assigned it as part of a course assignment, or as part of a workshop held by the Institute for the Healing of Racism, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, or some other such organization. It is also important to note that such groups that encourage personal antiracist work usually do so in the context of a workshop that mandates interracial participation. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond holds an Undoing Racism workshop, for example, that necessitates multiracial attendance. It includes break-out groups for same-race interactions, and large full group exchange and sharing of cultural differences (O'Brien 2001). Further, as soon as an individual white person takes stock of the white privilege in her life and devises strategies to challenge it, those strategies would almost always entail interactions with others.

This first ideal type of antiracism does not usually focus on implementing policy or institutional-level changes, but it could certainly have latent effects on such changes. For instance, part of the white person's plan to interrupt white privilege in her life could be to consciously choose to move to a more racially integrated neighborhood, and begin sending her child to a more racially diverse school. Although this person's action alone does not significantly alter structural arrangements in that locality, it sets an example that others may follow and creates a context that might eventually lead to parents coming together to protest their lack of adequate educational facilities, for example. People in positions of power might also be impacted by individual antiracist workshops or discussion groups to change their organization's hiring practices, as one grocery store CEO did in O'Brien's (2001) work. Thus, the ideal type of individual-level antiracism is not exclusively limited to challenging individual friends' and family members' prejudices. It can also have an impact on larger social structures in various ways.

The second ideal type, already alluded to above, is a structural or institutional form of antiracism. This antiracism tends to focus on public policy and/or the structural arrangements of organizations. While Scott's (2000) work cited above demonstrates how private nonprofit organizations can choose to commit themselves to "affirmative action" hiring, antiracists could also work at the level of local, state, or federal government to protest the ending of affirmative action strategies in higher education. Some antiracists have done this kind of work either at the level of grassroots organizing (e.g., educating voters on ballot initiatives, staging public protests) or as policy makers (e.g., candidates taking a public stand against such measures or lawyers seeking to challenge the policies in the courts). Nonpartisan efforts to make sure people of color are registered to vote, sponsored by nationally recognized groups such as the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), would also fall under this type of antiracism. An antiracist group called Anti-Racist Action (ARA) started a program called "Copwatch" where members used video cameras to monitor the on-the-street behavior of police officers to guard against police brutality. One lead organizer for this group was also a police misconduct litigator who filed lawsuits against the city on behalf of victims of police brutality and donated his share of the settlements back to the ARA organization (O'Brien 2001).

As with the first type of antiracism, it is also difficult to draw a clear line separating the larger institutional type of antiracism from individual antiracism. Feagin and O'Brien (2003) profile one elite white man in their study, cited earlier as an example of autopathy at

the individual level, who also is a police misconduct litigator. While we may be able to make a clear distinction between the autopathy he shares with his family at a social event and his legal activities, another example from his life is less clear cut. When his biracial son becomes the target of racial harassment at the hands of peers from school (and his family's home is the target of a vandalism hate crime), this man intervenes not only seeking justice for his son and their family, but also requesting various types of antiracist educational curricula at the school. Quite simply, he is not just interested in individual-level restitution, but in institutional-level change that will perhaps reduce the likelihood of others engaging in acts of discrimination in the future. O'Brien's (2001) study also provides an example of a participant in an Undoing Racism workshop who begins the individual-level process of unlearning racism, starts confronting racist comments in interpersonal interactions, but eventually institutes a multicultural arts program in the racially segregated (predominantly black) elementary school where she teaches. This antiracist credits her individual, interpersonal work of building allies at her school with creating the institutional context that was eventually supportive enough of her to allow the program to become part of the school's agenda. She also continually returned to her antiracist discussion group as a source of support when her efforts to start this program were difficult or painful. Thus, like Weber's ideal types, neither type of antiracism is mutually exclusive, and the two can overlap and mutually reinforce each other. However, **individual/interpersonal antiracism** and **institutional/structural antiracism** are useful concepts to convey the patterns established thus far in the field.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANTIRACISM IN THE UNITED STATES

The term "antiracism" itself is fairly recent in human history. However, if we use the definition laid out at the start of this essay, surely there has been thought and practice that could be characterized as antiracist since racism itself began. Although ethnic conflict existed long before the idea of "race" emerged, we will limit ourselves here to racism as opposed to ethnic conflict, prejudices, and disagreements. Racism, fueled by the socially and politically constructed concept of distinct "races," has been linked by most scholars to the development of capitalism, colonization, and the slave trade—particularly chattel slavery in the Western world. Although scholars disagree on the exact date, most focus sometime between the 17th and 18th centuries as the origin of racism (e.g., Allen 1994; Aptheker 1992). As such, Aptheker (1992) begins his book *Antiracism in the United States: The First Two Hundred Years*, around the turn of the 18th century and ends with the emancipation of African American slaves in 1865. Thus, his work centers upon the abolitionist or antislavery movement. As Aptheker's work shows, much pre-antiracist work was largely done through multiracial coalitions. Slave rebellions led by such notable figures as John Brown, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey necessitated the participation of both blacks and whites—either in actually taking up arms against slaveholders to attempt escape or in simply securing hideouts for escaped African Americans. The basis for Thomas's (1996) entire work, *Understanding Interracial Unity*, is to advance this thesis that most antiracist work has been accomplished by bridging racial dividing lines. Using a timeline that extends a bit beyond Aptheker's into the U.S. civil rights movement itself, Thomas demonstrates how groups like the NAACP, for example, were co-founded by both blacks and whites. Using legal test cases to take before the Supreme Court to challenge institutional segregation, and nonviolent direct action to raise

public awareness of the issues, these antiracists effectively challenged social conventions so uniformly accepted that few politicians dared even address them. To even question them put one at risk for white terrorism, resulting in slander, torture, and even death. Aptheker's work includes names too many to count, of both blacks and whites, who were martyred to antiracism. In this era, antiracism was a risky venture, to be sure.

Antiracism, however, was not always decidedly interracial. At times, African Americans in particular advocated for necessarily black-only antiracist organizations. In their struggle against the devastating effects of racism on African-American communities, several prominent black scholars and activists called for various strategies of empowerment through separation. It should be noted that voluntary separation of a subordinated group in society is altogether different from legally enforced segregation and/or of that group by those in power. Various prominent black pre-antiracists have engaged with such strategies from time to time. Although in African-American history lessons, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois are often cast as opposites—the former as an accommodationist and the latter as an assimilationist—legal scholar Roy Brooks (1996) points out that both men agreed on certain strategies for fighting racism that did not demand equal treatment from the white establishment, but instead encouraged African Americans to hone their own skills and talents to work in service of each other. Many students of this history may be familiar with Washington's "up-by-your-bootstraps" self-help strategy, which was the impetus for the Tuskegee Institute and its training of African Americans in skilled trades (constraining them largely to the working class). However, Du Bois also advocated for a separatist strategy of sorts that would speak more to the "talented tenth" elite African Americans of the day by encouraging them to do as much of their business as possible with other African American merchants (Brooks 1996). In these ways, black antiracists believed they could eschew the negative stereotypes attached to them by the larger society and "prove" themselves as well-functioning, talented, gifted members of the society, deserving of all the rights and privileges denied to them at the time.

A major tension running throughout the history of multiracial antiracist efforts has been this dichotomous "integration or separation" question upon which Brooks focuses his 1996 book of the same name. Brooks (1996) points out that some African Americans spend many years as dedicated antiracists committed to a strategy of integration, but become exasperated with the white establishment's lack of cooperation in such endeavors, and eventually prefer an antiracist strategy that incorporates some separatist elements. Brooks himself proposes one such strategy, calling it "limited separation." Du Bois, for example, in his long life, went from working with whites to establish the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to emigrating to Ghana where he died (Edles and Applearauth 2005). This move seemed to mirror the path advocated by Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), whose work culminated in the establishment of the American-created African nation of Liberia in 1822. Such total separationist strategies, though, sometimes attracted curious allies. The Ku Klux Klan, obviously not an antiracist organization, but indeed an organization of racist terror, found itself supporting Garvey's emigration movement because they relished the logical outcome of fewer black citizens in the United States. Indeed, more contemporary separationist groups like the Nation of Islam have been criticized for their allegiance to more conservative ideologies such as the inferiority of women (Brooks 1996). Nonetheless, for some blacks, the ability to function independently of the negative stereotypes of the dominant group, and in an environment that ideally would nurture their unique contributions to society, was something attractive to many for whom integration seemed nothing but an empty promise.

In his book, *We Are Not What We Seem*, Rod Bush (1999) argues that the key factor distinguishing between the different black-led antiracist movements is not so much whether they were integrationist or separationist, but whether they were able to mobilize the masses of working-class African Americans or had more conservative aims of inclusion into the system for those with middle-class aspirations and credentials. For example, Bush contrasts Du Bois' NAACP with Garvey's UNIA to show that even at the height of the NAACP's public support in the 1960s, it still could not surpass the UNIA's effective recruitment of working-class blacks, boasting a total membership somewhere between one and six million in the 1920s (Bush 1999:96). Similarly, in the 1920s, another militant black group was able to mobilize thousands of members on the basis of both race pride and fighting worldwide related oppression—the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). One difference between the UNIA and the ABB was that the latter encouraged alliances with majority white groups who were fighting class-based oppression. Thus, even black militant groups whose names suggest a separationist platform actually did work within multiracial coalitions. The main difference between the above groups and organizations like the NAACP, as Bush sees it, was not that the former pursued separation and the latter opted for integration, but that the latter pursued *civil rights* within the existing American capitalist framework, while the former demanded that the United States own up to its neglect of *human rights* on a global scale.

During the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, as the legal victories that the NAACP won on behalf of people of color did not translate into immediate changes in the everyday lives of blacks in the Jim Crow south, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) effectively mobilized students and working-class blacks to use direct action to demand the rights they deserved. In the meantime, in several northern cities, the plight of the urban black poor was being tapped by more conservative nationalist groups like the Nation of Islam. Northern blacks understood that even with “civil rights,” they still were unable to secure full economic access to society. Groups like the Nation of Islam took a stance similar to Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey, that blacks must “do for self” in the context of a society clearly hostile to their equal participation. Although the Nation of Islam, like SNCC and CORE, was successful at reaching the black working class in large numbers, they did not have a strategy that challenged structural racism directly. They challenged the system's ideology, but not its practices. In Bush's analysis, black-led antiracist groups were at their most effective when they used a race-pride ideology to counteract hegemonic cultural racism and attract the black working class, but then challenged the system in ways from which all oppressed peoples could benefit. Thus, groups like the UNIA and the Nation of Islam limit themselves not necessarily because they do not include whites in their membership, but because their agenda does not make demands on the system to attend to the human rights of its peoples.

Malcolm X's journey from conservative nationalism to a more radical human-rights-focused antiracism over the course of his lifetime exemplifies the kind of ideological shift which Bush advocates. Malcolm X began his antiracist career as a member of the separationist Nation of Islam, but later broke with that organization and started his own, the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), which was less based in fundamentalist religion and more based on economic and social justice with a racially inclusive membership (X and Haley 1965). Soon groups like the Black Panther Party (BPP) began forming to emphasize black pride and economic justice. Although the BPP and the Nation of Islam both agreed that blacks needed to take it upon themselves to ensure their own economic and cultural survival in a U.S. system hostile to their full inclusion, the Nation of Islam demanded a conservative transformation of its members, who would then serve each other's needs. By contrast, all the BPP asked

of its members was agreement with its 10-point plan, and then many of its programs, such as free breakfast and school clothes for children, liberation schools, and buses to visit prisons were open to and served all, regardless of racial background or organizational membership. While the Nation of Islam's conservative strategy mirrored the dominant capitalist ideology of self-denial ("work hard and you too can succeed"), the BPP's actions clearly projected an ideology that everyone's basic needs should be met regardless of merit but rather due to their innate worth as human beings. Like the ABB before it, the BPP was also open to building coalitions with other like-minded organizations that empowered other oppressed groups, such as the Puerto Rican Young Lords, the Chinese American Red Guards, and the white working-class Young Patriots (Bush 1999:199).

Other racial-ethnic groups from the late 1960s to the 1980s followed the BPP's model of racial empowerment, such as *La Raza* and the American Indian Movement (AIM) (Feagin 2000). While race-specific antiracist groups like these formed as an attempt to cast off negative imagery perpetuated by the white majority and encourage economic and political empowerment, many such groups were never entirely nonwhite. In O'Brien's (2001) work on white antiracists, one activist recalls that she was allowed to stay in SNCC even when they "kicked out" the white members, and she also reports working with the Black Panthers to help them serve breakfast to low-income children in their communities. Further, even when certain antiracist organizations limited majority-group membership, many continued to build coalitions with other kindred groups, as we have seen above. Thus, a brief examination of history reveals that people of color have always been at the forefront of antiracist struggles, but more often than not they have worked alongside white allies. Moreover, the key difference among the various antiracist efforts is not as much about the racial identities of who they have included, but in the goals, tactics, and strategies they have utilized to attain racial equality.

### **WHAT CONDITIONS TEND TO FOSTER ANTIRACISM?**

While history demonstrates that both whites and people of color have involved themselves in antiracist efforts, there is a basic assumption underlying much of the contemporary research on antiracism that people of color are essentially prone to be antiracist without qualification or precondition. In fact, Johnson, Rush, and Feagin assert: "To some degree, most Americans of color are forced routinely to engage in anti-racist work, at least in regard to their own group." (2000:105). Whites, by contrast, have more ground to traverse to become aware of racism and commit to acting against it. As Du Bois noted with his concept of double consciousness, the system of racism results in a keen awareness on the part of people of color about not only their own condition, but of whites' own perceptions of them. Indeed, their position in the social structure compels them to be experiential experts on racism. They have gotten to know whites intimately and have had to understand them for survival in a world where they are the dominant group. People of color have had to play by whites' rules, in a sense, so they know them well. By contrast, whites are relatively ignorant about people of color and their cultures and can function largely without penalty not having to know about them. As a result, one of the most prominent questions in the more contemporary literature examining antiracism is, "What drives whites to become antiracist?" Although the remainder of this essay will summarize the basic findings of that literature, it will also examine why research on antiracism is so heavily centered upon the question of whites' alignment with antiracism and less concerned with people of color as "antiracists."

Several scholars have identified "colorblindness" as the major obstacle to antiracism today, particularly among whites (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Carr 1997; Frankenberg 1993). Their work demonstrates how colorblindness (or, as Frankenberg calls it, color and power evasiveness) prevents people from acknowledging the structural realities of racism, leading them to instead interpret the "racial" differences they sometimes claim not to see (but do see) as caused by biological, psychological, or cultural factors intrinsic to individuals. This kind of thinking results in a blame-the-victim ideology, which does not believe structural antiracism is necessary. Some scholars have likened this colorblind ideology to "nonracism," which is characterized by denial of racial realities and set in contrast to antiracism. For example, Joseph Barndt writes that "Nonracists deny that the prison exists," while antiracists "work for the prison's eventual destruction" (1991:65). These scholars assert that being colorblind and claiming not to notice racial differences usually results in an absence of antiracist activities.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the research shows that whites are much more likely to subscribe to this strategy of denial than are blacks. Carr (1997) surveyed college students to find that 77% of whites agreed with the statement "I am colorblind when it comes to race" (while only 40% of blacks agreed). Bonilla-Silva (2003), who also relied on two samples, found that only 15% of his white student sample and 12% of his Detroit Area study were considered racially progressive. This would mean that, like Carr's study, over three quarters of the whites Bonilla-Silva studied espoused the dominant colorblind ideology. These findings may shed some additional light upon why the literature on antiracism is so preoccupied with identifying the motivating factors behind whites' becoming antiracist. Whites are likely to hold a colorblind ideology that is generally deemed incompatible with antiracism. O'Brien (2000) does pose some qualified challenges to this uniform incompatibility thesis with her selective race cognizant category of white antiracists who tend to acknowledge racial differences at the abstract, structural level, but are not articulate about their own white privilege nor the racial identities of others. However, on the whole, the fact that a majority of whites subscribe to some aspect of the dominant colorblind ideology means there are major barriers to moving whites in particular to an antiracist identity. As such, scholars of antiracism have been particularly interested in examining the processes by which individual whites break with the dominant colorblind ideology and become antiracist.

Even before colorblindness was the dominant ideology of racism in the United States, though, whites were still considered a curious group to be involved in antiracist activities. John Brown, a white man involved in a slave rebellion, was executed for his role in the uprising and later portrayed in folklore as a "nut case." Malcolm X argued that such negative portrayals of him were strategic to prevent white people from perceiving antiracism as a viable focus of their time (O'Brien 2001). Although John Brown is a more well-known (relatively speaking) white abolitionist martyr, there are plenty of other lesser-known antiracists of all racial backgrounds who suffered great consequences, including death, for their antiracist acts and publicly declared convictions. In his study of that particular era, Aptheker (1992) concluded that whites were more likely to be involved in such antiracist/abolitionist practices if they were women, lower class, and/or had significant experiences with blacks. However, by the time the civil rights movement of the 1960s attracted significant white participation, class and gender in particular did not seem to have the same effect. Northern white college students who came to the U.S. south to participate in such activities as Freedom Summer (a voter registration drive in 1964) had more elite class backgrounds, and gender was sometimes a mitigating factor for such "high-risk" activism. That is, some white women who wanted to participate had to struggle against parental paternalism in order to do so, or were not able to go at all (McAdam 1988, 1992; Sherkat and Blocker 1994). Most of the research on white antiracists of the 1960s

concludes that experiences with African Americans were not as influential for them as the predominantly white activist and religious networks of which they were a part (McAdam 1988; Pinkney 1968).

There does not seem to be much attention paid in the literature to the question of what inspires white antiracists again until the 1990s. Indeed, even much of the above studies on 1960s' antiracism were completed in the 1990s. By this time, scholars probed the question of what moves whites away from a colorblind ideology, rather than the question of "high-risk" activism, which was one of the major barriers to participation in the 1960s. Feagin and Vera (1995) focused on the concept of empathy, and the various routes through which whites could traverse the color line and develop empathy with people of color, realizing that racism is still a serious issue in their lives. They assert that white women who face sexism might be more likely to empathize with African Americans and become antiracist than white men. Their graduate students, Hogan and Netzer (1993, as cited in Feagin and Vera 1995), did some unpublished work that identified three different types of "approximating experiences" through which white women developed empathy for people of color and became antiracist: (1) overlapping approximations, where they had faced some other type of oppression (e.g., anti-Semitism or homophobia) and made connections from that to racism; (2) borrowed approximations, where they had gained their understandings of racism through stories told to them by people of color in their lives; and (3) global approximations, where they drew upon democratic ideas of social justice and fairness to develop a sense of outrage about contemporary racism. Some subsequent work by O'Brien (2001) and Eichstedt (2001) pointed out that some white antiracists who were survivors of sexual abuse and/or incest—although not considered dimensions of "oppression" in the traditional sociological sense—had also made empathic connections with people of color through these "abuses of power" in their own lives.

Much of this research pointing to the role of empathy in white antiracism, though, was based on samples of white women only, so did not include white male antiracists. Even in O'Brien's (2001) mixed-gender sample of white antiracists, it was only the women who discussed the "overlapping approximations" where whites empathized with people of color due to some other non-racial form of oppression they had faced themselves. This is not to say white men are not also antiracist, but that they more often commit to antiracism due to reasons besides empathy. Consistent with McAdam's (1988) research on the 1960s' civil rights workers, some contemporary white antiracists also become involved through activist networks—their activist friends invited them to a meeting or a workshop (O'Brien 2001). Some become involved because their religious organization is committed to issues of social justice—one person's church even had an "antiracism committee" (O'Brien and Korgen 2007). Still others reported an influential college class, book read, song heard, or lecture attended (O'Brien 2001). For most, there was usually not just one factor, but a series of factors in a "process of sensitization" that eventually led to an antiracist awareness (O'Brien and Korgen 2007).

It is important to note that many of these routes to becoming antiracist do not necessitate whites having actual relationships with people of color. This is significant since the contact hypothesis, a major tenet of race relations research, points to a connection between cross-racial contact and reduced racial prejudice (Allport 1958; Forbes 1997). Being unprejudiced, however, is not the same as being antiracist, as the above discussion of nonracism versus antiracism illustrates. Indeed, only about a third of one sample of white antiracists reported becoming antiracist due to an interracial relationship. In this same article, another sample of whites with a close black friend is analyzed, and less than a third (27.5%) of whites who had a close black friend (verified by the researchers through also meeting and interviewing



the friend) were antiracist. Many close interracial friends tended not to even discuss race. The authors conclude that the dominant ideology of colorblindness is a major factor explaining why interracial contact is not more influential in motivating antiracism. Where interracial relationships are the impetus for becoming antiracist, they are almost always romantic and not merely platonic. Interestingly, a great deal of the sample in the above study had some type of interracial relationships, but they had either occurred after the person become antiracist, or the respondent felt that s/he was not antiracist yet during the relationship (O'Brien and Korgen 2007). This questionable correlation between interracial relationships and antiracism is further substantiated by Childs' research. Childs (2005) studied partners in romantic interracial relationships and found that they tended to fall into one of two categories: antiracists or colorblind racists. The latter group used colorblind language to discuss why they chose their partner (e.g., "I do not notice his/her race") but used racialized language to discuss people of color as a whole (e.g., "blacks bring their problems on themselves").

Taking all of this research together, from early abolitionism to the present, it is evident that antiracism among whites is motivated by a number of factors, including interracial relationships, interactions with other activists and their organizations, religious organizations, and other experiences with non-racial forms of oppression, particularly for women. Though social class appears to be less of a factor than it once was, class (especially when measured by educational level) may not influence whether or not someone becomes antiracist as much as it influences the *type* of antiracism to which s/he subscribes (O'Brien 2001). And gender continues to be influential, not in terms of necessarily making one more or less likely to be antiracist, but rather in the ways in which one perceives and interprets his or her involvement in antiracism (McAdam 1992; Sherkat and Blocker 1994).

One's racial identity bears a complex relationship to antiracism. Possession of a racially progressive ideology, the usual precursor to antiracist activities, is much more common among people of color—blacks in particular—than it is for whites (Bonilla-Silva 2003). If we limit antiracism to individual/interpersonal antiracism, then some scholars would argue that most people of color engage in antiracism on a near daily basis (Johnson et al. 2000). If, however, we analyze structural antiracism's relationship to race, it would depend upon the ideological bent of the particular antiracist organization in question. Those groups that stress a critical antiracism (George 2003) that holds whites explicitly accountable for various dimensions of racism generally have lower levels of white involvement than the antiracist groups that target "hate in any form" and are more "colorblind" in their ideology. In fact, these latter groups tend to be predominantly white (O'Brien 2001). Most analysts agree that much more white involvement is needed, both individually/interpersonally and structurally/institutionally, if there is to be any major systemic and enduring antiracist transformation of the social structure.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, Theodore W. 1994. *The Invention of the White Race Volume 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control*. New York: Verso.
- Allport, Gordon W. 1958. *The Nature of Prejudice*. New York: Doubleday/Anchor.
- Aptheker, Herbert. 1992. *Anti-Racism in the United States: The First Two Hundred Years*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Barnett, Joseph. 1991. *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Bonnett, Alastair. 2000. *Anti-Racism*. London: Routledge.

- Brooks, Roy L. 1996. *Integration or Separation? A Strategy for Racial Equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bush, Rod. 1999. *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century*. New York: New York University Press.
- Childs, Erica Chito. 2005. *Navigating Interracial Borders: Black-White Couples and Their Social Worlds*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Edles, Laura Desfor and Scott Applerouth. 2004. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Eichstedt, Jennifer. 2001. "Problematic White Identities and a Search for Racial Justice." *Sociological Forum* 16:445–470.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2000. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Hernan Vera. 1995. *White Racism: The Basics*. New York: Routledge.
- Forbes, H. D. 1997. *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- George, Mark Patrick. 2004. "Towards a Critical Antiracism: Redefining and Rethinking the Term 'Antiracism.'" Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, August, San Francisco, California.
- Hogan, Tiffany and Julie Netzer. 1993. "Knowing the Other: White Women, Gender, and Racism." Unpublished manuscript, University of Florida, Department of Sociology.
- hooks, bell. 1995. *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Johnson, Jacqueline, Sharon Rush, and Joe R. Feagin. 2000. "Doing Anti-Racism: Toward an Egalitarian American Society." *Contemporary Sociology* 29:95–110.
- Kivel, Paul. 2002. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. St. Paul, MN: New Society Publishers.
- Korgen, Kathleen. 2002. *Crossing the Racial Divide: Close Friendships Between Black and White Americans*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Kozol, Jonathan. 2005. *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Crown.
- Lorber, Judith. 2005. *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*, 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Malcolm X and Alex Haley. 1965. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- McAdam, Doug. 1992. "Gender as a Mediator of the Activist Experience: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 97:1211–1240.
- McAdam, Doug. 1988. *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McIntosh, Peggy. 1998. "White Privilege and Male Privilege." In *Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology*, 3rd ed. Edited by Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins. New York: Wadsworth.
- O'Brien, Eileen. 2001. *Whites Confront Racism: Antiracists and Their Paths to Action*. Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield.
- O'Brien, Eileen. 2000. "Are We Supposed to be Colorblind or Not? Competing Frames Used By Whites against Racism." *Race and Society* 3:41–59.
- O'Brien, Eileen and Kathleen Korgen. 2007. "It's the Message Not the Messenger: The Declining Significance of Black-White Contact in a Colorblind Society." *Sociological Inquiry* 77(3).
- Perry, Pamela. 2005. "Propositional, Affective, Situational: What Knowledge Transforms White People's Racial Praxis?" Unpublished manuscript.
- Scott, Ellen K. 2000. "Everyone against Racism: Agency and the Production of Meaning in the Anti-Racism Practices of Two Feminist Organizations." *Theory and Society* 29:785–818.
- Sherkat, Darren E. and T. Jean Blocker. 1994. "The Political Development of Sixties Activists: Identifying the Influence of Class, Gender and Socialization on Protest Participation." *Social Forces* 72:821–842.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2003. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race*. New York: Basic Books.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 1994. "Teaching White Students about Racism: The Search for White Allies and the Restoration of Hope." *Teachers College Record* 95:462–476.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 1992. "Talking about Race, Learning about Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Development in the Classroom." *Harvard Educational Review* 62:1–24.
- Thomas, Richard W. 1996. *Understanding Interracial Unity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Tong, Rosemarie. 1998. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Weber, Max. 1925/1978. "The Types of Legitimate Domination." Pp. 212–301 in Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds. *Economy and Society*, Vols. 1 and 2. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Yetman, Norman. 2004. "Prejudice and Discrimination." Pp. 8–20 in Healey, Joseph F. and Eileen O'Brien, eds. *Race, Ethnicity and Gender: Selected Readings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zajicek, Anna. 2002. "Race Discourses and Antiracist Practices in a Local Women's Movement." *Gender and Society* 16:155–174.

## CHAPTER 22

# Heart of Violence: Global Racism, War, and Genocide

PINAR BATUR

W.E.B. Du Bois pointed out that the expansion of capitalism and growth of global racism made the color line the problem of the 20th century. Even though the struggle against the global line of racial inequality also grew in that century, the problem of the 21st century is the intensification of racial inequality manifested as war and genocide. The last century was marred by racial hate and killings, forcing the term “genocide” into being. “Genocide” came to be understood as “the coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves” (Totten et al. 1997: xxiii) As Israel Charny warned,

There needs to be a growing consensus on the part of human beings and organized society that penetrates the very basis of human culture that mass killing is unacceptable to civilized peoples, otherwise the prevailing momentum of historical experience will continue for generation after generation that genocide is a phenomenon of nature, like other disasters, and this view of the inevitability of genocide as an almost natural event will continue to justify in the sense of convincing people that nothing can be done. (Totten et al. 1977: xxxix)

War and genocide are horrid, and taking them for granted is inhuman. In the 21st century, our problem is not only seeing them as natural and inevitable, but even worse: not seeing, not noticing, but ignoring them. Such act and thought, fueled by global racism, reveal that racial inequality has advanced from the establishment of racial hierarchy and institutionalization of segregation, to the confinement and exclusion, and elimination, of those considered inferior through genocide. In this trajectory, global racism manifests genocide. But this is not inevitable. This article, by examining global racism, explores the new terms of exclusion and the path to permanent war and genocide, to examine the integrality of genocide to the framework of global antiracist confrontation.

## GLOBAL RACISM IN THE AGE OF “CULTURE WARS”

Racist legitimization of inequality has changed from presupposed biological inferiority to assumed cultural inadequacy. This defines the new terms of impossibility of coexistence, much less equality. The Jim Crow racism of biological inferiority is now being replaced with a new and modern racism (Baker 1981; Ansell 1997) with “culture war” as the key to justify difference, hierarchy, and oppression. The ideology of “culture war” is becoming embedded in institutions, defining the workings of organizations, and is now defended by individuals who argue that they are not racist, but are not blind to the inherent differences between African-Americans/Arabs/Chinese, or whomever, and “us.” “Us” as a concept defines the power of a group to distinguish itself and to assign a superior value to its institutions, revealing certainty that affinity with “them” will be harmful to its existence (Hunter 1991; Buchanan 2002).

How can we conceptualize this shift to examine what has changed over the past century and what has remained the same in a racist society? Joe Feagin examines this question with a theory of systemic racism to explore societal complexity of interconnected elements for longevity and adaptability of racism. He sees that systemic racism persists due to a “white racial frame,” defining and maintaining an “organized set of racialized ideas, stereotypes, emotions, and inclinations to discriminate” (Feagin 2006: 25). The white racial frame arranges the routine operation of racist institutions, which enables social and economic reproduction and amendment of racial privilege. It is this frame that defines the political and economic bases of cultural and historical legitimization.

While the white racial frame is one of the components of systemic racism, it is attached to other terms of racial oppression to forge systemic coherency. It has altered over time from slavery to segregation to racial oppression and now frames “culture war,” or “clash of civilizations,” to legitimate the racist oppression of domination, exclusion, war, and genocide. The concept of “culture war” emerged to define opposing ideas in America regarding privacy, censorship, citizenship rights, and secularism, but it has been globalized through conflicts over immigration, nuclear power, and the “war on terrorism.” Its discourse and action articulate to flood the racial space of systemic racism.

Racism is a process of defining and building communities and societies based on racialized hierarchy of power. The expansion of capitalism cast new formulas of divisions and oppositions, fostering inequality even while integrating all previous forms of oppressive hierarchical arrangements as long as they bolstered the need to maintain the structure and form of capitalist arrangements (Batur-VanderLippe 1996). In this context, the white racial frame, defining the terms of racist systems of oppression, enabled the globalization of racial space through the articulation of capitalism (Du Bois 1942; Winant 1994). The key to understanding this expansion is comprehension of the synergistic relationship between racist systems of oppression and the capitalist system of exploitation. Taken separately, these two systems would be unable to create such oppression independently. However, the synergy between them is devastating. In the age of industrial capitalism, this synergy manifested itself imperialism and colonialism. In the age of advanced capitalism, it is war and genocide. The capitalist system, by enabling and maintaining the connection between everyday life and the global, buttresses the processes of racial oppression, and synergy between racial oppression and capitalist exploitation begets violence. Etienne Balibar points out that the connection between everyday life and the global is established through thought, making global racism a way of thinking, enabling connections of “words with objects and words with images in order

to create concepts” (Balibar 1994: 200). Yet, global racism is not only an articulation of thought, but also a way of knowing and acting, framed by both everyday and global experiences. Synergy between capitalism and racism as systems of oppression enables this perpetuation and destruction on the global level.

As capitalism expanded and adapted to the particularities of spatial and temporal variables, global racism became part of its legitimization and accommodation, first in terms of colonialist arrangements. In colonized and colonizing lands, global racism has been perpetuated through racial ideologies and discriminatory practices under capitalism by the creation and recreation of connections among memory, knowledge, institutions, and construction of the future in thought and action. What makes racism global are the bridges connecting the particularities of everyday racist experiences to the universality of racist concepts and actions, maintained globally by myriad forms of prejudice, discrimination, and violence (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Batur 1999, 2006). Under colonialism, colonizing and colonized societies were antagonistic opposites. Since colonizing society portrayed the colonized “other,” as the adversary and challenger of the “the ideal self,” not only identification but also segregation and containment were essential to racist policies. The terms of exclusion were set by the institutions that fostered and maintained segregation, but the intensity of exclusion, and redundancy, became more apparent in the age of advanced capitalism, as an extension of post-colonial discipline. The exclusionary measures when tested led to war, and genocide. Although, more often than not, genocide was perpetuated and fostered by the post-colonial institutions, rather than colonizing forces, the colonial identification of the “inferior other” led to segregation, then exclusion, then war and genocide. Violence glued them together into seamless continuity.

Violence is integral to understanding global racism. Fanon (1963), in exploring colonial oppression, discusses how divisions created or reinforced by colonialism guarantee the perpetuation, and escalation, of violence for both the colonizer and colonized. Racial differentiations, cemented through the colonial relationship, are integral to the aggregation of violence during and after colonialism: “Manichaeism [division of the universe into opposites of good and evil] goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes” (Fanon 1963:42). Within this dehumanizing framework, Fanon argues that the violence resulting from the destruction of everyday life, sense of self and imagination under colonialism continues to infest the post-colonial existence by integrating colonized land into the violent destruction of a new “geography of hunger” and exploitation (Fanon 1963: 96). The “geography of hunger” marks the context and space in which oppression and exploitation continue. The historical maps drawn by colonialism now demarcate the boundaries of post-colonial arrangements. The white racial frame restructures this space to fit the imagery of symbolic racism, modifying it to fit the television screen, or making the evidence of the necessity of the politics of exclusion, and the violence of war and genocide, palatable enough for the front page of newspapers, spread out next to the morning breakfast cereal. Two examples of this “geography of hunger and exploitation” are Iraq and New Orleans.

## **IRAQ AND NEW ORLEANS: THE DARK HEART OF THE POST-COLONIAL WORLD**

In Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow says,

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much, [because one sees the] conquerors, and for that you want only brute force—nothing to boast

of when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. . . . It was just a robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. (Conrad 1989: 31–32)

Such darkness hides moral uncertainty, greed, and violence and obscures all awareness of racist intentions, such as Western involvement with Iraq. This involvement is racist: not just now, but from the beginning of British colonial domination, to the first Gulf War, to now. The “liberation of Iraq” from the barbaric “other” and the establishment of the British mandate in the 1920s, had the purpose of controlling the oil around Mosul, which required stability to foster investment and to insure profits. To subdue the Kurdish and other minorities, including nomadic Arab populations, the British, together with handpicked Iraqi elites, made liberal use of the newly developed technology of airplanes to bomb, gas, and terrorize the people. During World War I, the RAF asked for permission to experiment with chemical weapons against what they called “recalcitrant” Arabs. Winston Churchill, then the Lord of the Admiralty, replied,

I do not understand the squeamishness about the use of gas. . . . I am strongly in favor of using poisonous gas against uncivilized tribes. . . . It is not necessary to use only the most deadly gases. . . . Gases could be used which would cause great inconvenience, and would spread a lively terror and yet leave no serious permanent effect on most of those affected. (Lichtman 1995: 519)

Churchill argued that chemical weapons are the application of western science to modern warfare. “We can not under any circumstances acquiesce in the nonutilization of any weapons which are available to procure a speedy termination of the disorder which prevails on the frontier” (Lichtman 1995: 519). Sixty years later, following the gas attack on Kurds in the town of Halabca, the Iraqi Defense Minister told reporters that “it is legitimate for any people to defend themselves with whatever means available” and that the state’s use of chemical weapons was an “internal issue” (Marshall 1988). While the world closed its eyes to British actions, it expressed outrage at the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi regime when Saddam Husayn wanted to subdue the “recalcitrant” Kurds demanding their rights.

Following the 1990–1991 Gulf War, U.N. sanctions against Iraq remained in place, ostensibly to force Saddam Husayn to comply with demands to open the country up to weapons inspectors in search of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Claiming that the Iraqi regime was obstructing inspections in order to resurrect its WMD program, the Bush and Clinton administrations pressured the Security Council into tightening sanctions, to prevent importation of a long list of banned and “dual-use” materials such as chlorine, which could be used for water treatment or chemical weapons. While the sanctions’ only impact on the regime was to strengthen Saddam Husayn’s grip, the UN eventually conceded that more than 600,000 Iraqis, mostly children and elderly, had died from lack of proper hygiene and medicine. Bill Clinton’s Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, when confronted by a Congressional panel, replied that “we find these numbers acceptable.” Clinton and George W. Bush maintained that the deaths were the fault of Saddam Husayn, which made them a domestic political matter.

But racism, war, and genocide are never internal issues, because violence requires participants and collaborators. But in the context of global racism, collaboration is legitimized by the white racial discourse of “just oppression.” “Just oppression” is a racist belief in domination and compliance, which to take it for granted that something like human dignity no longer matters, and therefore we can overlook abuse, violence, and destruction by blaming the “other,” or people of color, or in this case, Arabs or Iraqis, for the cumulative destruction. But it is impossible to utilize the white racial frame that justifies oppression, without the concept of “technical rationality.” Richard Lichtman points out the importance of the “technocratic ideology of

liberal modernism,” which is central to “technical rationality” (Lichtman 1995; Marcuse 1998). The technocratic ideology of liberal modernism has a tendency to concentrate on ends, without assigning an ultimate value to the means or the consequences. It confronts what it sees as disorder and inefficiency, with seemingly neutral morality and no impact on the everyday, or the future. And it serves the double standard of responding when the un-technical, irrational “other” threatens rational, scientific “us,” but not when the “other” threatens “another,” as was the case with the Iraqi gas attacks on Kurds, or blame can be shifted to the “other,” as with the killing by sanctions, or destruction of New Orleans, and to the people who were unable to leave New Orleans before and after the storm.

On Friday, August 26, 2005, a state of emergency was declared in Louisiana and Gulf Coast states as Hurricane Katrina approached. The governors of the Gulf Coast states also asked George Bush to declare a federal state of emergency, especially for Louisiana. As Katrina threatened, the local newspapers forecast that the levees wouldn’t hold, and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin announced that “we are facing the storm most of us have feared,” then issued orders for the mandatory evacuation of New Orleans (Russell 2005). That evening, while water began to topple the levees, approximately 30,000 people gathered at the Superdome with an estimated 36 hours’ worth of food and clean water. By Monday the 29th, Katrina made landfall, and the Bush administration was notified of the levee breach. In fact, 28 government agencies reported that the New Orleans levees breached, leaving most of the city under water (Jordan 2006). These documents later became a point of departure to question whether or not the government moved to rescue the storm victims when the levees broke. George W. Bush repeatedly said, “I don’t think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees,” but documents later showed that FEMA officials discussed the possibility of such a breach in a briefing for George W. Bush. In fact, on March 1, 2006, news surfaced that 19 hours before the arrival of Katrina, the Bush Administration was notified by top hurricane experts of their fear for massive loss of life due to levee failure. As the levees failed that morning, George Bush was visiting senior citizens in Arizona to promote Medicare drug benefits, and went to bed without acknowledging Governor Blanco’s plea: “Mr. President, we need your help, we need everything you got” (Thomas 2005).

On Tuesday, August 30, while the nation’s newspapers showed George Bush playing guitar with singer Mark Willis, the navy ship *Bataan* was in the Gulf of Mexico. It had a 600-bed hospital available, along with helicopters and doctors, was loaded with food, and could produce approximately 100,000 gallons of potable water a day. Captain Tyson said “We are ready.” But they were never called (Hedges 2005). By now Reuters reported 80,000 people were stranded in the city, as Bush continued to claim, “no one expected the levees to break.” On September 1, Michael Brown, the head of FEMA, said on national television that they had just learned that evacuees were at the New Orleans Convention Center. It was not before September 3 and 4 that 25,000 hungry, thirsty, sunburned, and sick human beings were evacuated. Some by choice, and some without consent, were bused to Houston and other cities (CNN 2005).

As evacuees gathered at the Houston Astrodome, Barbara Bush, George Bush’s mother, observed, “So many people in the arena are, you know, underprivileged anyway, so this, this is working well for them” (APM 2005). Meanwhile, New Orleans City Councilman Oliver Thomas told CBS News, “People are too afraid of black people to go in and save them.” Rumors of shootings, looting, riots made people afraid to save or take in people conceptualized as diseased, dirty, violent thugs, and thieves. A black woman told CBS News, “If we were lucky, we would have died” (CBS 2005). The Congressional Black Caucus, Black Leadership Forum, Urban League, and the NAACP held news conferences and charged that



the administration's slow response was due to most of the victims' being black and poor. As Jesse Jackson said in an interview, "We have an amazing tolerance for black pain" (CNN 2005). According to reports, more people died from starvation and heat than from drowning caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (CBS 2005).

But this was not the first time. In 1927, with heavy rains upriver threatening to flood New Orleans, a consensus of politically enfranchised whites emerged calling for the destruction of a downstream levee to avert the flood risk to New Orleans. The St. Bernard parish area was chosen purportedly because its residents were "regarded by city dwellers as backward or even 'primitive'" (Gomez 2000: 110). The 1927 Mississippi Flood was one of America's major natural disasters, but the bigger disaster occurred due to Jim Crow discrimination, segregation, and violence. Ninety percent of the flood victims were black. The flood left over 600,000 people homeless. The basic policy embraced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Guard, and state and Federal agencies was to create segregated refugee camps and establish forced labor camps for black flood victims. There were 154 camps, and camps were patrolled by armed white National Guardsmen. One of the largest camps held 13,000 blacks who were ordered by armed whites to work on the levees. As a result, many blacks lost their lives when the levees broke, while others lost their belongings, because they did not have the time or means to make preparations. In refugee camps, tents, beds, clothing, and food were given to whites. And while whites ate at sheltered tables, blacks stood or sat on the ground and ate without utensils. When blacks died their bodies were slit, loaded with sand, and dumped in the river. The flood trash from white neighborhoods was gathered and dumped into black neighborhoods. Blacks were only allowed to leave the camps when their previous employer came to claim them. Relief supplies were given to the employer, which most employers used as provisions to run their businesses, and paid them as salary to their labor force. In addition, during this period the number of lynchings increased dramatically (Evans 2006: 6–9).

This callous disregard for black lives contrasted sharply with the tremendous capital expenditure devoted to saving muskrats. This small game brought trappers "5.1 million" in 1924–1925. Boats were sent to rescue the muskrats, as "trappers and conservation agents transported thousands of rats to higher ground." And, rafts were floated into the river "allowing the animals to feed, take shelter, and give birth as they recuperated" from the trauma of the flood (Gomez 2000: 110–118).

### **THE SHADES OF DARKNESS: ISLAM, MUSLIMS, AND THE "CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS"**

Albert Memmi argued that "We have no idea what the colonized would have been without colonization, but we certainly see what happened as a result of it" (Memmi, 1965:114). Events surrounding Iraq and Katrina provide three critical points regarding global racism. The first one is that segregation, exclusion, and genocide are closely related and facilitated by institutions employing the white racial frame to legitimize their ideologies and actions. The second one is the continuation of violence, either sporadically or systematically, with single-minded determination from segregation, to exclusion, to genocide. The third point is that legitimization and justification of violence is embedded in the resignation that global racism will not alter its course, and there is no way to challenge global racism. Together these three points facilitate the base for war and genocide.

In 1993, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Samuel P. Huntington racialized the future of global conflict by declaring that “the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics” (Huntington 1993:22). He declared that the fault line will be drawn by crisis and bloodshed. Huntington’s end of ideology meant the West is now expected to confront the Confucian-Islamic “other.” Huntington intoned “Islam has bloody borders,” and he expected the West to develop cooperation among Christian brethren, while limiting the military strength of the “Confucian-Islamic” civilizations, by exploiting the conflicts within them. When the walls of communism fell, a new enemy was found in Islam, and loathing and fear of Islam exploded with September 11. The new color line means “we hate them not because of what they do, but because of who they are and what they believe in.” The vehement denial of racism, and the fervent assertion of democratic equality in the West, are matched by detestation and anger toward Muslims, who are not European, not Western, and therefore not civilized. Since the context of “different” and “inferior” has become not just a function of race or gender, but of culture and ideology, it has become another instrument of belief and the self-righteous racism of American expansionism and “new imperialism.” The assumed superiority of the West has become the new “White Man’s Burden,” to expand and to recreate the world in an American image. The rationalization of this expansion, albeit to “protect our freedoms and our way of life” or “to combat terrorism,” is fueled by racist ideology, obscured in the darkness behind the façade of inalienable rights of the West to defend civilization against enemies in global culture wars.

At the turn of the 20th century, the “Terrible Turk” was the image that summarized the enemy of Europe and the antagonism toward the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire, stretching from Europe to the Middle East, and across North Africa. Perpetuation of this imagery in American foreign policy exhibited how capitalism met with orientalist constructs in the white racial frame of the western mind (VanderLippe 1999). Orientalism is based on the conceptualization of the “Oriental” other—Eastern, Islamic societies as static, irrational, savage, fanatical, and inferior to the peaceful, rational, scientific “Occidental” Europe and the West (Said 1978). This is as an elastic construct, proving useful to describe whatever is considered as the latest threat to Western economic expansion, political and cultural hegemony, and global domination for exploitation and absorption.

Post-Enlightenment Europe and later America used this iconography to define basic racist assumptions regarding their uncontested right to impose political and economic dominance globally. When the Soviet Union existed as an opposing power, the orientalist vision of the 20th century shifted from the image of the “Terrible Turk” to that of the “Barbaric Russian Bear.” In this context, orientalist thought then, as now, set the terms of exclusion. It racialized exclusion to define the terms of racial privilege and superiority. By focusing on ideology, orientalism recreated the superior race, even though there was no “race.” It equated the hegemony of Western civilization with the “right ideological and cultural framework.” It segued into war and annihilation and genocide and continued to foster and aid the recreation of racial hatred of others with the collapse of the Soviet “other.” Orientalism’s global racist ideology reformed in the 1990s with Muslims and Islamic culture as to the “inferior other.” Seeing Muslims as opponents of Christian civilization is not new, going back to the Crusades, but the elasticity and reframing of this exclusion is evident in recent debates regarding Islam in the West, one raised by the Pope and the other by the President of the United States.

Against the background of the latest Iraq war, attacks in the name of Islam, racist attacks on Muslims in Europe and in the United States, and detention of Muslims without trial in secret prisons, Pope Benedict XVI gave a speech in September 2006 at Regensburg

University in Germany. He quoted a 14<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine emperor who said, “show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.” In addition, the Pope discussed the concept of Jihad, which he defined as Islamic “holy war,” and said, “violence in the name of religion was contrary to God’s nature and to reason.” He also called for dialogue between cultures and religions (Fisher 2006b). While some Muslims found the Pope’s speech “regrettable,” it also caused a spark of angry protests against the Pope’s “ill informed and bigoted” comments, and voices raised to demand an apology (Fisher 2006a). Some argue that the Pope was ordering a new crusade, for Christian civilization to conquer terrible and savage Islam. When Benedict apologized, organizations and parliaments demanded a retraction and apology from the Pope and the Vatican (Lee 2006). Yet, when the Pope apologized, it came as a second insult, because in his apology he said, “I’m deeply sorry for the reaction in some countries to a few passages of my address at the University of Regensburg, which were considered offensive to the sensibilities of Muslims” (Reuters 2006). In other words, he is sorry that Muslims are intolerant to the point of fanaticism. In the racialized world, the Pope’s apology came as an effort to show justification for his speech—he was not apologizing for being insulting, but rather saying that he was sorry that “Muslim” violence had proved his point.

Through orientalist and the white racial frame, those who are subject to racial hatred and exclusion themselves become agents of racist legitimization. Like Huntington, Bernard Lewis was looking for Armageddon in his *Wall Street Journal* article warning that August 22, 2006, was the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Rajab in the Islamic calendar and is considered a holy day, when Muhammad was taken to heaven and returned. For Muslims this day is a day of rejoicing and celebration. But for Lewis, Professor Emeritus at Princeton, “this might well be deemed an appropriate date for the apocalyptic ending of Israel and, if necessary, of the world” (Lewis 2006). He cautions that “it is far from certain that [the President of Iran] Mr. Ahmadinejad plans any such cataclysmic events for August 22, but it would be wise to bear the possibility in mind.” Lewis argues that Muslims, unlike others, seek self-destruction in order to reach heaven faster. For Lewis, Muslims in this mindset don’t see the idea of Mutually Assured Destruction as a constraint but rather as “an inducement” (Lewis 2006). In 1993, Huntington pleaded that “in a world of different civilizations, each . . . will have to learn to coexist with the others” (Huntington 1993:49). Lewis, like Pope Benedict, views Islam as the apocalyptic destroyer of civilization and claims that reactions against orientalist, racist visions such as his actually prove the validity of his position.

Lewis’s assertions run parallel with George Bush’s claims. In response to the alleged plot to blow up British airliners, Bush claimed, “This nation is at war with Islamic fascists who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom, to hurt our nation” (TurkishPress.com. 2006; Beck 2006). Bush argued that “the fight against terrorism is the ideological struggle of the 21st century” and he compared it to the 20th century’s fight against fascism, Nazism, and communism. Even though “Islamofascist” has for some time been a buzzword for Bill O’Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, and Sean Hannity on the talk-show circuit, for the president of the United States it drew reactions worldwide. Muslim Americans found this phrase “contributing to the rising level of hostility to Islam and the American Muslim community” (Raum 2006). Considering that since 2001, Bush has had a tendency to equate “war on terrorism” with “crusade,” this new rhetoric equates ideology with religion and reinforces the worldview of a war of civilizations. As Bush said, “. . .we still aren’t completely safe, because there are people that still plot and people who want to harm us for what we believe in” (CNN 2006).

Exclusion in physical space is only matched by exclusion in the imagination, and racialized exclusion has an internal logic leading to the annihilation of the excluded. Annihilation, in this sense, is not only designed to maintain the terms of racial inequality, both ideologically and physically, but is institutionalized with the vocabulary of self-protection. Even though the terms of exclusion are never complete, genocide is the definitive point in the exclusionary racial ideology, and such is the logic of the outcome of the exclusionary process, that it can conclude only in ultimate domination. War and genocide take place with compliant efficiency to serve the global racist ideology with dizzying frequency. The 21st century opened up with genocide, in Darfur.

### **THE ROLE OF WILLFUL IGNORANCE IN GLOBAL RACISM: WAR OR GENOCIDE?**

On September 22, 2006, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, addressed the 5,520th meeting of the Security Council, to condemn the escalation of violence in Darfur, Sudan. Against the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 5, 2006, the Sudan Liberation Army and the government forces had resumed fighting. Nearly 3 million displaced people were in need of emergency international aid for food, shelter, and medical treatment, and the fighting was making it difficult for humanitarian workers to reach them. Council members were united in their belief that the situation was unacceptable and that Darfur was “at the brink of total collapse,” touching what some have called “the Rwanda threshold,” with killings and rapes this time even targeting international and humanitarian workers (UN 2006).

The Darfur conflict has been escalated by two different groups: the Sudan Liberation Army, and the Justice & Equality Movement, fighting with Sudanese Army units and Janjaweed militia units. As a result of this bloodshed, approximately 2 to 3 million people have been displaced, and 70,000 to 100,000 people have died. One of the major questions regarding Darfur has been whether or not the conflict should be termed “genocide,” under the terms of the Genocide Convention. Some argued that, after all, the fight is between two “armies” that are both killing civilians—so what is new? It is a civil war. Basically, government-backed Sudanese Muslim Arabs are exerting domination over Christian and Muslim Blacks, and Animists, farmers, herders, and nomads.

The complexity of events in Darfur stems from layers of conflict. The first is between the government and the rebels who are angered by the political and economic marginalization of southern Sudan. The second is the conflict between the northern, Arab-dominated government, and Christian, nomadic peoples in the south, going back to decolonization of Sudan by the British in 1956. Since 1983, this conflict has directly or indirectly claimed 2 million lives. The third level of conflict is a split within Darfur, between Black farmers and Arab “nomadic livestock herders” (Straus 2005). The fighting has been sporadic, but almost all of it centers around oil extracted from southern Sudan and piped through a new 1,000-mile pipeline to tankers on the Red Sea (Salopek 2005). The Nubas are victims of this complex conflict. The Nuba Mountains, bordering Sudan’s oil pipeline, are at the frontline of conflict. The Nuba speak Arabic, and about half are Muslim, and half are Christian, although many still keep faith in animist customs. When the Nuba joined the Sudan Liberation Army, government forces pushed them up into the mountains, where they could no longer grow food. And when the government banned humanitarian airlifts, the Nuba starved, and many of them, especially children, have died (Lange 2003).

Two issues, related to one another, emerge from this complexity: whether or not Darfur represents a case of war or genocide; and how to calculate the massive numbers of the victims. Both of these questions are based on subsequent debates regarding how long death of this scale has been occurring in Sudan, how to count nomadic peoples and villagers who have fallen victim to this conflict, how to calculate victims while some have died, but others have fled to neighboring countries, and still others have suffered and perished from related malnutrition, hunger, disease, and poor settlement conditions. The key to the first debate, which began around March 2004, is whether or not these events were internal skirmishes, thus not warranting international action. In July 2004, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution labeling the events “genocide” (Straus 2005). The resolution called on the Bush Administration to act according to the Genocide Convention, therefore encouraging it to act even if the U.N. Security Council failed to act. Secretary of State Colin Powell insisted that calling the Darfur Genocide “genocide” would not change U.S. policy toward Sudan. But he did commission an in-depth study on whether or not the events in Darfur merited the term “genocide” on the international level. The United States was not alone, as Canadian, British, and EU officials, along with Kofi Annan, continued to call Darfur “a massive violation of human rights,” not genocide (Straus 2005). Meanwhile Human Rights Watch called Darfur “ethnic cleansing” and argued that it symbolized “forced removal of an ethnic group,” not annihilation. And because of the various crises, and the nearly 20-year duration of the conflict, Kofi Annan also appointed a U.N. commission to determine if genocide has occurred in Darfur. All these debates came to a halt when U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell agreed that genocide, not war, was taking place in Darfur (Straus 2005; Smith 2005). This declaration brought a new conundrum: if and what kind of international intervention was justified to stop the violence? A peace accord was signed in May 2005 between the government and opposition forces, but to what end? The African Union sent 7,000 peacekeepers to monitor the refugee camps, but the very small size of the force and the vastness of the county hampered their effectiveness. Unfortunately, they also ran out of money and time in September 2006 (Andisheh 2005). This time we know that genocide will continue in Darfur.

### **THE CHALLENGE OF BEING ANTIRACIST IN THE FACE OF THE VIOLENCE OF GLOBAL RACISM**

The synergy between capitalism and racism creates a process, a continuous chain of cross-cultural and cumulative actions and interactions, setting the terms of oppression globally. This synergy emanates violence. Accepting global racism as an absolute product of this synergy will reinforce the tendency to imagine global racism as a never-ending inevitability, forging the belief that either it is here to stay or it will erode of its own volition. The debate regarding the number of victims or whether or not Darfur fits in the definition of “genocide” is an example of how the technical rationality of technocratic ideology of liberal modernism reveals this synergy. In this context, how can antiracist theory and praxis challenge global racism, which is integrated into everyday life globally? Global racism permeates economic, political, social, and cultural production, distribution, and consumption; racial violence that once built colonial empires is now essential to the technocratic ideology of liberal modernism of the capitalist state. How can one challenge and destroy its white racial frame? How can we do more than just watch genocidal acts, and be silent? The response is constant struggle.

The necessity of antiracist praxis demands that global racism cannot be understood without understanding the struggle against its oppression and violence. Opposing and resisting racism globally requires exposing and confronting the complex synergy of global racism and capitalism. Since actions and ideologies tie the universal to the particular in the context of global racism, praxis is integral to the particularities of the everyday struggle against racism to sustain the global antiracist struggle at the universal level. Such struggle requires understanding of global racism as an axiom in the paradigm of oppression, as antiracism must be conceptualized as a domain assumption in the confrontation of the dominant paradigm that accommodates and perpetuates systems of oppression. Struggle is also a continuum, with a cumulative and humanizing synergy of its own.

In April 1942, Du Bois came to Vassar College and, subsequently, went to Yale University to give talks. In these two speeches, directed to the students, he explored the global color line and internal and external imperialist racial oppression in “The Future of Africa in America” and “The Future of Europe in Africa” (Aptheker 1985: 173–184, 184–198). In the midst of the Second World War, Du Bois points out that “with all our tumult and shouting rage against Hitler, we are perfectly aware that his race philosophy and methods are but extreme development and application of our own save that he is drawing his race lines in somewhat different places” (Du Bois 1985:183). Oppression is linked globally. Thus, tying global racism to the struggle against it requires conceptualizing antiracism as a reflexive understanding of global racism in order to produce and reproduce thought, knowledge, and action, uniting all levels and forms of struggle against systems of domination and oppression; linking struggle against racism to confrontation with class differentiation, sexism, and homophobia. A further challenge comes with integrating the unified thought and action of the struggles against oppression at the universal level into the experience of everyday life in its particularities. For example, as Du Bois pointed out, “democracy cannot have a rebirth in the world unless it firmly establishes itself in America” (1985:183). To explore global racism and its centrality to oppression, Du Bois pointed out the need to study the dynamics of its perpetuation, but how to connect the everyday and the global to reframe antiracist thought and action?

Looking at the context in which Du Bois gave these speeches provides a window to this connection. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered Japanese Americans and immigrants of Japanese descent to be exiled to concentration camps, then called “relocation centers.” On April 9, just a few days before Du Bois’s visit to Vassar College, U.S. troops surrendered to the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. When Du Bois came to Vassar, he gave not only a campus speech, but also an interview to the student newspaper, *Vassar Miscellany News*, known as “the Misc.” In this interview, Du Bois pointed out that Vassar College, then known as a girls’ school, was very fortunate to have Black students, but he challenged Vassar College to admit 100 Black students, which would be approximately 10% of its student body.

While Du Bois was on the campus, the college was celebrating “Founder’s Day,” a day of community celebration, sports, and leisure activities. According to the newspaper, one of the activities was to heave darts at a caricature of a presumed Japanese head. The organizing committee thought that this activity, called “Slap a Jap,” would encourage purchase of War Savings Stamps by students. The following day, it is interesting to note, the editorial board of the college paper condemned this activity, even though students who sponsored it had said this kind of advertising was taking place all over the country and “the Japs probably did worse things.” Editors responded with a statement that acknowledged Du Bois’s speech and his position regarding American democracy. They argued that “the vast majority of people follow their leader in their thinking, and the leader in this case is race

prejudice and hatred. . . . Perhaps it is impossible really to practice democracy, or isn't this a test case?" (Kent & Heilner 1942: 2). The universality of the principles of equality and particularity of hate and destruction provides an understanding into the white racial frame and the dynamics of perpetuation of racist connections. Not only are bigotry, discrimination, and violence tied, but also antiracist thought and action are cumulative and connected. In 2006, when Vassar students joined in a reading of Du Bois's speech on the campus, they were confronted with how "fresh" it is after 60 years and how poignant it is that every time we read it out loud, there is violence in the world to which the speech still applies.

The purpose of reading an antiracist speech out loud is not to memorialize resistance to racism, but to remind us of the cumulative effect of praxis. The only reason to understand global racism is to devise antiracist strategies to develop an understanding of antiracist theory and praxis that is not just reactionary, but is progressive, proactive, responsive, and reflective. As DuBois argued,

Not only [has] this got to be overthrown, but the means of its overthrowing is a firm conviction on the part of white America that a change in the present organization of his world is best for the world. And that only by recognition and conviction, and action following such conviction, can the world come to a place where it recognizes human beings as essentially equal and works toward the actual equality which may be accomplished. (Aptheker 1985:184)

Global racism, as a theoretical construct, focuses on the interconnectedness of racist thought and action globally, yielding a broader understanding. White racial frame provides for the global racist paradigm. But, global racism also facilitates a theoretical base to reconceptualize that racism and antiracism connect temporally and spatially on a global level. As capitalism and global racism change, antiracist praxis must change. Since capitalism fragments, antiracist praxis must be reconceptualized to insist on unity of struggle. The complexity of antiracist praxis stems from the challenge of establishing coalitions with other thought and action against systems of oppression. The totality of oppression necessitates unified challenge. The further confrontation comes from bridging spatial and temporal gaps in our conceptualization of antiracist struggle to reinforce the understanding that local struggles are about global resistance, and past struggles illuminate future praxis. In this context, understanding racism in Iraq becomes a way to confront racism in America. An antiracist framework demands that this time we act against everyday racism in school and in the office, and against genocide in Darfur, Rwanda, and Chechnya, and all forms of cumulative mass destruction globally. But first we need to know how racism is connected globally, from Iraq to New Orleans to Darfur to Kosovo to Chechnya. Saturation of global racism on the everyday and global levels requires antiracist praxis to be integrated into everyday life to confront issues of the everyday and global consistently. Antiracist praxis should be conceptualized, actualized, and integrated into everyday life sometimes even without the benefit of "beloved communities," organization, or resources. What gives antiracist praxis coherency is the goal of eradicating racism locally and globally, and understanding that the only way to eradicate racism locally is to fight to eradicate racism globally (Batur-VanderLippe 1999). When thousands are buried in mass graves in Iraq or Darfur, the silence that frames the foreign policy of the United States also serves to maintain domestic policies that allow inadequate inner-city schools for people of color, discrimination, harassment in the workplace, and segregated neighborhoods. The white racial frame it contains also frames New Orleans. If shouts are not heard against genocide in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur, there will be no powerful opposition to the Prison-Industrial Complex for people of color, the AIDS epidemic, environmental racism, or absence of housing and health care policies.

On April 4, 1967, Martin Luther King delivered a speech at a meeting of Concerned Clergy and Laity at Riverside Church in New York City to argue that “a time comes when silence is betrayal” in regards to Vietnam. He called for speaking out against the war and violence “as the enemy of poor” worldwide: “Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak” (King 1967). He was speaking against the global racism that limits integrity, cripples communities, and destroys nations, and how it connects through violence.

We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Georgia or Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would never live on the same block in Detroit. (King 1967)

At that time, King called for action by surpassing indecision: “Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter—but beautiful—struggle for a new world. . . .The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise we must choose in this crucial moment of human history” (King 1967). Antiracism provides a framework for choice for action, then and now, to seize this force to challenge all instrumentalities of domination, violence, destruction, war, and genocide. We are that force, and the struggle continues.

## REFERENCES

- Andisheh, Nourae. 2006. “Don’t Panic!” *Weekly Planet* 18/40:16.
- Ansell, Amy. 1997. *New Right, New Racism: Race and Reaction in the United States and Great Britain*. New York: New York University Press.
- APM News Agency. September 5, 2005.
- Aptheker, Herbert. 1985. *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887–1961*, by W.E.B. Du Bois. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Bacon, Kenneth H. 2004. “Hiding Death in Darfur: Why the Press Was So Late.” *Columbia Journalism Review*, Sep.–Oct. 2004:9–10.
- Baker, Martin. 1981. *New Racism*. London: Junction Books.
- Balibar, Etienne. 1994. *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy before and after Marx*. New York: Routledge.
- Balibar, Etienne and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso.
- Batur, Pinar. 2006. “Just a Link in the Chain: Global Racism and the Concept of ‘Blackness’ in Russia,” in *Racial and Ethnic Economic Inequality: An International Perspective*, by Samuel L. Myers and Bruce P. Corrie. New York: Peter Lang, pp. 5–14.
- Batur-VanderLippe, Pinar. 1999. “Centering on Global Racism and Antiracism: From Everyday Life to Global Complexity.” *Sociological Spectrum*, 19:467–484.
- Batur-VanderLippe, Pinar. 1996. “Colonialism and Post-Colonialism: Global Expansion of Racism.” In *Racial and Ethnic Relations* (5th edition), edited by Joe Feagin and Clarice Feagin. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Batur-VanderLippe, Pinar and Joe Feagin. 1999. “Racial and Ethnic Inequality and Struggle from Colonial Era to the Present: Drawing the Global Color Line.” In *The Global Color Line: Racial and Ethnic Inequality and Struggle from a Global Perspective*. Edited by Pinar Batur-VanderLippe and Joe Feagin. Stamford, CT: JAI Press.
- Beck, Amanda. 2006. “US Muslims Bristle at Bush Term ‘Islamic Fascists,’” Reuters, August 10. [http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=domesticNews&storyID=2006-08-10 . . .](http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=domesticNews&storyID=2006-08-10...) <September 30, 2006>.
- Buchanan, Patrick. 2002. *A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America’s Destiny*. New York: Regnery Books.
- CBS News. 2005. “Race an Issue in Katrina Response.” September 3, 2005. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/03/katrina/printable814623.shtml>. <September 28, 2006>.



- CNN. 2005. *CNN Reports: Katrina State of Emergency*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing.
- CNN.com. 2006. "Bush: U.S. at War with 'Islamic Fascists'." <http://cnn.worldnews.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=CNN.com+-+Bush.<September 30, 2006>>.
- Conrad, Joseph. 1989. *Heart of Darkness*. London: Penguin Books. (Originally published in 1902.)
- Evans, David. 2006. "High Water Everywhere: Blues and Gospel Commentary on the 1927 Mississippi River Flood," in *Nobody Knows Where the Blues Come From: Lyrics and History*, edited by Robert Springer. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, pp. 3–75.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2006. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.
- Fisher, Ian. 2006a. "Muslim Leaders Assail Pope's Speech on Islam," *New York Times*, September 14. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/14/world/europe/15papalend.html?pagewanted=print,<September 18, 2006>>.
- Fisher, Ian. 2006b. "Pope Assails Secularism, Adding Note on Jihad," *New York Times*, September 13. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/13/world/europe/13pope.html,<September 18, 2006>>.
- Fisher, Ian. 2006c. "Pope Calls West Divorced From Faith, Adding a Blunt Footnote on Jihad," *New York Times*, September 13, p. A6.
- Gomez, Gay M. 2000. "Perspective, Power, and Priorities: New Orleans and the Mississippi River Flood of 1927," in *Transforming New Orleans and Its Environs*, edited by Craig E. Colten. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 109–120.
- Hedges, Stephen J. 2005. "Navy Ship Nearby Underused," *Chicago Tribune*, September 4, 2005.
- Hunter, James D. 1992. *Culture Wars: Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, 72: 22–49.
- Jordan, Lara Jakes. 2006. "28 Government Agencies Reported Levee Breach," *Boston Globe* (AP), February 9.
- Kent, Jean and Mary Heilner. 1942. "Letter to the Editor," *Vassar Miscellany News*, April 26, 1942, p. 2.
- King, Martin Luther. 1967. "Speech against the War." New York, Riverside Church. <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article2564.htm>.
- Lange, Karen E. 2003. "The Nuba: Still Standing." *National Geographic*, February (2).
- Lee, Vic. 2006. "Local Outrage over Pope's Muslim Remarks: Many Surprised and Angry," *ABC News*, September 15. <http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=local&id=4567154&ft=print.<September 18, 2006>>.
- Lewis, Bernard. 2006. "August 22," *Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 2006, p. A10. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB115500154638829470-search.html?KEYWORDS=bernard+lewis&COLLECTION=wsjie/6month.<September 22, 2006>>.
- Lewis, David Levering. 1995. *W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Lichtman, Richard. 1995. "Gulf War: Participation in Modernity." In *Marxism in Postmodern Age: Confronting the New World Order*, Edited by Antonio Callari et al. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Marcuse, Herbert. 1998. *Technology, War and Fascism*. New York: Routledge.
- Marshall, Eliot. 1988. "Chemical Genocide in Iraq?" *Science*, 241:1752.
- Memmi, Albert. 1965. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Raum, Tom. 2006. "Republicans Target 'Islamic Fascism'," *Washingtonpost.com*, August 30. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/30/AR2006083000490\\_p...,<September 30, 2006>](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/30/AR2006083000490_p...,<September 30, 2006>).
- Reuters. 2006. "Pope Sorry about Muslim Reaction, Urges Dialogue," *New York Times*, September 17. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/17/world/europe/17pope.ready.html,<September 18, 2006>>.
- Russell, Gordon. 2005. "Forecaster Fear Levees Won't Hold Katrina." *Times-Pucayne*: August 28:1.
- Salopek, Paul. 2003. "Shattered Sudan." *National Geographic*. February (2).
- Smith, Cynthia E. and Tony Pipa. (2005) "The Politics of Genocide: U.S. Rhetoric vs. Inaction in Darfur, 7 April–26 September 2004." *Kennedy School Review*, 6:131–141.
- Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Straus, Scott. 2005. "Darfur and the Genocide Debate." *Foreign Affairs*, 84.1:123–133.
- Thomas, Evan. 2005. "How Bush Blew It," *Newsweek*, September 19, 2005.
- U.N. Security Council, SC8823/5520. September, 11, 2006.
- TurkishPress.com. 2006. "Bush Zeroes in on 'Islamic Fascism'," September 30. <http://www.turkishpress.com/nw.asp?s=u&i=060902164310.o1bdm7qi&t=Bush+zeroes+i...,<September 30, 2006>>.
- VanderLippe, John. 1999. "Racism and the Making of American Foreign Policy: The 'Terrible Turk' as Icon and Metaphor." In *The Global Color Line: Racial and Ethnic Inequality and Struggle from a Global Perspective*, edited by Pinar Batur-VanderLippe and Joe Feagin. Stamford, CT: JAI Press, pp. 47–63.

## CHAPTER 23

# The Reality and Impact of Legal Segregation in the United States

RUTH THOMPSON-MILLER AND JOE R. FEAGIN

### INTRODUCTION

In this section we discuss the social system of legal segregation (Jim Crow). We cover the history of Jim Crow, how it began, and the legal foundation on which it was formulated. We incorporate voices of African Americans to shed light on the daily experiences of African Americans who lived through Jim Crow. We discuss the racial etiquette that was demanded and enforced by whites, and performed and adhered to by African Americans. All institutions, including the educational system that was claimed to have taught equality and tolerance, were bound by the laws of legal segregation. Central to the system was the use of violence through lynchings, rapes, and destruction of property, especially at the hands of groups like the Ku Klux Klan. Even though African Americans were bound by laws of segregation and experienced racial violence on a daily basis, there was always resistance. Some organizations that spearheaded collective resistance were the black churches, the NAACP, and other private organizations. The resistance to legal segregation was also engaged in by everyday citizens who wanted to see an end to the oppressive system. Ultimately, the Civil Rights Movement was instrumental in ending the written laws of segregation. The informal practices have taken longer to end; indeed, they have not yet ended. White challenges to the ending of legal segregation prevented African Americans from enjoying full human rights for years after the anti-segregation laws were passed. Moreover, the psychological, long-term impact on older, currently living, African Americans who experienced the tyranny of legal segregation is apparent in their painful narratives, which will be incorporated into this article.

### THE BLACK CODES

Since this article focuses on the era of legal segregation, it is important to provide a brief historical framework as to how legal segregation came to be such an intricate and longstanding set of practices in the United States. The social system of legal segregation (Jim Crow) began in the

1870s and ended in the 1960s. Prior to the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the case that resulted in Supreme Court approval of the formal laws of legal segregation, there were other similar laws. Generated after the Civil War, and similar in effects to the just-ended institution of slavery, the “Black Codes” helped to create and enforce a system of racial inequality and servitude for—technically—freed African Americans. After the Civil War, ex-Confederate officers and officeholders who led most southern legislatures spearheaded the passing of statutes whose impact resembled slavery. “The measures controlled nearly every aspect of black life, with whites allowed to employ draconian remedies against recalcitrant blacks. These laws soon became known simply as the Black Codes” (Packard 2002: 42).

In 1865, President Andrew Johnson supported the Black Codes, which were a near-slavery system intended to force African Americans to work without benefit of significant payments. Segregation of railroad cars and many facilities spread, especially after 1870. “[The] Florida legislature went a step further the same year by forbidding whites to use cars set apart for use of Negroes, as well as excluding Negroes from cars reserved for whites” (Woodward 1974: 23). The Codes generally prohibited African Americans from voting, attending public schools, and being admitted into public hospitals, as well as prohibiting African Americans from utilizing public facilities such as hotels, parks, and public transportation. Public facilities were segregated. The Black Codes encouraged whites to take the law into their own hands and physically attack nonconforming “free” blacks and to pressure them to work in arrangements that provided little or no payments. The ending of the Black codes in 1866 did not end the oppression, for the everyday social control dating back to slavery continued in the form of an extensive racial etiquette. The end of Black Codes was but a short reprieve for African Americans, because within a few years the laws of legal segregation were implemented in the southern and border states. They would last for decades, indeed until the late 1960s.

### THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL SEGREGATION LAWS

Researcher Hugh Smythe (1948) emphasized how the concept of Jim Crow seems to have first appeared as such in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1832 and also how it developed into a term synonymous with “racial accommodation.” Jim Crow was a technique utilized to segregate human beings by racial group. And the concept was soon incorporated into many aspects of legal and social science thinking. It operated as a system of racial inequality and degradation for African Americans (Packard 2002).

African Americans attempted to fight against the laws of legal segregation often before they were officially implemented. There were numerous challenges to segregated public schools years before *Brown v. Board of Education* ended up in the Supreme Court in 1954. Peter Irons notes that the first challenge to segregated public schools began in “1849 with a lawsuit filed in Boston by Benjamin Roberts, after his five-year-old daughter, Sarah, was turned away from the primary school nearest her home on the ground of her being a colored person” (2002: ix). The court decided it was best that she continue to attend a segregated school. This Massachusetts Supreme Court decision preceded the landmark 1896 U.S. Supreme Court case of Homer Plessy, a Black man who refused to sit in the legally required “colored” section on a train. The decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* paved the way for widespread legal segregation by affirming that separate facilities for blacks and whites could be “separate

but equal.” This legal fiction increasingly included racially segregated public schools, other public facilities, and many other aspects of public life. The U.S. Constitution and federal court decisions created contemporary forms of the racist institutions that are still functioning today (Thompson-Miller and Feagin 2006).

Legal segregation (Jim Crow) was a social system that southern (and border states) whites utilized after the abolition of slavery. The primary function was to continue the social system of servitude, the racial caste hierarchy, and the economic control of African Americans. The social system was at base controlled through the use of overt and implied racial violence. Even though the official segregation system was finally outlawed by the 1968 Civil Rights Act, nearly 40 years ago, its reality and impact continue. The personal narratives of older African Americans that we collected and that will quote later in this article indicate that the emotional, economic, and social ramifications of the experience are still greatly felt.

As early as 1866, some southern states began enacting some formal segregation laws. By the 1880s, extensive Jim Crow segregation could be seen in Florida, Tennessee, Texas, Mississippi, and Georgia and soon spread across all southern and border states. More than 100 years after the end of the Civil War, until the late 1960s, African Americans lived under a system of official second-class citizenship—formally in all border and southern states, and informally in most northern states. Van Woodward notes, “[In] the summer of 1956 the legislatures of Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia were called into special sessions to consider bills designed to tighten segregation laws” (1974: 162). The laws, written and unwritten in the South, kept African Americans subjugated in a system that governed every aspect of their social, political, and economic life. The legal system of Jim Crow prohibited voting and access to public facilities including public transportation; and it legalized an unfair penal system. “With its ‘WHITES ONLY’ and ‘COLORED ONLY’ signs, posted above railroad waiting rooms, bathrooms, and drinking fountains, the Jim Crow system inflicted daily humiliations on blacks of both sexes and all ages” (Irons 2002: 12).

## THE INTERVIEW DATA

The personal life narratives that we reference here are part of a research project that has been ongoing for several years. Nearly 100 elderly African Americans in the Southeast and Southwest have recently been interviewed about their experiences during the long era of legal segregation. Most interviews took place in the participant’s home. On average, each interview lasted between one to two hours. While the participants were interviewed utilizing a carefully crafted schedule and we chose questions after a review of the relevant social science literature, the resulting narratives should be regarded as co-constructions of the interviewer and participant.

The narratives in this article are a representation of what elderly African Americans actually lived through in their everyday lives during legal segregation. We collected many accounts of encounters with whites, which took place in both public and private spaces, throughout the years of legal segregation. Historically, there are many misconceptions and contradictions about the everyday practices and interactions between African Americans and whites during legal segregation. The narratives of these elderly African Americans shed significant light on some of those misconceptions.

## RACIAL ETIQUETTE

The racial etiquette of legal segregation was a system used to control and dictate the physical, psychological, and social interactions between whites and blacks. Stetson Kennedy (1959: 206) describes racial etiquette as “a compulsory ritual denoting first- and second-class citizenship. It has more than psychological and social significance; it’s serving also the basic economic and political purpose of facilitating the exploitation of nonwhites by whites, collectively and individually.” The social practices of racial etiquette included removing or tipping your hat for whites, moving off the sidewalk when whites walked by, addressing whites (young and old) as “Sir,” “Madam,” or the like. Also, this meant never speaking up for your rights or “being uppity.” According to our respondents and other studies, instances where whites views Blacks as acting “uppity” included speaking too well, living in a home that whites deemed as nice, wearing nice clothes, and owning a nice automobile (Kennedy 1959; Johnson 1943; Litwick 1979; Tolnay and Beck 1992).

The practice of racial etiquette allowed ordinary whites, young and old, to inflict racial oppression on African Americans. Law enforcement agents and high-ranking officials enforced the racial etiquette of Jim Crow as if it were written into the laws of the U.S. Constitution. What incident would incite white violence changed depending on the day, the person, and the state; violence was often unpredictable. According to Jerrold Packard, racial violence would be inflicted upon African Americans for behavior that was perceived as being disrespectful, for “reckless eyeballing,” or for the purpose of sending a message of “stay in your place” to the Black community (2002). No one was immune to witnessing the violence of segregation. “In Georgia, Martin Luther King Sr. . . . witnessed drunken white men beat a black man to death for being ‘sassy.’ . . . The victim’s ‘sassiness’ consisted of refusing the demand of the white men that he hand over his paycheck” (Litwick 1998: 13). In the South, whites used racial etiquette in many instances to justify inflicting individual or collective racial terror on African Americans.

## JIM CROW EDUCATION

Frequently, in the rural areas of the South the majority of African Americans worked as sharecroppers or tenant farmers on the land of white people. The white owner (or overseer) often expected slave-like labor from the Black families. Children were often allowed to attend school for only a few months of the year, that is, when the crops didn’t need to be picked. Parents often taught their children to conceal their schooling from the white owner. The act of keeping a child from an education is, in effect, an act of racial violence against the child and his or her community.

The public schools during legal segregation were “separate and unequal.” Many of the segregated schools that African American children attended were held in community churches and private homes. The salaries that African American teachers received were typically a fraction of what white teachers received. Parents were often forced to purchase the books, school supplies, and other essential needs for their children. In some instances, children didn’t have desks and chairs to sit on (Irons 2002). African American children usually attended schools that were overcrowded and often resembled a “windowless log cabin,” while white students typically attended schools that were “beautiful red and white brick buildings” (Brundage 2005: 141–142).

## THE CENTRALITY OF RACIAL VIOLENCE

During legal segregation, much racial violence was legitimized and essential to the routine operation of legal segregation. The violence that whites inflicted on African Americans was not seen as deviant, but legal or customary. The violence of segregation often took the form of mob beatings, rapes, house and church burnings, and lynchings. All such actions, moreover, took place within a well-institutionalized framework of racial oppression. This framework generally shaped, indeed frequently mandated, the array of violent actions by whites. Whites attacking African Americans did not need to be immediately motivated by racial prejudice, but could act because of group pressures to conform within an institutionally racist system with already-defined racial targets (Jackman 2002; Blee 2005; Feagin 2006).

Some white folks go so far as to take offense (and action) against nonwhites whom they consider to be "acting uppity" or "putting on airs." Some Negroes having built for themselves a fine home, have refrained from painting the exterior, in order not to antagonize whites in the community whose homes are not so fine. A large automobile can also prove a liability in some sections. (Kennedy 1959: 207)

## LYNCHINGS

Whites' regular use of lynching as a brutal technique brought death to thousands of African American men, women, and children. Several thousand African Americans have been put to death by lynchings since the beginning of legal segregation. Calculations indicate "on the average, a black man, woman, or child was murdered nearly once a week between 1882 and 1930 by a hate-driven white mob" (Tolnay and Beck 1995: ix). Not surprisingly, virtually all older African Americans have seen or heard about local whites' collectively engaging in lynchings that targeted African Americans defined as breaking with white custom or law. Social science research has shown that African Americans can be psychologically affected by lynchings without ever witnessing one. White mob lynchings of African American men, women, and children were common during legal segregation, as we see in this elderly respondent's painful *recollection*:

*There was a man, a black man. He was a janitor, he cleaned up the place, and he went and told this white man that was so mean to me. . . . That he didn't have to treat me the way he was treating me. He [the white man] took and pushed me over one of the tables. . . . he [black man] got tired of him doing that, before I know it he leaned back and hit that white man and beat him up. It scared me so bad because I didn't know what he [the white man] was going to do to him. When the police come, he [the white man] had almost beat him to death. You know. So anyways, my parents raised enough money to get him out of jail. [Pauses, then starts to cry], somebody back then, you could go up and down the highway and see the Black boy hanging from the tree, and he was dead. They killed him on the tree. . . . I didn't think that I could live to see somebody beat somebody like that man did and not [have anyone] do anything about it. [Cries harder]. . . . The white man, they took hot water, they boiled that water, and they put him in the water, and cooked him. How could somebody treat somebody, a human being, and just threw them in the pot, they had a big ol' pot they use to make soap out of it. And they just throw them in there [the pot]. Whenever you use to do stuff, you were dead. You couldn't do anything, you had to just stand there and watch them do him like that, and every time his head would come up like that, they pushed him right down in the pot. God brought us through all of that, he sure did. He brought us, God made for that person down there to die that day. When we got down there we pray, and we ask God to forgive him, because they didn't know what they was doing. It didn't help his family to see him tortured down there. . . . it was a black pot, a cast iron. . . . they rejoiced. Can you believe that they [whites] rejoiced about what they did to him in the black pot, they rejoiced.*

These details of an African American man being boiled in a pot, while his family watched, epitomized the atrocities of violence during legal segregation. Racial violence is active act by a white mob, and it inflicts psychological trauma on individuals who witnessed it and heard about it. Clearly, this respondent's frequent crying during the retelling demonstrates his extreme psychological distress.

During legal segregation, African Americans commonly believed that many whites actually enjoyed lynching, mutilating, or otherwise hurting them. During legal segregation, some whites were photographed smiling, rejoicing, and celebrating in front of lynched and mutilated bodies of African Americans as they hung from trees. Historically, one of the misconceptions is that the Ku Klux Klan committed thousands of lynchings. However, Leon Litwick, Hilton Als, John Lewis, and James Allen dispel this misconception with nearly 100 photographed images of burned, lynched, and mutilated bodies of African Americans. Litwick states,

The photographs stretch our credulity, even numb our minds and senses to the full extent of the horror, but they must be seen if we are to understand how normal men and women could live with, participate in, and defend such atrocities, even reinterpret them so they would not see themselves or be perceived as less than civilized. The men and women who tortured, dismembered, and murdered in this fashion understood perfectly well what they were doing and thought of themselves as perfectly normal human beings. Few had any ethical qualms about their actions (2000: 34).

## RAPE

During the era of legal segregation, recurring sexual assaults against African American women were common knowledge in the white and African American cities. Historically, the research of social scientists has generally failed to describe thoroughly these frequent assaults on African American women by white men. The search is more likely to focus on the frequent allegations of rape of white women by black men. However, a more common problem historically lies in the fact that African American families regularly faced the raping or otherwise sexual threats against their daughters, mothers, and sons by white men, including those with local power and ice (Feagin 2006: ix-x, 74-81).

One of our respondents in her late 70s recalls a family story of rape:

In later years, my mother and her sisters would never tell us anything but I have . . . a cousin, I called her Aunt Bell, but she was really a cousin. . . . She told me that this white prostitute across the street, Ms. Ann, my Auntie Celeste worked for her and she was over there working one day and this [white] man, that owned a store a block up the street, came to see Ms. Ann. . . . He was married. Ms. Ann wasn't there, he raped my Aunt and my Aunt got pregnant and when she got pregnant she told them [her family] what happened, she told them that he had raped her that day and they went to talk to him, and you know what they did? They made *her* leave town. They said you have to send her out of town, and my Aunt said that is what they did to Blacks. The white men would rape the Black girls, and if the Black girls got pregnant the families would have to send them out of town to have the babies, and the like, so that's what happened in that situation in the family. . . . She would tell me other families it happened to, in [names town]. . . . Our family wasn't one that told a lot of things. You see, they wanted to hide everything, that's what they wanted to do. My mother or my aunt would never have told me about you know her situation they would have gone to their grave. Because I remember when Aunt Bell told me mama knew she was talking about something and then Aunt Bell told me, later on she told me [my mama said to her], "You shouldn't have been telling them all of that" So they didn't want you to know what happened.

The psychological injury to the woman is apparent, and the female members of the family intended to take the story of this violent rape to their graves. The rape, the resulting

pregnancy, and the subsequent departure of this young woman from her hometown reveal an all-too-common story of legal segregation. According to the respondent, the young woman apparently did not tell her family about the rape until she realized she was pregnant. During legal segregation, African American victims of rape often suffered alone or in silence. This respondent's family was not alone, for "white men would rape the Black girls, and if the Black girls got pregnant the families would have to send them out of town." Unfortunately, for black women the responses from white society to their sexual assaults were not outrage, concern, or criminal punishment for perpetrators. White men were virtually never held responsible for raping Black women. "Paramour rights are the unwritten antebellum law declaring a white man's right to take a black woman as his paramour, whether she is married or not" (Ellis and Ellis 2003: xv). This is an aspect of segregation that assisted white men in their abuse of African American women, and it included the inability of Black men to do anything to protect Black women.

### RACIAL EXPULSION: PROPERTY LOSS

Successful and educated African Americans citizens "all too often, paid a heavy price" if they expected to hold on to their material gains. Those who had the most to lose financially typically internalized the practices of racial etiquette even more. The more an African American acquired economically, the more he or she deferred to whites to stay in their good graces and to alleviate the possibilities of repercussions because of his or her accomplishments (Litwack 1998: 321). Tolnay and Beck note that "poor whites lynched poor African Americans because they represented a threat to their well-being" (Tolnay and Beck 1995: 72). And Africans Americans were chased off their land and out of the South.

A retired nurse recalls how her aunt was living in a home that whites deemed to be nice and how that led to collective, physical violent actions:

My aunt came here to visit us and they set the house on fire and they burned him [cousin] up in the house, when he tried to get out the window, they pushed him back in the house. They just nasty and mean. . . . Black people, weren't supposed to live in no, really nice area like that. She was living on this lake, and they wanted it and, and they probably knew that, she was here in [names town], and, so they went there and he was, cause they left him home by himself. My cousin, he was a young man. . . . And they just burned . . . the house down and burnt him up in the house. She left that place. She didn't want nothing else to happen. . . . They know who did it, but wasn't nothing they can do about it. All the white people, they stuck together. . . . Back in the forties. Just like Rosewood. They burned him alive.

Collective white jealousy made the hope of attaining the American housing dream dangerous and in some cases impossible. With sadness in her voice and tears in her eyes, she describes how white jealousy turned her family's housing dream into a deadly sequence of events. This is not an isolated incident, for several respondents shared similar stories of how, if whites wanted a property, they would assault or kill to get it. For example, Rosewood was once an African American town in Florida. It was destroyed in the 1930s by a white mob that killed numerous Black residents. An undocumented but doubtless huge number of African Americans throughout the South and border states suffered great physical and material injury, including death, with no official or media reporting. Unfortunately, it was a common occurrence during legal segregation for African Americans to lose lives, property, and family members to racial violence at the hands of whites. The actual number of lost lives, property, and families remains undocumented and uncompensated, to the present day (Thompson-Miller 2006).



A man in his late 50s recalls stories of African Americans losing their land and lives to whites:

My grandmother said, "At one time a lot of blacks owned the land that is now owned by whites and that they were forced to sell their land." Those who did not sell lost their lives. Or the land was taken from them by means of taxation and indebtedness that they had incurred and they weren't aware that they were incurring. . . . Some of them were killed to take the land; they [whites] killed some of them to take the land. (Thompson-Miller 2006)

During the era of legal segregation, the land of African Americans was stolen by whites through an array of techniques.

## RESISTANCE TO LEGAL SEGREGATION

Even though active resistance usually sparked further violent attacks by white individuals or mobs, some African American men, women, and children did periodically engage in confrontational resistance. A prominent religious leader, now in his 80s, speaks to the importance of constant and confrontational resistance, especially to desegregate the schools:

You had to do that! You had to do that! In order to change the system you had to do that! You had to test it. You had to make them show their real color. . . . If you didn't keep protesting the system, [change] never would have happened and some of us just decided that, we were going to test the system. It was dangerous to do it but we did it. Yeah. We did it. . . . Schools were segregated. We wrote the school board and told them to consider integrating the schools. If they didn't integrate the schools we were gonna file a suit. As time went on, we decided to file a suit. I went to several parents and told them we had to file a suit. I told them we had to have a particular child. All of them said, "NO!" My younger daughter was at [names school] at that time. I said to her, "We got to use a name on the lawsuit to file the suit. Don't tell your mother about it but would you agree to do this?" She said, "Yes."

Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans like this respondent and his child actively resisted legal segregation and pressed the larger African American community to resist collectively. They showed that they were fighters, demonstrating great courage and agency in resisting segregation in spite of the threat of violence. Black churches and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), among other Black organization, were instrumental in organizing collective resistance against the brutal laws of legal segregation.

In 1954 the landmark decision in the *Brown* case officially overturned the infamous "separate but equal" doctrine of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. *Brown* was based on the tireless work of Black men, women, and children, including members of the NAACP. African Americans and their white allies challenged legal segregation in public schools, at great personal risk to themselves and their families. Eventually, the Supreme Court decided that legal segregation violated the U.S. Constitution. African American men and women who were involved in the Civil Rights Movement were inspired by the *Brown* decision (Patterson 2001). With the support of liberal whites, African Americans began to fight harder for their civil rights in hope that all legal segregation would finally come to an end. After *Brown*, they organized sit-ins, boycotts, and demonstrations to end legal segregation. "The civil rights movement was heroic. . . . It inspired even higher expectations that *Brown* had in 1954" (Patterson 2001: xxi). Derrick Bell affirms this point, "*Brown* was the primary force and provided a vital inspirational spark in the post-World War II civil rights movement. Defenders maintain *Brown* served as an important encouragement for the Montgomery bus boycotters, and that it served as a key symbol of cultural advancement for the nation" (2004: 130).

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF RACIAL VIOLENCE—“SEGREGATION STRESS SYNDROME”

Although the Civil Rights Movement began the long, yet successful fight to end legal segregation, the long-term effects of years of racial violence took its toll on the lives, wealth, and psyche of African Americans. The research on this impact, and applying the idea of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to their experiences, mostly remains to be done. Yet, the preliminary findings indicate a positive correlation exists in frequency and degree of PTSD and African Americans (Allen 1996: 210). Researchers Terry Mills and Clara Edwards give an assessment of the affects of childhood traumatic experiences like the incidents that occurred during segregation: “The present cohort of older black Americans experienced very stressful life events and warlike trauma” (2002: 273–304).

We have introduced the idea of a “segregation stress syndrome”—which encompasses the chronic and enduring stress of, as well as the extremely painful responses to, official segregation that are indicated in the interviews of the elderly African Americans who participated in our research project (on the use of “PTSD” for Black responses to current racism, see Williams and Williams-Morris 2000; Feagin 2006). Some of the symptoms of “segregation stress syndrome” are physical, such as crying, sweating, and increased anxiety. The syndrome has some psychological components such as the sufferer’s avoiding situations, individuals, or objects that remind him or her of the traumatic racial events. In addition, the syndrome often includes some denial, for instance, not personally associating with the traumatic event, stating that it happened to someone else, and emotionally distancing oneself from the pain. Survivors of traumatic experiences, similar to the events that occurred regularly during legal segregation, sometimes have problems feeling comfortable and trusting individuals who remind them of their perpetrators (Bryant-Davis and Ocampo 2005: 488). The victims of the racialized rape and assault of legal segregation often experience depression, anger, anxiety, or fear, just some of the symptoms of “segregation stress syndrome.”

We have shown here from the interviews just a few of the many instances of psychological impact on our respondents, those who suffered the pain and long-term consequences of the racial violence that occurred during legal segregation.

### CONCLUSION

In this article, we have documented some aspects of the history of legal segregation, using in part the life narratives of older African Americans who lived through that extreme apartheid system. We have discussed the extreme racial etiquette and racial violence that were used to enforce such social practices. Racial violence that was central to legal segregation included thousands of lynchings, hundreds of thousands of rapes, much loss of life, and much loss of property, all at the hands of whites. We have seen that African Americans frequently resisted legal segregation through the Black church and the NAACP.

Legal segregation ended, officially, less than 40 years ago with emergence of the Civil Rights Movement and the passage of major civil rights laws, the last in 1968. For the most part, African Americans are no longer worried about individual and organized acts of random racial violence such as rape and lynching. However, the deeper reality is that the racially violent experience of legal segregation did profoundly affect and shape the lives of older African Americans in collective and individualized ways, to the present day. How much the

participants were affected is evident in the poignant and emotional ways in which they have shared their life narratives. African Americans found creative ways to counter the everyday customs and laws of legal segregation. They developed strategies such as deference, obedience, and avoidance. Presently, elderly African Americans are passing the strategies that they learned from their parents onto their children and grandchildren. However, in spite of everything African Americans endured during legal segregation, they can now live to tell what such oppressive life was like for them.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, Irving M., "PTSD among African Americans." In: A. Marsella, M. Friedman, E. Gerrity, and R. Scurfield, eds. *Ethnocultural Aspects of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Issues, Research, and Clinical Applications*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association; 1996:209–238.
- Als, Hilton. James Allen, Leon F. Litwack, and John Lewis. 2005. *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*. Santa Fe, NM: Twin Palms Publishers.
- Bell, Derrick. 2004. *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, 495 (1954).
- Brown v. Board of Education*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955).
- Bennett, Gary G., Marcellus M. Merritt, Christopher L. Edwards, and John J. Sollers III. 2004. "Perceived Racism and Affective Responses to Ambiguous Interpersonal Interactions among African American Men." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47:963–976.
- Blee, Kathleen M. 2005. "Racial Violence in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:599–619.
- Brown, Tony N., David R. Williams, James S. Jackson, Myriam Torres, Sherrill L. Sellers, and Kendrick T. Brown. 2000. "'Being Black and Feeling Blue': The Mental Consequences of Racial Discrimination." *Race and Society* 29(2):117–131.
- Brundage, Fitzhugh W. 2005. *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Bryant-Davis, Thema and Carlota Ocampo. 2005. "Racist Incident-Based Trauma." *The Counseling Psychologist* 33(4):479–500.
- Bufacechi, Vittorio. 2005. "Two Concepts of Violence." *Political Studies Review* 3:193–204.
- Burke, Peter J. 1991. "Identity Processes and Social Stress." *American Sociological Review* 56:836–849.
- Chafe, William H. 2001. *Remembering Jim Crow*. New York: New Press.
- Christopoulos, Veronica P. 2002. "The Relationship between Exposure to Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms in Inner City Youth," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Psychology, Pace University, New York.
- Cockerham, William C. 1990. "A Test of the Relationship between Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Psychological Distress." *Sociology of Science and Medicine* 31:1321–1326.
- Dray, Phillip. 2003. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*. New York: The Modern Day Library.
- Ellis, Arthur E. and Leslie C. Ellis. 2003. *The Trial of Ruby McCollum.*, Bloomington, IN: First Books Library.
- Eyerman, Ron. 2001. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Faulker, Audrey O. 1982. *When I Was Comin' Up: An Oral History of Aged Blacks.*, Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. *Living with Racism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2000. *Racist America*. New York: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Karyn D. McKinney. 2003. *The Many Costs of Racism*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2006. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.
- Folmsbee, Stanley, J. 1949. "The Origin of the First Jim Crow Law," *The Journal of Southern History* 15:235–247.
- Ginzburg, Ralph. 1962. *100 Years of Lynchings*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press.
- Gray, Jeffery A. 1987. *The Psychology of Fear and Stress*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Horowitz, Donald. 2001. *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Irons, Peter. 2002. *Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Jackman, Mary. 2002. "Violence in Social Life." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:387–415.

- Johnson, Charles. 1943. *Backgrounds to Patterns of Negro Segregation*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Kelly, Brenden D. 2005. "Structural Violence and Schizophrenia." *Social Science and Medicine* 61:721–730.
- Kennedy, Stetson. 1959. *Jim Crow Guide to the U.S.A.* London: Camelot Press.
- Kessler, Ronald C., Kristen D. Mickelson, and David R. Williams. 1999. "The Prevalence, Distribution, and Mental Health Correlates of Perceived Discrimination in the United States." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40:208–230.
- Krieger, Nancy, Kevin Smith, Deepa Naishadham, Cathy Hartman, and Elizabeth M. Barbeau. 2005. "Experiences of Discrimination: Validity and Reliability of a Self-Report Measure for Population Health Research on Racism and Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 61:1576–1596.
- Litwick, Leon F. 1999. *Trouble in Mind*. New York: Random House.
- Litwick, Leon F. 1979. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Mason-Schrock, Douglas. 1996. "Transsexuals' Narrative Construction of the 'True Self.'" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 3:176–192.
- McDevitt, Jack, Jack Levin, and Susan Bennett. 2002. "Hate Crime Offenders." *Journal of Social Issues* 58:303–318.
- Mills, Terry L. and Carla Edwards. 2002. "A Critical Review of Research on the Mental Health Status of Older African Americans." *The Journal of Aging and Society* 22:273–304.
- Myers, Michell A. and Vetta L. Sanders Thompson. 2000. "The Impact of Violence Exposure on African American Youth in Context." *Youth & Society* 32:253–267.
- Packard, Jerrold. 2002. *American Nightmare: The History of Jim Crow*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Patterson, James T. 2001. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).
- Pizarro, Judith, Roxanne Cohen Silver, and JoAnne Prause. 2006. "Physical and Mental Health Costs of Traumatic War Experiences among Civil War Veterans." *Archives of General Psychiatry* 63:193–200.
- Schwartz, Barry and Howard Schuman. 2005. "History, Commemoration, and Belief: Abraham Lincoln in American Memory." *American Sociological Review* 70:183–203.
- Smythe, Hugh H. 1948. "The Concept of Jim Crow." *Social Forces* 27:45–48.
- Thompson-Miller, Ruth. 2006. "Legal Segregation: Racial Violence and the Long-Term Implications." Texas A & M University, College Station, TX. Unpublished manuscript.
- Thompson-Miller, Ruth and Joe R. Feagin. 2006. "Building a Theory of Racial Violence: Violence and Legal Segregation." Under review.
- Tolnay, Stewart E. and E. M. Beck. 1995. *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1890*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Tolnay, Stewart E. and E. M. Beck. 1992. "Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910–1930." *American Sociological Review* 57: 103–116.
- Wang, Lu-in. 1999. "The Complexities of 'hate.'" *The Ohio State Law Journal* 60:799–900.
- Williams, David R. and Ruth Williams-Morris. 2000. "Racism and Mental Health: The African American Experience." *Ethnicity & Health* 5:243–268.
- Woodward, Vann C. 1974. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford University Press.

# Epilogue: The Future of Race and Ethnic Relations

HERNÁN VERA AND JOE R. FEAGIN

For several decades now, sociologists have made a clear distinction between prejudice or discrimination as an individual phenomenon and institutional racism as societal practice. At least since the 1960s, North American social scientists have demonstrated that racism involves at its heart an institutionalized social practice. Thus, racism constitutes a way of acting, feeling, and thinking that is sanctioned by society and made legitimate through numerous ideological devices. Today, calling racism—the deliberate exclusion of racialized others from the resources and opportunities that a society offers those of its members considered of European origin—just intolerance, hatred, prejudice, or similar terms tends to euphemistic obfuscation and hides the deliberate and structural character of this exclusion. What people call “race” is a set of (real or imagined) physical traits—such as skin color, facial form, or hair type—thought to be indicative of intellectual ability, as well as moral and spiritual caliber.

For nearly 20 years of teaching, the first editor of this volume generated some classroom data on racial stereotypes. He asked his classes, “What do we know about spics?” as he wrote and underlined the abusive epithet on the blackboard. Before students had recovered their breath, he would say, “Everyone knows we are great lovers!” and when the relieved laughter subsided, he would write, “oversexed” under the underlined term of abuse, usually provoking another explosion of laughter. Little by little students would venture into well-known abusive characterizations: “They stick to their families,” “they are lazy,” “they are dumb,” “they have rhythm, they are a musical people,” “they talk funny,” “they eat spicy foods,” “they deal drugs,” “they are criminal,” “they cannot control their emotions,” and so forth. When the list was exhausted, the instructor would say “let’s do ‘nigas’ ” now as he wrote and underlined this abusive epithet on the blackboard and took time to explain what these terms of abuse are and how they are related to stereotypes. He would explain that he was using the abusive terms to make the point that the traits being contributed made no reference to real people, but to mental and social constructions. Then he would ask a class, “Are ‘nigas’ oversexed?” “Are they

musical, familistic?" "Are they lazy?" and down the typically racist list, making checkmarks by each of the traits listed.

With minor variations, the two groups, African Americans and Latinos, turned out to be closely identical in typical societal stereotyping. When the list was complete, the instructor would do the same with other epithets and other groups: "wops," "micks," "polacks," and then "kikes" and "chinks." In all cases, with the exception of the last two, the targeted groups ended up having the same traits initially attributed to spics assigned to them by the students. Why the "kike" (a term of abuse for Jews) and "chink" (a term of abuse for Asians) categories were viewed by the students as "model minorities" and were often assigned other stereotyped traits—such as diligence, intelligence, lack of musicality, and emotional control—is of great interest and worth analyzing elsewhere, here we only have space to emphasize that in 20 years of teaching he found a strong consensus: Most U.S. "racial" groups are viewed in similar terms in the hoary, conventional white racial framing. In the class exercise students were asked to think through this list and search for explanations. The classes were lively, but over the years many students mentioned how "tired" and "depressed" they were after the exercise that they would never forget. Often numerous students would insist that there had to be a kernel of truth in the abusive characterizations or they would not exist. In this epilogue we cannot reproduce the richness of the conceptual and emotional discoveries that students made with this important exercise. In the essays in which they wrote their reflections on the exercise, the consensual and socially constructed nature of the traits and images that emerged was surprising to most students. "I cannot believe, that up to this day, I had never questioned the truth of these stereotypes," wrote a student that captured the central comment that his peers had also made in these essays. "That blackboard will haunt me," wrote another student, "because that thinking has shaped all of my life to this point." In this epilogue, we will only note that the similarity in undesirable traits among groups so different in heritage and culture stems from the fact that they are expressions of fears of the same hegemonic white mind and its long-term racist framing of society. It is also necessary to recognize that abused members of groups of color often find themselves adopting the same stereotypes and images from this white racial framing to characterize themselves and other groups. This is so because they too are constantly bombarded, from cradle to grave, with this white racial framing—from parents, peers, teachers, and the media.

The blackboard, with its consistent and provocative data, accents the consensual nature of "race" in society, and how it is a taken-for-granted and obligatory way of thinking. For over 400 years now, European Americans have developed a racialized way of acting, feeling, and thinking that has created and legitimized numerous white privileges and powers exerted over peoples that contemporary European Americans and their ancestors have systematically conquered and imposed on others. How else can anyone compel servitude and long-term suffering over other peoples if not by establishing an unbridgeable difference between themselves and those being oppressed? Note too that in human history only whites have developed such an extensive racist ideology accenting "racial" differences to justify exploitation and oppression.

Among the concepts that are most promising to the sociology of racism none is bolder and more important than that of "systemic racism." This label may seem a bit surprising given the close association of the concept of "system" with the rather abstract theories of thinkers like Talcott Parsons, who defined a social system as

a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the "optimization of gratification" and whose relation to their situation, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols. (Parsons 1951:5–6)

Parsons' social system emphasized the status-role as a component of the social system, which was often diagrammed into just four system components that Parsons thought were key features of society. Through this definition and others of its kind, such an abstract style of social theorizing tends to close off the analytical considerations honed in regard to the societal fields to which it is applied. Once this abstract definition has been imposed, the contours of our knowledge about social reality have been more or less pre-established. This is one of the features that make Parsons' system-functionalist (less accurately called structural-functionalist) analyses satisfactory to many. In Parsons' project the ideal condition, "scientifically speaking," is that "where most actual operational hypotheses of empirical research are directly derived from a general system of theory" (Parsons 1954:354). However, this abstract establishment of (in effect, influential or official) social truths about society tends to operate uncritically to support and justify the status quo. Significant changes within a societal system are envisaged, but not the dramatically remaking or replacement of the social system itself.

In our work over the last decade or so, we have pressed to look at the U.S. system of racism, termed "systemic racism" in writings of the second editor, from a new foundational and totalizing perspective. Systemic racism is a reinvigorated social concept that should guide much research on racial matters. In his work Feagin has stepped back and offered an analysis of U.S. racial matters from a perspective that contextualizes and accents the complex whole and foundational character of systemic racism in the United States (Feagin 2000, 2006). He has carefully examined how this racist social system was initially constructed, how it has functioned as a political-economic and symbolic-ideological societal foundation for centuries, and who constantly profits and loses from it. Drawing here on Feagin's work, we use the term "systemic" as a synonym for "ubiquitous," "total," and "foundational." Systemic racism is that which "penetrates every nook and cranny" of the society we live in. "*Racist relations*—are not *in*, but rather *of* this society" (Feagin 2000:17).

Concepts such as systemic racism have come, not out of pre-established theorizing, but out of extensive field research—from examining many of the lives, experiences, and interpretations of those "organic intellectuals" who have had to "live this society" for decades. By contrast to Parsons' style of theorizing, this concept of systemic racism is designed to open, not close, the analytical assessments of the social fields to which they are applied. When we use the concept of systemic racism, we do not seek to establish one truth about things societal, but rather encourage people to look at this and other societies in a much more critical and contextualized fashion, from a perspective that questions official truths and "established knowledge." We recognize the need for flexibility as we dig deeper into the foundational realities of U.S. racism. Feagin (1973:4) put this matter of flexibility thus in introducing his influential anthology, *The Urban Scene*: "The selections will provide divergent and provocative interpretations which one may or may not be able to synthesize into a whole. The intention thus is to provoke the reader to formulate and integrate his or her own hypotheses and conclusions about the whys and wherefores of urban life."

In the U.S. case racism is extraordinarily well-institutionalized, one reason for the failure of most analysts to see its deeply foundational and contextualized reality. Our ideas about institutionalization are influenced by Emile Durkheim's idea that sociology is actually the *science* of institutions and from his social constructionist perspective, which has been reinvigorated since the 1960s and 1970s. Awareness of the systemic nature of U.S. racism does not deny the fact that similar types of racial oppression have been institutionalized around the world, with much of the latter shaped or influenced by well-developed U.S. racism. Most importantly, this accent on systemic racism goes a considerable step further than

previous analyses to accent the reality of racism, especially in the United States, as *total* and *foundational*.

Our concept of systemic racism is also experiential, both in its definition and in the way in which we arrived at it. In his famous book, *The Gift*, Marcel Mauss, the French sociologist and student of Durkheim, introduced the idea of the total social fact. For Mauss, social scientists not only needed to make use of specialized views of their disciplines, but also needed to show how social facts “became flesh and blood in an individual experience” (Levi-Strauss 1968:xxv–xxvii). In our view the social scientific interpreter should work out the relationship of the objectivity of historical and sociological analysis with the subjectivity of actual lived experience. To say that a social fact is total is to say that observers, being of the same nature as those they observe, are an integral part of their observation.

The future of racial oppression and resistance to that oppression, in the United States and across the world, will depend to a large extent on the way we choose to look at them and react to them. The concept of systemic racism invites us to look at both the objective reality and subjective experience of everyday racism, avoiding the scientific error of adopting the official definition of others, as radically different. In our view much depends on how social scientists enable and empower people to analyze accurately and struggle successfully against one of the most significant evils in the history of the world. If the multiple racial genocides of the 19th through the 21st centuries, legitimized in perpetrators’ minds by notions of “race,” are no longer going to be allowed, then we need to live up to the challenge of acknowledging and subverting the totality of the racism that engulfs us.

## REFERENCES

- Feagin, Joe R., 2006. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R., 1973. *The Urban Scene: Myths and Realities*, New York: Random House.
- Feagin, Joe R., 2000. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 1968. “Introduction à l’œuvre de Marcel Mauss,” in Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, pp. ix–xii.
- Mauss, Marcel, 1968. “Essai sur le Don. Forme et Raison de l’Echange dans les Sociétés Archaïques,” pp. 145–284 in *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, Paris: Presses Univesitaires de France.
- Parsons, Talcott, 1954. “The Prospects of Sociological Theory,” pp. 348–369 in *Essays in Sociological Theory*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Parsons, Talcott, 1951. *The Social System*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press.



# Index

- ABB, *see* African Blood Brotherhood (ABB)
- Abercrombie and Fitch
- t-shirts, racist stereotypes, 120, 127
- Aborigines, Australia, *see* Australia
- Academic freedom, 74–75
- Accommodationist racists, 82
- Accountability, educational organizations, 377–383
- Actors Workshop, 242–243
- ADC, *see* Aid to Dependent Children’s Program (ADC)
- Advertising images, racist stereotypes, 120–121, 127
- AFDC, *see* Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
- Affirmative action, 277, 288
- AFL-CIO, 175, 186
- Africa
- Niggers* (store), 102
- African Americans
- access to care and treatment, 197
  - AIDS/HIV, 207
  - American Dream, 6
  - as Americans, 301, 302
  - in armed forces, 297
  - assimilation, 291
  - breast cancer, 196
  - demonization of young, 347
  - discrimination experiences, 68–69
  - educational attainment, 234
  - elderly, Medicaid, 59
  - employment discrimination, 6
    - audit studies, 69
  - exclusion, 222–223
  - extended kin networks, 151–152
  - families, 4, 145–160
  - contemporary families, 150–151
  - and “decline” of marriage, 153–156
  - and emancipation, 148–149
  - female-headed households, 147–148, 153–156
  - history, 146–150
  - kinship ties, 151–153
  - middle class, 156–157
  - migration, impact of, 149–150
  - motherhood, 153
  - single-parent households, 153–156
  - and slavery, 145–147
  - urbanization, impact of, 149–150
  - values, 294
  - food insufficiency, 233
  - Haitian Americans and, 417
  - health, 54, 233
    - disparities, feminist intersectionality and, 203–204
    - health insurance, 197
  - housing discrimination, 157
    - audit studies, 69–70
  - hypertension, 195
  - incarceration, 396, 399
  - income, 150, 232, 298
  - infant mortality, 194
  - institutional discrimination, 151
  - intellectuals, 348
  - Jim Crow era, *see* Segregation (Jim Crow laws)
  - in labor market
    - collective bargaining, 276
    - earnings, division of labor and, 265–268
    - educational attainment, 274
    - employer practices, 269–273
    - family inheritance, 275
    - generally, 264
    - glass ceilings, 273
    - immigrant labor, preference for, 271–272
    - legal discrimination, 269
    - networks, reliance on, 273
    - niches, developing and protecting, 275
    - ranking and sorting process, 264–265
    - restructuring, 271
    - soft skills, employer demand for, 272–273
    - worker strategies, 274–276
  - life expectancy, 195
  - marriage, “decline” of, 153–156
  - middle class, 89, 156–157
  - migration, 223
  - minority students, 385
  - neighborhoods, 233–235
  - nigger, use of word, 106–107; *see also* Nigger, use of word

- police encounters, 399
- poverty, 150, 152, 157, 207–208
  - culture of, 293
- public school attendance, 380
- quality of life, 232–233
- racial profiling, 151
- rape of African American women, 149, 460–461
- separate but equal status, 233–234
- separatist strategy, 432–433
- single-parent households, 153–156
- skin shade, effect on economic outcome, 270
- smoking, 196
- sociopolitical strategies, 6
- South, migration back to, 149–150
- theater, portrayal, 248–261
- unemployment, 55, 150
- violence against, 142, 149
- voting, 223, 336–337
- wealth distribution and, 54
- women, perceived dominance over men, 153
- African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), 434
- African Music and Drama Association, 255
- Africans
  - theater, portrayal, 254–247
- Aguas de Tanari, 338
- “Aguila Azteca” award, 183
- Ahmadinejad, 448
- Ah Yup, 225
- AIDS
  - Haitians, 414, 417, 421
  - health systems, race and ethnic differences, 202, 206–207
- Aid to Dependent Children’s Program (ADC), 387, 393
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), 389, 390
- AIM, *see* American Indian Movement (AIM)
- Albright, Madeline, 444
- Alcatraz, 243
- Aleman, Miguel, 173
- Altshuler, David, 199
- American Civil Liberties Union, 179
- “American,” defined, 300–301
- An American Dilemma* (Myrdal), 291, 295
- American Dream, 6, 285, 304–307, 344, 365–366
  - African Americans, 6
  - globalization of, 6
- American English, 289
- American flag, 290, 304, 311
- American Idealism, 295
- American Indian Movement (AIM), 23–36, 435
- American Indians, 2, 17–19; *see also* Indigenous peoples (Americas); *specific tribes*
  - as athletic team mascots, 120–121
  - causes of death, 194
  - citizenship, right to, 224
  - conflicts of, 19–27
  - death rates (1800s), 21
  - exclusion, 222
  - Five Civilized Tribes, 21
  - health insurance, 197
  - hypertension, 195–196
  - income, 232
  - “Indian Offences”, 23
  - Native Nations, 17–19
  - population, decimation, 362
  - racial domination of, 19
  - relocation programs (1950s), 23
  - sovereignty over Native Nations, 20–23
    - Lakota Indians, case study, 25–27
    - multiple sovereignty, 20 n. 12
    - struggles over sovereignty, 23–24
  - termination policies, 23
  - “Tribal” Courts, 23
- American Journal of Public Health*, 199
- American Population Society, 81
- The American Race Problem: A Study of the Negro* (Reuter), 88
- Americans for Democratic Action, 368
- American Sociological Review*, 93
- America (United States), *see* United States
- Amygdala, 50, 53
- Angelou, Maya, 112, 261
- Annan, Kofi, 449, 450
- Anti-discrimination policies, institutions, 75–76
- Anti-hegemonic movements, 5, 328–33
  - fair contractual agreements, 335–336
  - fair trade, 335–336
  - fair wages, 335–336
  - insurgency as strategy, 337–338
  - reparations as, 333–335
  - and violence, 336–337
- Antiracism, 7, 427–240
  - “color blindness” as obstacle, 436
  - conditions fostering, 435–438
  - critical antiracism, 428
  - history of in United States, 432–435
  - reflexive race cognizance, 429
  - selective race cognizance, 429
  - systemic racism, 429–430
  - transformative love, 430
  - types of, 428–433
- Antiracism in the United States: The First Two Hundred Years* (Aptheker), 432
- Anti-Racist Action (ARA), 431
- Anti-Semitism, 354–355
- Apache Indians, 22
- Apartheid, 6
- Arab-Americans
  - discrimination against since 9/11, 13
  - national identity, 310
- Arakakan peoples, 16
- Arawak Indians, *see* Taino-Arawak peoples
- Aristide, Jean-Bertrand, 418
- Aristotle, 220

- Arizona  
 Mexican immigrants, 177–178  
 Proposition 200, 172, 187  
 Armed forces, African Americans, 297
- Asia  
 “whiteness,” and, 9
- Asian Americans  
 advertising campaign, racist stereotypes on t-shirts, 120, 127  
 anti-immigration laws, 179  
 causes of death, 194  
 citizenship, denial of, 224–225  
 discrimination, 4  
   perceived, 138–140  
   white perceptions of, 139–140  
 as foreigners, 132–133  
 immigration control, 224  
 income, 232  
 infant mortality, 195  
 intermarriage, 133, 135–138  
 in labor market  
   earnings, division of labor and, 265–268  
   glass ceilings, 274  
 language, 228  
 as model minorities, 72–73, 134, 137–138  
 pitting against blacks and other nonwhites, 137  
 public’s perception of, 137–138  
 race and racism, experiences, 131–144  
   nativistic racism, 131–133  
   socioeconomic conditions, 133–135  
 socioeconomic conditions, 133–135, 138  
 stereotyping, 137–138  
 violence, anti-Asian, 140–142  
 whiteness, definition, 13  
 “whitening” thesis, 137–140  
 women, earnings, 134  
 “yellow peril” slur, 132
- Asian Americans for Community Involvement 1993, 134
- Assimilation, 313–314
- “Audit studies”  
 discrimination, 69–70
- Aunt Jemima, 117
- Australia  
 Aborigines, 102, 111, 222  
 citizenship, 221–222  
 nigger, use of word, 102  
*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (Johnson), 107
- Automaticity, 50–52
- AvendaOo, Ana, 175
- Aymara Indian, 35
- Aztec peoples, 17
- Baatan*, 445
- Bacon’s Rebellion (1676), 286, 287
- Baker, Ella, 366
- Baldwin, James, 12
- Bamboozled* (film), 121–123
- Bank loans, discrimination, 70
- Baraka, Amiri, 366
- Battle of the Little Big Horn (1876), 25
- Battles, land claims (1800s), 22
- B-Boy Blues* (Hardy), 112
- “Beautiful Black Men” (Giovanni), 259
- Beckett, Samuel, 242–243
- Behavioral health risks, race and ethnic differences, 196
- The Bell Curve* (Hernstein and Murray), 231
- Beloved* (Morrison), 261
- Benedict XVI, 447–448
- Bennet, Gwendolyn, 260
- Bentham, Jeremy, 401
- Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and the Irish of New York City* (Glazer and Moynihan), 292, 357
- Bias, 41–42  
 cognitive bias theory, 45–49  
 social cognition theory, 42–48
- Biko, Steven, 332
- Bilingual Education Act of 1968, 228
- Binghamton University, *see* State University of New York at Binghamton
- Bin Laden, Osama, 311
- Biobehavioral explanations for health disparities, 200–202
- Black Codes, 455–456
- Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Frazier), 146
- Blackfoot Confederacy, 34
- Black Freedom Struggle, 365
- Black Hills, 25, 26, 34
- Black Left, 351
- Black Liberation movement, 369
- Black Lives, White Lives* (Blauner), 79
- Black Nationalism, 227, 346, 348
- Black Panther Party (BPP), 347–348, 434–435
- Black Popular Front, 345–346
- Black Power, 347
- Blacks, *see also* African Americans; Africans  
 theater, portrayal, 244–247
- Black Voices* (Homan), 6, 244, 255, 257–261  
 Coda, 261  
 “Good Mornin’ Blues”, 258–259  
 men and women, 259–260  
 slave diaries, 260  
 “What is it like to be black”, 260–261
- Blauner, Bob, 79
- The Blood Knot*, 255
- “Blowback”, 42, 47
- Blumenbach, Johann, 11
- Blumer, Herbert, 57
- Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell*, 379
- Bolivia, resistance to globalization, 36
- Bolshevik revolution, 345

- “Bootstraps model”, 293
- Borders
- “operation gatekeeper”, 167, 177–179
  - post-September 11, 161–163
  - Time* magazine coverage, 162
- “Bowling for Columbine” (film), 75
- Bowser, Kevin, 102
- BPP, *see* Black Panther Party (BPP)
- Bracero program, 169–170, 173–174
- Brazil
- racial democracy, 5, 219, 230
  - racial hegemony, 324
  - whiteness, definition, 13
- Breast cancer, 54
- health systems, race and ethnic differences, 202
  - race and ethnic differences, 196
- Brecht, Bertolt, 257
- Brennan, Neal, 122
- Brewer, Rose, 369
- Briggs, Cyril, 348
- Brooks, Gwendolyn, 261
- Brown, John, 432, 436
- Brown, Michael, 445
- Brown v. Board of Education*, 40, 183, 234, 286, 289, 343, 378, 379, 456, 462
- Brown, William Wells, 147
- Bubble Sisters, 126
- Buffon, Count de, 11
- Bunyan, Paul, 249
- Burden of proof, institutional discrimination, 71
- Bush, Barbara, 445
- Bush, George H., 55
- Bush, George W., 107
- criticisms, 75
  - on freedom, 311
  - Genocide Convention, 450
  - Hurricane Katrina, 445
  - and Iraq, 444
  - and Mexican temporary workers, 169, 186–188
  - No Child Left Behind program, 382–383
- Byrdsong, Ricky, 142
- California
- Asian Americans
    - intermarriage, 136
    - socioeconomic conditions, 138
  - Latino vote, 187, 188
  - Mexican immigrants, 166–167, 171–172, 174, 177–179, 184, 187, 188
  - Mexican schools, 379
  - Proposition 187, 168, 171, 187
  - public school funding, 381
- California State University, 304
- California, University at Irvine
- anti-Asian violence, 141–142
- Camacho, Manuel Avila, 170
- Cambodian Americans
- socioeconomic conditions, 135
- Canada
- Blackfoot Confederacy, 34
  - Mohawk Indians, 33
  - “status Indian”, 34
- Cancer death rates
- race differences, 54
- Cane* (Toomer), 259
- “Cant of Conquest”, 20 n. 11
- Capitalism, 287
- Longue Duree, 5–6, 339–361; *see also* Longue Duree *for detailed treatment*
- Cardenas, Blandina, 183
- Cardiovascular disease (CVD)
- health systems, race and ethnic differences, 201
- Caribbean
- Haitian Americans, 411–415
  - indigenous peoples, 17
  - stereotypes, 412–413
- Castañeda, Jorge G., 182
- Castillo, Leonel, 176
- Castro, Fidel, 351
- Catholic Church
- and American Indians, 20 n. 10
  - and indigenous peoples (Americas), 15, 16 n. 2
  - Mexico, 175
- Caucasoid race, 11–12
- CDC, *see* Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Center for Public Policy, 394
- Centering the margins, 331–333
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 192
- AIDS, 414
  - genetics, 198–199
- Central Bank of Mexico, 175
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
- “blowback”, 42 n. 15
- Cervical cancer
- race and ethnic differences, 196
- “Change is Gonna Come” (Morrison), 261
- Chapman, Leonard, 176, 182
- Chappelle, Dave, 121–123
- Chappelle’s Show* (tv show), 121–124
- Charles V, 355
- Charny, Israel, 441
- Chavez-Thompson, Linda, 175–176
- Chechnyans, 326
- Che Guevara, 351
- Cheikh Anta Diop, 361
- Cherokee Indians, 21
- Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 21
- Cheyenne Indians, 25
- Chiapas, 30
- resistance to globalization, 32, 174
- Chicago Public Schools, 384
- Chicago School, 81, 84, 330

- Chicago, University of, 83, 290, 319
- Chicago Urban League, 306
- Chicano Americans  
skin shade, effect on economic outcome, 270
- Chicano movements, 227
- Chinese American Red Guards, 435
- Chinese Americans  
anti-Asian violence, 142  
anti-immigration laws, 179  
citizenship, denial of, 224–225  
immigration, 224  
infant mortality, 195  
labor market  
legal discrimination, 269  
niches, 275  
as model minorities, 72, 138  
public's perception of, 137–138  
socioeconomic conditions, 135  
World War II, during, 132
- Chinese Communist Party, 365
- Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, 4, 131, 224
- Chin, Vincent, 4, 131–133, 142
- Chronic health conditions, race and ethnic differences, 195–196
- Churchill, Winston, 444
- Cincinnati, Ohio  
Jim Crow laws, 456
- Citizens, *see also* Citizenship  
defined, 220  
second-class, 220
- Citizenship  
Asian Americans, denial of, 224–225  
denial of, 221–226  
Haitian Americans, 419  
inclusion and exclusion, 221–222  
rights to, 224
- Civil Rights Act of 1875, 148–149
- Civil Rights Act of 1964, 59  
labor market and illegal discrimination, 269  
and overt discrimination, 68  
social programs, 293  
Title VI, 40  
Title VII, 2, 39–40, 64, 277
- Civil Rights Act of 1968  
and overt discrimination, 68
- Civil Rights Act of 1991, 277
- Civil rights movement  
and health care, 192  
and popular culture, 123–124  
post-civil rights movement, 53, 62, 80  
mainstream surveys on racial attitudes, 85–87  
and racial hegemony, 319, 321  
reforms, 7  
and voting, African Americans, 223
- Civil War  
and citizenship, 222
- Claim-makers, discrimination  
labeling, 73–74
- Claims making, 70
- Class Counts* (Wright), 94
- Class, race versus, 94
- Clifton, Lucille, 259
- Clinton, Bill  
Democratic Leadership Council speech, 305  
and health care, 192, 211  
and immigration, 177  
and Iraq, 444  
PRWORA, 389  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 394
- CNC, *see* Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC)
- CNN, 303
- Code of the Street* (Anderson), 90–91
- Coffee Will Make You Black* (Sinclair), 261
- Cognitive bias theory, 45–49  
automaticity, 50–52
- COINTELPRO, 24
- Cold War, 132
- Collectibles, racist stereotypes, 117–118
- Collective bargaining, 276
- Colleges  
anti-Asian violence, 141–142
- Collins, Patricia Hill, 369
- Coloniality of power, 356–360
- Color, Americans of, 3
- Color-blind ideology, 55–56
- Columbine, Colorado, high school shooting, 75
- Columbus, Christopher  
and indigenous peoples, 16  
and slavery, 16 n. 4
- Comedy Central, 121–123
- Committee of 100, 137–138
- Committee on Ways and Means  
*2004 Green Book*, 390
- Communism, 1
- Community, social capital and, 92
- Concentration camps, Japanese Americans, *see* Japanese Americans *subhead* World War II
- Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 300–301
- Conditions* (Brooks), 261
- Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC), 174
- Congress, *see* U.S. Congress
- Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), 434
- Conrad, Joseph, 443–444
- Consciousness of kind, 82
- Constructionism and institutional discrimination, 70
- Constructions, distorting  
institutional discrimination, 76–77
- Context, racism and, 52–56  
intention, limited relevance, 54–55  
unmotivated racial disparities, persistence of, 54  
wealth distribution, imbalance, 54
- Contracts  
fair contractual agreements as anti-hegemonic  
movement, 335–336
- Cooley, Charles Horton, 82
- CORE, *see* Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)

- Coronary artery disease  
 health systems, race and ethnic differences, 201–202
- Corporate prisons, 400–402
- Council of African Affairs, 366
- Cox, Oliver Cromwell, 427
- Crash* (film), 124
- Crime rates, 270
- Criminal-blackman*, 125
- Criminalization  
 illegal aliens, 172
- Critical antiracism, 428
- Critical Inquiry*, 319
- Critical race theory (CRT), 41, 385
- Cuban Americans  
 immigrants, 7  
 infant mortality, 195
- Culler, Card Coulee, 260
- Culture of poverty, 90–91
- Dakota Indians, 25–27
- Dante, 247
- Danticat, Edwidge, 422–423
- Darfur, 449–450
- Darfur Peace Agreement, 449
- Darkest Before Dawn* (Work), 74
- Darwin, Charles, 81
- Davis, Angela, 366, 369
- Davis, Gray, 179
- Davis rule, 40
- Dawes Act, *see* General Allotment (Dawes)  
 Act of 1887
- Death, causes of  
 race and ethnic differences, 194
- Declaration of Independence, 286
- “Declaration of the Rights of Negro People of the World”, 112–113
- “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 33
- The Declining Significance of Race* (Wilson), 79
- Decode Genetics, 200
- “De-Indianization”, 28
- Democratic Leadership Council, 305
- Democratic Party, 171, 224  
 South, 387
- Department of Health and Human Services, *see* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS)
- Department of Justice, *see* U.S. Department of Justice
- Department of Labor, *see* U.S. Department of Labor
- Depression in women  
 health systems, race and ethnic differences, 201
- Desegregation  
 educational organizations, politics of, 379–381
- Desquiron, Lilas, 416
- Dewey, John, 375
- Diabetes 2  
 race and ethnic differences, 195–196, 199
- “Dialectic of Migrants’ Vulnerability”, 163, 164
- Diaries, slaves, 260
- Diaspora  
 Haitian Americans, 415–416
- Direct discrimination, 67
- Disaccumulation, 58
- Discrimination, *see also* Racism  
 Asian Americans, 4, 138–139  
 perceived, 138–140  
 white perceptions of, 139–140  
 “audit studies”, 69–70  
 bank loans, 70  
 caselaw, 42  
*de facto* discrimination, 68, 270  
*de jure* discrimination, 68  
 direct, 67  
 employer taste for, 269–273  
 employment discrimination, 58  
 audit studies, 69  
 interview process, 71–72  
 Equal Protection, 39  
 Filipino Americans, 138  
 housing discrimination, 58, 157, 233  
 audit studies, 69–70  
 indirect, 67  
 institutional, *see* Institutional discrimination  
 intent doctrine, 40–41, 44, 51  
 abandonment of, 56  
 jurisprudence, 65  
 opponents of, 63  
 as outdated, 56  
 intergroup, 48, 49  
 Supreme Court theory of, 44  
 unintentional discrimination, 56–57, 63–64  
 Vietnamese Americans, 138  
 what constitutes, 2  
 workplace, 46
- Disinvestment, 58
- Disneyland, 125–126
- Disney, Walt, 125
- Dispute resolution, 70
- Dissimilarity index, 87–88
- Disuniting of America* (Schlesinger), 228
- “Diversity programs” in organizations, 75–76
- Division of labor  
 race and ethnic differences, 265–268
- DNA, 198–199
- “Doctrine of Discovery”, 20, 21
- Dominican Americans  
 in labor market, niches, 275
- Dorkay House, 255
- Double consciousness, 302
- Douglass, Frederick, 258, 286
- “Down by the Riverside”, 259
- Downsizing, 68
- Drama, *see also* Theater as mirror of race, ethnicity and place  
 racist stereotypes, 118  
*The Dramatic Vision of August Wilson* (Shannon), 251
- Dred Scott* decision, 286

- Dual consciousness, 6
- Dubois, W.E.B., 249, 351  
 antiracism, 427  
 as assimilationist, 433  
 on capitalism, 441  
 on color line, 345  
 Council of African Affairs, 366  
 double consciousness concept, 302, 435  
 NAACP, 434  
 predictions of, 373  
 race relations study, 291 n. 6  
 separatist strategy, 433  
*Souls of Black Folk*, 348  
 speeches, 451–453
- Durkheim, Emile, 413, 469–470
- Dust Tracks in the Road* (Hurston), 261
- Earley, Jackie, 259
- Earnings, race and ethnic differences, 265–268
- Ecomienda*, 18 n. 7
- Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), 350
- Ecuador  
 resistance to globalization, 32
- Edgewood (Texas school district), 381
- Educational attainment  
 and labor market, 274
- Educational inequalities, 234
- Educational organizations, 377–385  
 accountability, 377–383  
 anti-Asian violence, 141–142  
 defining characteristics, 375–376  
 desegregation, racial, 379–381  
 inequality, 377–378, 382  
 minority students, 384–385  
 public school funding and color line, 381  
 segregation (Jim Crow laws), 458  
 Texas, 379, 381, 383–384
- Educational Trust, 381
- The Element of Sociology* (Giddings), 82
- Elites  
 Euro-American, 358  
 white power, 7
- Ellison, Ralph, 260, 345
- Ellwood, Charles, 82
- Emancipation  
 and African American families, 148–149
- Empire, development of, 286–294
- Employment discrimination, 58  
 African Americans, 6  
 audit studies, 69  
 Hispanics, 6  
 interview process, 71–72
- “Enemies-of-Christ”, 360
- England  
 first colonies, 17  
 racial hegemony, 324–325
- Enlightenment, 221
- Equal Employment Opportunity commission, 277
- Equal opportunity, 314
- Equal Protection law, 39
- “Escape valve” ideology, 172–173
- “E.S. ‘Nigger’ Brown Stand”, 102, 111
- “Espacial Amusement of the President of the United States”, 118
- Ethnic differences  
 health systems, 5, 191–218; *see also* Health systems,  
 race and ethnic differences
- Ethnic Dilemma* (Glazer), 294
- Ethnicity, 290–291  
 Haitian Americans, 422  
 in labor market, 263–283  
 earnings, division of labor and, 265–268  
 employer practices, 269–273  
 worker strategies, 274–276  
 organizational understanding, need for, 375–377
- Ethnic Notions*, 122
- European Union, 164
- European World Health Organization (EURO/WHO), 192
- Europe, Inquisition, 15–16 n. 1
- Evans, Mari, 261
- Everyman*, 249
- Exclusion, *see* Inclusion and exclusion
- “Exclusion of Illegal Aliens from Public Services”, 171–172
- Executive Order 9066, 132
- Executive Order 11246, 277
- Extended kin networks  
 African Americans, 151–152
- EZLN, 30, 34
- “Fahrenheit 911” (film), 75
- Fair contractual agreements as anti-hegemonic movement, 335–336
- The Fairie Queen* (Spenser), 249
- Fair trade as anti-hegemonic movement, 335–336
- Fair wages as anti-hegemonic movement, 335–336
- Families  
 African American, 4, 145–160  
 contemporary families, 150–151  
 and “decline” of marriage, 153–156  
 and emancipation, 148–149  
 female-headed households, 147–148, 153–156  
 history, 146–150  
 kinship ties, 151–153  
 middle class, 156–157  
 migration, impact of, 149–150  
 motherhood, 153  
 single-parent households, 153–156  
 and slavery, 145–147  
 urbanization, impact of, 149–150  
 values, 294
- Family inheritance and labor market, 274–275
- Family values, 294, 364–369

- Fanon, Frantz, 351
- Farmers, 296
- Farrakhan, Louis, 347–348
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 299
  - FBI agents, death at Pine Ridge, 24, 26
  - hate crimes, statistics, 75
  - Wen Ho Lee, imprisonment, 131
- Federal Sedition Act of 1918, 74
- Federal Writers Project, 260
- FEMA, 445
- Female-headed households
  - African Americans
    - and “decline” of marriage, 153–156
    - history, 147–148
- Feminists
  - attacks against, 73
  - health systems, race and ethnic differences, 203–206
- Fences* (Wilson), 244, 250–254
- Fifteenth Amendment, 148, 222, 223
- “The Fighting Whities”, 121
- Fighting Words* (Collins), 109
- Filipino Americans
  - discrimination, 138
  - intermarriage, 136
  - violence against, 142
- Film, *see also specific film*
  - and race
    - addressing race, 123–124
    - forecasting, 125–126
    - satire, 122–123
    - stereotypes, 119
- Finnish Americans
  - citizenship, denial of, 225
- Finnish Socialist Federation, 225
- Five Civilized Tribes, 21
- Flat Brook with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform* (Hays), 393
- Florida
  - nigger, use of word, 103–104
- Florida, University of
  - nigger, use of word, 103
  - “Non-Discrimination Policy”, 75
- Flowers, Bertha, 261
- fMRI, 50, 53
- Food stamps, 390
- Fools Crow, Frank, 26, 34
- Foreign-born blacks, identification as American, 302–303
- Foreign-born whites, identification as American, 306, 308–309
- “For Sandra” (Giovanni), 259
- Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, 22, 24, 36
- Fourteenth Amendment, 148, 222, 224, 289
- Fox, Vicente, 179, 181–185, 186
- France, nationalism, 221
- Frankfort School, 399
- Frazier, E. Franklin, 83, 146, 345
  - Council of African Affairs, 366
- Freedom Summer, 436
- Freeman v. Pitts*, 379
- Freyre, Gilberto, 229
- Frito-Lay
  - Frito Bandito, 120
- Fugard, Athol, 6, 254–247
  - No Good Friday*, 255
- Fuhrman, Mark, 105
- Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), 50, 53
- Furrow, Buford, 142
- The Future of the Public’s Health in the Twenty-First Century*, 198
- Gainesville, Florida
  - nigger, use of word, 103–104
- Galarza, Ernesto, 169, 170, 174
- Galileo* (Brecht), 257
- Gaming, 35
  - Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, 24
- Garner, John Nance, 170
- Garvey, Marcus, 113, 345, 349, 434
- GDP, percent of health care expenditures, 211
- Gender
  - discrimination, indigenous peoples, 34
  - division of labor and earnings, race and ethnic differences, 266–268
  - inclusion and exclusion, 221
  - oppression, 70
- General Allotment (Dawes) Act of 1887, 22
- Genes and race, 198–200
- Genetics, 198–200
- Genocide, 354–355, 441
  - definition, 450
  - indigenous peoples (Americas), 35, 36
    - U.S. claims to sovereignty as, 20–23
  - and willful ignorance, 449–450
- Genocide Convention, 450
- Genovese, Kitty, 242
- Gentleman’s Agreement of 1907, 224
- Germany, national identity, 221
- Ghettopoly (board game), 115
- Ghost Dance, 22, 25
- GI Bill, 277
- Giddens, Anthony, 163 n. 2, 165 n. 3
- Giddings, Frank H., 82
- GI-Forum, 183
- The Gift* (Mauss), 470
- Giovanni, Nikki, 259
- Giuliani, Rudolph, 311
- Glass ceilings, 273
- Glazer, Nathan, 291–292, 294, 357
- Globalization
  - international markets, 163–164
  - and racial hegemony, 5, 321, 322, 327–328, 339
  - technology, 321
- Global racism, 7–8, 441–454
  - clash of civilizations, 446–449
  - and culture wars, 442–443



- Iraq, 443–445  
   and Islam/Muslims, 446–449  
   New Orleans, 445–446  
   and violence, 443, 450–453  
   and willful ignorance, 449–450
- Goffman, Erving, 242
- Goldwater, Barry, 347
- “Good Mornin’ Blues”, 258–259
- “Got Up This Morning”, 259
- Graham, Shirley, 366
- Gramsci, Antonio, 5
- Grandfather clauses, 149
- Great Races, 11
- Great Society, 55
- Greeks  
   and definition of whiteness, 12
- Griggs v. Duke Power*, 2, 39
- Gross National Product (GNP)  
   Haiti, 418
- Groveland (neighborhood), 156
- Guanajuato (Mexico), 179
- Guatemala  
   genocidal repression, 34  
   resistance to globalization, 32
- Guess Who* (film), 124
- Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (film), 123–124
- Gulf War, 444
- Hagan, Stephen, 102, 111
- Haiti  
   Gross National Product (GNP), 418  
   indigenous peoples, 16
- Haitian Americans, 7, 411–426, 426  
   and African Americans, 417  
   AIDS, 414, 417, 421  
   Caribbean, 411–415  
   case study, 413–415  
   and citizenship, 419  
   diaspora, 415–416  
   ethnicity, 422  
   and generations, 416–418  
   health, 421  
   and religion, 419–421  
   sociological literature, 415–422  
   transnationalism, 424  
     and citizenship, 419  
     and diaspora, 415–416  
     and generations, 416–418  
     and health, 421  
     and religion, 419–421  
   utilization of services, 421–422
- Haitian Slave Revolution, 16 n. 2
- Halloween masks, racist stereotypes, 118
- Hamer, Fannie Lou, 192
- Hampton, Fred, 348
- Hannity, Sean, 448
- Hansberry, Lorraine, 6, 244, 248–251
- Hard pluralism, 229
- Hardy, James Earl, 112
- Harlem, New York  
   poverty, 207, 209
- Harlem Renaissance, 258
- Harrison, Hubert, 348
- Hart-Celler Act (1965), 226
- Hartigan, John, 111
- Harvard University, 138  
   Civil Rights Projects, 234
- Harvest of Empire* (Gonzalez), 296
- Hate crimes, 63, 75  
   violence, anti-Asian, 140–142
- Hate groups, 75
- Health and Human Services Department, *see* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS)
- Health conditions  
   Haitian Americans, 421  
   race and ethnic differences, 93, 195–196, 202
- Health insurance  
   race and ethnic differences, 196–197
- Health systems, race and ethnic differences, 5, 191–218  
   access to care and treatment, 197  
   AIDs, 202  
   behavioral health risks, 196  
   biobehavioral explanations for health disparities, 200–202  
   breast cancer, 196, 202  
   cardiovascular disease (CVD), 201  
   cervical cancer, 196  
   chronic conditions, 195–196  
   coronary artery disease, 201–202  
   death, causes of, 194  
   depression in women, 201  
   diabetes 2, 195–196  
   disparities, 193–197  
   access to care and treatment, 197  
   behavioral health risks, 196  
   breast cancer, 196  
   cervical cancer, 196  
   chronic conditions, 195–196  
   death, causes of, 194  
   diabetes 2, 195–196, 199  
   health insurance, 196–197  
   hypertension, 195–196  
   infant mortality, 194–195  
   life expectancy, 195  
   obesity, 196  
   reduction and elimination of, 210–213  
   smoking, 196  
   social context of, 197–209  
   socioeconomic groups, 193  
   disparities, defined, 192–193  
   feminist intersectionality, 203–206  
   genes and race, 198–200  
   health insurance, 196–197

- HIV/AIDS, 206–207
- hypertension, 195–196
- infant mortality, 194–195
- intersectionality
- feminist, 203–206
  - social construction of health disparities, case examples, 206–209
- macro structures and intersections, 202–206
- obesity, 196
- psychosocial explanations for health disparities, 200–202
- reduction and elimination of health disparities, 210–213
- reproduction, social contexts, 207–208
- smoking, 196
- and pregnancy, 208–209
- social construction of health disparities, case examples, 206–209
- social context of disparities, 197–209
- AIDs, 202
  - biobehavioral explanations for health disparities, 200–202
  - breast cancer, 202
  - cardiovascular disease (CVD), 201
  - coronary artery disease, 201–202
  - depression in women, 201
  - feminist intersectionality, 203–206
  - genes and race, 198–200
  - HIV/AIDS, 206–207
  - macro structures and intersections, 202–206
  - psychosocial explanations for health disparities, 200–202
  - reproduction, social contexts, 207–208
  - smoking and pregnancy, 208–209
  - “upstream,” looking further, 202–203, 210
- Healthy People 2010*, 192–193
- Heart of Darkness* (Conrad), 443–444
- Hegel, George, 164–167, 189
- Hegemony, *see* Racial hegemony
- Heisenberg, Werner, 84
- Hempbill, Esse, 261
- Henkins, Frank H., 81
- Henry, John, 112
- Hernandez, Juan, 185
- Herndon, Angelo, 345
- Herrenvolk* democracy, 229
- Hispanic Americans
- AIDS/HIV, 207
  - causes of death, 194
  - employment issues, 6
  - hypertension, 195
  - income, 232
  - infant mortality, 195
  - in labor market
    - collective bargaining, 276
    - de facto* segregation, 270
    - earnings, division of labor and, 265–268
    - educational attainment, 274
    - employer practices, 269–273
    - generally, 264
    - legal discrimination, 269, 270
    - networks, reliance on, 273
    - ranking and sorting process, 264–265
    - restructuring, 271
    - worker strategies, 274–276
  - skin shade, effect on economic outcome, 270
- Hispaniola*, 16–17, 414
- Historical capitalism, racism and, 351–356
- Historical Capitalism* (Wallerstein), 351–356
- HIV/AIDS
- health systems, race and ethnic differences, 202, 206–207
- Ho Chi Minh, 351
- Hodenoosaunee, 34
- Hoffman, Abraham, 187
- “Homage to My Hips” (Clifton), 259
- Homan, Sidney, 6, 244, 255, 257–261
- Horowitz, David, 74
- Housing discrimination, 157, 233
- audit studies, 69–70
- Houston Astrodome, 445
- HR-3447, 172
- Hughes, Langston, 249
- “I Too Sing America”, 260
  - “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”, 260
  - “Sylvester’s Dying Bed”, 259
- Human Genome Project, 198
- Human rights and international migration, 163–168, 182–183
- Human Rights Watch, 450
- Hunton, Alphaeus, 366
- Hurricane Katrina, 102–103, 107, 109
- and racism, 445–456
- Hurston, Zora Neal, 261
- Husayn, Saddam, 444
- Hwang, John, 131
- Hypertension, race and ethnic differences, 195–196
- IAT, *see* Implicit Association Test (IAT)
- Ideology
- international migration (Mexicans), 172–176
  - “I Have a Dream” speech (King), 55, 365–366
  - “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” (Angelou), 261
- Ileto, Joseph, 142
- Imagined Communities* (Anderson), 304
- Immigrants and immigration, 4–5, 161–189; *see also* Migration
- Asian Americans, 224
  - Chinese Americans, 224
  - Cuban, 7
  - human rights and, 163–168, 182–183
  - Japanese Americans, 224
  - labor, preference for immigrants in labor market, 271–272

- and racial hegemony, 327–328
- turn of the century, 290
- Immigration Act of 1965, 72, 293
- Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, 225
- Implicit Association Test (IAT), 45
- Implicit bias, 42
- Incarceration, *see* Prison organizations
- “Incident” (Culler), 260
- Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Jacobs), 147
- Inclusion and exclusion
  - citizenship, denial of, 221–226
  - multiculturalism as mode of inclusion, 226–229
  - racial democracy, 220–226
- Income, *see also* Earnings, race and ethnic differences
  - African Americans, 150, 298
  - racial inequality, 232
- The Independent Alligator* (Florida), 103, 107, 109
- Indiana University, 142
- Indian Citizenship Act (1924), 224
- Indian Claims Commission, 26
- Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, 24
- Indian Removal Act, 21
- Indian Reorganization Act (1934), 23, 25
- Indians, *see* American Indians
- Indian Wars, 21–22
- Indices, demographic
  - racism, 87–89
- Indigenous peoples (Americas), 2, 15–38; *see also*
  - American Indians
  - borders, 34
  - “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 33
  - definitions, 15–19
  - genocide, 35, 36
    - U.S. claims to sovereignty as, 20–23
  - land, relationship to, 29
  - Latin America, 27–33
    - global conflicts over indigeneity, 33–36
    - Mexico, 28–32
    - “multinational” state structure, 33–34
    - Popol Vuh, 28
    - recognition issues, 31
    - resistance to globalization, 31–33
  - Mexico, 28–32
    - recognition issues, 31
    - resistance to globalization, 31–32
  - origins, 15–19
  - racial domination, 18–19
  - resistance to globalization, 34–35
  - slavery
    - racial construction of Indians and blacks (1486–1686), 15–19
    - stratification systems, 18–19
- Indirect discrimination, 67
- Individualism, 62
- Inequality
  - denial of and social capital, 91–93
  - educational organizations, 377–378
  - within schools, 382
  - factors contributing to racial inequality, 313
- Infant mortality, race and ethnic differences, 194–195
- Inheritance, 363
- Inquisition, 15–16 n. 1
- INS, *see* U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)
- Institute for the Healing of Racism, 431
- Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science, 197–198, 202, 205, 212
- Institutional discrimination, 67–70
  - African Americans, 151
  - anti-discrimination policies, 75–76
  - burden of proof, 71
  - claim-makers, labeling, 73–74
  - constructions, distorting, 76–77
  - disguising institutional strategies, 71–77
    - anti-discrimination policies, 75–76
    - claim-makers, labeling, 73–74
    - constructions, distorting, 76–77
    - silence, incentives for, 71–73
    - silence, mandating, 74–75
  - “diversity programs”, 75–76
  - empirical analysis, 70–71
  - empirical reality, 76–77
  - employment interview, 71–72
  - gender oppression, 70
  - “lip service”, 76
  - model minorities, 72–73
  - silence
    - incentives for, 71–73
    - mandating, 74–75
  - “window dressing”, 76
- Institutionalized racism, 150, 153
- Institutional racism, 60–61
- Insurgency and anti-hegemonic movements, 337–338
- Intent
  - and context, 54–55
  - discrimination, 40–41, 51
    - doctrine of, 44
  - intent doctrine, 40–41
    - abandonment of, 56
    - opponents of, 63
    - as outdated, 56
  - jurisprudence, 65
- Intermarriage
  - Asian Americans, 133, 135–138
  - Filipino Americans, 136
  - Japanese Americans, 135
  - Korean Americans, 135
  - Vietnamese Americans, 136
- International migration (Mexicans), *see also*
  - Immigrants and immigration
  - bracero program, 169–170, 173–174
  - criminalization of illegal aliens, 172
  - empowerment, 165
  - empowerment of migrants, 164
  - “escape valve” ideology, 172–173

- “Exclusion of Illegal Aliens from Public Services”, 171–172
- “guest workers program”, 186
- historical context, 168–172
- human rights and, 163–168, 182–183
- and ideology, 172–176
- illegal immigrants, 176–177
- criminalization of, 172
- labor market, 166–167
- law of the land, 165
- present and future, 179–188
- “silent invasion”, 176–179
- undocumented immigrants, 176–177, 188
- amnesty, 186–187
- vulnerability of migrants, 163, 166, 167
- “In Texas Grass” (Troup), 260
- Invisible Man* (Ellison), 260
- Involvement of Mexican Americans in Gainful Endeavors, 120
- IOM, *see* Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science
- Iraq
- global racism, 443–445
- Ireland
- indigenous peoples, 17
- Irish
- and definition of whiteness, 12
- Iroquois Confederation, 34
- Islam
- Islamic fundamentalists, 311
- Nation of Islam, 346, 433, 434, 446–449
- Ito, Judge Lance, 105, 131
- “I Too Sing America” (Hughes), 260
- Jackson, Andrew, 21
- Jackson, Jesse, 347–348
- Jacobs, Harriet, 147, 286
- James, C.L.R., 345, 351
- Jamestown Settlement (Virginia), 17–18
- Japan
- “Little Black Sambo”, 126
- Japanese Americans
- citizenship, denial of, 224–245
- immigration, 224
- intermarriage, 133, 135
- as model minorities, 72
- national identity, 309
- socioeconomic conditions, 134
- World War II, 4, 131, 132, 139, 305, 451
- Jefferson, Thomas, 36, 83
- Lewis and Clark expedition, 21
- Jencks, Christopher, 93
- Jews
- and definition of whiteness, 13
- Russian Jews, 12
- Jim Crow laws, 92, 223; *see also* Segregation (Jim Crow laws)
- legacy of, 226
- legal discrimination under, 269
- political consequences, 223
- Johnson, Andrew, 456
- Johnson, Charles, 83
- Johnson, Helene, 261
- Johnson, James Weldon, 107
- Johnson, Lyndon Baines
- 1964 election, 347
- war on poverty, 387–388
- and welfare state, 365
- Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21
- Joint statement of Chief Frank Fools Crow and Frank Kills Enemy, 26, 34
- Jones, Claudia, 345
- Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 90
- A Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 204n. 2
- Jumping Bull complex, 24
- Junta de Vallodolid, 355
- Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, 34
- Justice Department, *see* U.S. Department of Justice
- K-12 schools, anti-Asian violence, 141
- Kaiser Family Foundation, 138, 298
- Kani, John, 254, 256
- Katrina (Hurricane), *see* Hurricane Katrina
- Kennedy-McCain proposal, 169
- Kennedy, Ted, 168–169
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 337
- and American Dream, 344
- “I Have a Dream” speech, 55, 365–366
- 1967 speech, 309
- Riverside Church (NYC) meeting, 453
- King, Rodney, 76
- Kinship ties, African Americans, 151–153
- Korea
- Bubble Sisters, 126
- Korean Americans
- anti-Asian violence, 141–142
- intermarriage, 135
- Korean Conflict, during, 132
- socioeconomic conditions, 135
- Korean Conflict
- Korean Americans, treatment during, 132
- Kuan Chung Kao, 142
- Ku Klux Klan, 68, 103, 119, 455, 460
- Kumeyaay*, 34
- Kwan, Michelle, 131
- Labeling
- claim-makers, discrimination, 73–4
- Labor Department, *see* U.S. Department of Labor
- Labor market, 6, 263–283
- affirmative action, 277
- de facto* discrimination
- Mexican immigrants, 181, 188, 189
- segregation, 270

- earnings, division of labor and, 265–268  
 Mexican immigrants, 166–167  
*de facto* market, 181, 188, 189
- queueing process (race and ethnicity)  
 collective bargaining, 276  
 discrimination, employer taste for, 269–273  
 earnings, division of labor and, 265–268  
 educational attainment, 274  
 employer practices, 269–273  
 family inheritance, 274–275  
 generally, 264–265  
 glass ceilings, 273  
 immigrant labor, preference for, 271–272  
 legal discrimination, 269  
 legal struggles, 276  
 networks, reliance on, 273  
 niches, developing and protecting, 275  
 political power and, 276  
 restructuring, 271  
 soft skills, employer demand for, 272–3  
 worker strategies, 274–276
- ranking and sorting process, 264–265  
 employer practices, 269–73  
 worker strategies, 274–276
- Laférière, Danny, 416
- Lakota Indians, 21–23, 36  
 Black Hills, 25, 26, 34  
 case study, 25–27  
 joint statement of Chief Frank Fools Crow and Frank Kills Enemy, 26, 34  
 Lakota Oyate, 25  
 reservations, 25  
 resistance to globalization, 33  
 “Statement of Vision toward the Next 500 Years”, 27
- Lance, Judge, 4
- Land  
 indigenous peoples, relationship, 29
- Land claims (1800s), 22
- Language  
 race and, 61–63  
 and racism, 55–56
- La Opinion*, 179
- La Raza*, 435
- Las Cases, Bartolome de, 355, 356, 360
- Latin America  
 indigenous peoples, 27–33, 28  
 global conflicts over indigeneity, 33–36  
 Mexico, 28–32  
 “multinational” state structure, 33–34  
 recognition issues, 31  
 resistance to globalization, 31–33  
 sovereignty, 31
- Latino Americans  
 access to care and treatment, 197  
 definition as white, 13  
 educational attainment, 234  
 health insurance, 197  
 incarceration, 404–405  
 language, 228  
 minority students, 385  
 neighborhoods, 235  
 poverty, culture of, 294
- Latino critical theory (LatCrit), 385
- Lawrence, Francis, 298
- League of Nations, 35
- Lebanese Americans, violence against, 142
- Lee, John, 141
- Lee, Spike, 121–123
- Legal discrimination  
 in labor market, 269
- Legal segregation, *see* Segregation (Jim Crow laws)
- Lewis and Clark expedition, 21
- Lewis, Bernard, 448
- Lewis, Oscar, 90, 292
- Liberal racists, 82
- Liberation Theology, 32
- Life expectancy, race and ethnic differences, 195
- Limbaugh, Rush, 73, 448
- Lincoln, Abraham, 118
- Linnaeus, Carolus, 11
- Lipinski, Tara, 131
- “Lithe Negro Girls” (Bennet), 260
- “Little Black Sambo”  
 Japanese version, 126
- Longue Duree, 5–6, 343–365  
 coloniality of power, 356–360  
 and family values, 364–369  
 racism and historical capitalism, 351–6  
 world-system, 356–360  
 modern, 360–364
- Los Angeles Times*, 138–340
- Los Mojados, The Wetback Story* (Samara), 174
- Louisiana Purchase, 21
- Luce, Henry, 344, 346
- LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), 183
- Lynchings, 8, 149, 223, 458–361
- Machado, Richard, 141–142
- Madhubuti, Haki, 258–259
- Mainstream surveys on racial attitudes, 85–87
- Malcolm X, 346, 348, 369  
 and American Dream, 344, 365–366  
 “ballot or the bullet”, 336–337  
 human-rights and, 434  
 negative portrayals of, 436  
 on white supremacy, 108–109, 258, 261, 307
- MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), 183
- Mamet, David, 241
- “Mammy” collectibles, 117, 119
- The Mansions and the Shanties* (Freyre), 229
- Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (Montague), 291

- The Many Costs of Racism* (Feagin and McKinney), 105–106
- Mao Zedong, 351
- Ma Rainey's Black Bottom and Jitney* (Wilson), 251
- Mara Salvatrucha, 185
- Markets, 231
- Marriage, 363
  - “decline” of, African Americans, 153–156
  - intermarriage, 133
- Marshall, Chief Justice, 21
- Marxism, 94
- Marx, Karl, 165, 322, 331n. 26, 348
  - Frankfort School, 399
  - on historical capitalism, 352–353
- Mascots
  - athletic teams, American Indians as, 120–201
- Massachusetts
  - legal segregation, 456
- Massachusetts, University of, 138–139
- Master and Slave* (Freyre), 229
- Mauer, Marc, 395
- Mauss, Marcel, 470
- “Mayan Quest”, 34
- McCain, Senator, 168–169, 188
- McCarthy, Senator, 1
- McClesky v. Kemp*, 40, 398
- McKay, Claude, 348
- Mead, George Herbert, 375
- Meadowview (neighborhood), 152
- Media, United States on, 310
- Medicaid, 59
- Medical research, 74
- Medina, Eliseo, 175
- The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare), 246
- Merchants of Labor; A History of the Bracero Program*, 169
- Meritocracy, 354
- Messenger Group, 348
- Mexican Americans
  - anti-Mexican ideology, 170
  - food insufficiency, 233
  - Frito Bandito, protests, 120
  - Involvement of Mexican Americans in Gainful Endeavors, 120
  - in labor market
    - immigrant labor, preference for, 272
  - National Mexican-American Anti-Defamation Committee, 120
  - segregation, 171, 379
- Mexican Constitution, 184
- Mexican Consuls, 173
- Mexicans
  - international migration, *see* International migration (Mexicans)
- Mexico
  - border between United States and, 161–163, 167
  - Catholic Church, 175
  - deaths, location of, 177–178
  - economic crisis of 1994, 177
  - EZLN, 30, 34
  - foreign debt, 177
  - indigenous peoples, 28–32
    - community organizations, 30
    - culture, 29–30
    - “dead,” celebration of, 29
    - Pueblos Indigenas*, 30, 33
    - recognition issues, 31
    - resistance to globalization, 31–32
  - international migration
    - historical context, 168–172
    - human rights and, 163–168, 182–183
    - and ideology, 172–176
    - present and future, 179–188
    - “silent invasion”, 176–179
  - Mexico Profundo, 28–32, 36
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 173
  - National Archives, 170
  - Trail of Tears, 36, 288
  - voting, 184
  - Zapatistas, 27, 30, 31, 33, 35
    - Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, 34
  - Zapotecs, 32
- Mexico Profundo, 28–32, 36
- Middle class
  - African Americans, 156–157
- Middle Eastern Americans
  - white racism, 2–3, 73–74
- A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare), 256
- Migration, *see also* Immigrants and immigration
  - African American families, 149–50
  - African Americans, 223
- Mind of Mencia* (tv show), 123
- Minkin, Aleksandr, 326
- Minnesota
  - Finnish Americans, denial of citizenship, 225
- Minority rights revolution, 227
- Minority students, 384–385
- Minstrelsy, 118
- Miskito, 27, 33
- Misrecognition, 110
- Mississippi
  - voting, African Americans, 223
- “Mississippi Burning” (film), 76
- Mississippi Flood (1927), 446
- Missouri v. Jenkins*, 379
- Model minorities
  - Asian Americans as, 72–73, 134, 137–138
- Model Penal Code, 46
- Mohawk Indians, 33
- Mokae, Zakes, 255
- Mongolian Race, 225
- Mongoloid race, 11
- Montague, M. F. Ashley, 291
- Montgomery Bus Boycott, 343

- Moore, Michael, 75
- Morales, Evo, 33, 35, 338
- Morrison, Toni, 261
- Mosaic Madness* (Bibby), 228
- Motherhood
- African Americans, 153
  - single mothers, 384–385; *see also* Single-parent households
- Moynihan, Patrick, 90, 155, 292
- Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and the Irish of New York City*, 291–292, 357
  - The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*, 148, 366–367
  - “The Politics of Stability”, 368
  - On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Science*, 367
- MTV Korea, 126
- Much Ado about Nothing* (Shakespeare), 246
- Multiculturalism
- inclusion, as mode of, 226–229
- Muslim Americans, 448
- Muslims, 446–449
- discrimination against, 73–74
- My Life in the South* (Brown), 147
- Myrdal, Gunnar, 47–48, 291, 295
- NAACP, *see* National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- NAEP, *see* National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
- NAFTA, 187
- Nagin, Ray, 445
- National Academies of Science
- Institute of Medicine, 197–198, 202, 205
- National Agricultural Workers Survey, 181
- National anthem, 290, 304
- National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
- 2002, 140–141
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 383
- National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 276, 366, 431, 433–434, 445–446, 462
- National Black Women’s Health Project (NBWHP), 205
- National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- cancer death rates, 54
- National Center for Educational Statistics, 384
- National Center for Health Statistics, 195
- National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, 193
- National Chicano Survey, 270
- National Citizenship Act (1948), 222
- National Colloquium on Black Women’s Health (NCBWH), 205, 206
- National Conference for Community and Justice
- “Taking America’s Pulse”, 137
- National Conference on Race and Ethnicity
- (2004), 110
- National Council of la Raza, 183
- National Guard, 446
- National identity
- Germany, 221
  - United States, 292, 309–310
- National Institutes of Health (NIH), 192, 212
- genetics, 198–199
- National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, 193
- Nationalism, 285–313
- development of nation, 286–294
- National Mexican-American Anti-Defamation Committee, 120
- National Opinion Research Center, 306
- National Origins Act (1924), 224, 225
- National Urban League Institute of Opportunity and Equality, 206
- Nation of Islam, 346, 433, 434, 446–449
- Native Americans, *see* American Indians
- Native Nations, *see* American Indians
- Nativism, 4, 131–133
- Naturalization Act of 1790, 224
- Nazis, 225, 354, 356
- NBWHP, *see* National Black Women’s Health Project (NBWHP)
- NCBWH, *see* National Colloquium on Black Women’s Health (NCBWH)
- NCI, *see* National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- Negroes, *see also* African Americans; Blacks
- in popular culture, *see* Popular culture, white racism and “racial temperament of”, 83
- The Negro Family: A Case for National Action* (Moynihan), 148, 366–367
- Negroid race, 11–12
- Negro Liberation Movement (Sudan), 327
- “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (Hughes), 260
- Nemiroff, Robert, 249
- Neo-Nazi groups, 75
- Networks, *see* Social networks
- Neuroscience
- cognitive bias theory, automaticity, 50–52, 61
  - unintentional discrimination and, 57
- New Deal, 343–344, 347, 365, 386–387
- New Negro Movement, 345, 348–349
- New Orleans
- global racism, 445–6
  - Hurricane Katrina, 102–3, 107, 109, 445–6
- New Right, 325
- Newton, Huey P., 348, 366
- New York City
- anti-Asian violence, 141
  - Genovese, Kitty, 242
  - labor market
    - immigrant labor, preference for, 272
    - niches, 275
    - and political power, 276

- languages spoken in schools, 302  
 Riverside Church meeting (Martin Luther King), 453  
*The New York Times*, 122, 199, 207, 295  
*New York Times Magazine*, 72  
 Nicaragua, resistance to globalization, 33  
 Niches, developing and protecting in labor market, 275  
 Nigger, use of word, 3, 101–114  
   the arts, 106–107  
   “bad nigger”, 112  
   class differences, 107  
   as comedic hook, 104  
   cultural capital, 108  
   Ebay searches for word, 119  
   “E.S. ‘Nigger’ Brown Stand”, 102, 111  
   in fiction, 105  
   in-groups, 108  
   Malcolm X, 108–109  
   “Nigga Please!”, 107, 109  
   12001, 102  
   nommo force, 105  
   pain of, 108, 111  
   race differences, 107  
   Simpson, OJ, trial, 105  
   store (Africa), 102  
   symbolic violence, 110–111  
   22008, 102  
   22009, 102–104  
 NIH, *see* National Institutes of Health (NIH)  
 9/11, *see* September 11, 2001  
 Nkrumah, Kwame, 351  
 No Child Left Behind program, 382–383  
*No Good Friday* (Fugard), 255  
 Nommo force, 105  
 Noncitizens, distinction between citizens, 220  
 Nordic theory, 81  
 Norms, social behavior, 92–93  
 North Carolina  
   African American families, 148  
   Northern California, University of, 121  
*Notes on the State of Virginia* (Jefferson), 21  
 Notre Dame, University of, 183  
 Ntshona, Winston, 254  
 Nuba, 449  
 “the N-word.”, *see* Nigger, use of word  
  
 OAAU, *see* Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)  
 OAS, *see* Pan American Union (OAS)  
 Oaxaca, 29, 30  
   resistance to globalization, 32  
 Obesity, race and ethnic differences, 196  
 Occupational dissimilarity  
   indices, demographic, 87–88  
 Occupational segregation, 266–268  
 Office of Economic Opportunity, 367  
 Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 194  
 Onondagas, 35  
  
*On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Science* (Moynihan), 367  
 OPEC countries, 176  
 “Operation gatekeeper”, 167, 177–179  
*Order and Progress* (Freyre), 229  
 O’Reilly, Bill, 448  
 Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), 434  
*Othello* (Shakespeare), 6  
 Ottoman Empire, 447  
 “Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific” (Park), 83–84  
 Outmarriage, *see* Intermarriage  
 Ozawa, Takao, 225  
  
 Pacific Islander Americans  
   socioeconomic conditions, 134, 135  
 Padmore, George, 345  
 Pan-African Congress, 345  
 Pan American Union (OAS), 179  
 Pan-European racist thinking, 5–6  
 Park, Robert Ezra, 81–84, 165n. 4  
   on ethnicity, 291  
   human ecology approach, 84  
   “Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific”, 83–84  
   social justice, 330  
 Parsons, Talcott, 468–469  
 Patriotism, 286, 303–304  
 Pearl Harbor, bombing of, 132  
 Pennsylvania  
   academic freedom, 74–75  
   hate groups and crimes, 75  
 People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, 429, 431  
*People v. Hall*, 286  
 Personal bias theory, 42  
 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), 389, 391, 393  
 Peterson, William, 72  
 Pew Political Typology, 63  
 Philippines, immigration, 135  
*Pilgrim’s Progress*, 249  
 Pine Ridge, 24, 26  
 Plato, 189  
 “Pledge of Allegiance”, 290, 304  
 Plessy, Homer, 456  
*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 149, 289, 456, 462  
 Plymouth Settlement (Massachusetts), 17  
 “Poem” (Johnson), 261  
 Political correctness, 68  
 Political power and labor market, 276  
 “The Politics of Stability” (Moynihan), 368  
 Poll taxes, 149  
 Popol Vuh, 28  
 Popper, Karl, 51  
 Popular culture, white racism and, 3–4, 115–129  
   black women’s roles, 125  
   forecasting, 125–126  
   historical background, 116–9  
   collectibles, 117–8



- drama, 118
- today, historical images, 118–9
- present-day, 119–25
  - advertising images, 120–1
  - film and television, 121–3
  - films, 122–4
- sexualized images of black men, 125
- Popular Science Monthly*, 83
- Postcards, racists artifacts, 117
- Post-traumatic stress disorder, 463
- Poverty
  - African Americans, 150, 152, 157, 207–8
  - culture of, 90–1, 294
  - war on poverty, 331, 369
- Powell, Colin, 247, 450
- Power
  - coloniality of, 356–60
  - social relations of, 13
- Pregnancy and smoking
  - health systems, race and ethnic differences, 208–9
- Prejudice, definition, 40
- PRI, 174, 179
- Price-Mars, Jean, 416
- Prison organizations, 395–402
  - corporate prisons, 400–402
  - defining characteristics, 375–376
  - incarceration rates, 396
  - population growth, 398
  - race, role of, 397–400
  - Raiford Prison, 242–243
  - transformation of prisons, 397–400
- Private property, 363
- Privatization, social institutions, 376–377, 404
- Problemas Agrícolas e Industriales de Mexico*, 180–181
- The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America* (Horowitz), 74
- Promoting Health: Intervention Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research*, 202
- Proposition 187, 167, 171, 187
- Proposition 200, 172, 187
- Protestantism, 82
- PRWORA, *see* Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)
- Pryor, Richard, 104
- Psychosocial explanations for health disparities, 200–202
- Pueblos Indígenas*, 30, 33
- Pueblos Indios*, 28
- Puerto Rican Americans
  - barrio, 90
  - infant mortality, 195
  - in labor market
    - restructuring, 271
- Puerto Rican Young Lords, 435
- Puerto Rico
  - whiteness, definition, 13
- “Quechuan” peoples, 27
- Queen Pen, 112
- Queueing process (race and ethnicity), *see* Labor market
- Quijano, Anibal, 349
- Quispes, Felipe, 32–33, 35
- Race
  - declining significance of, 3
  - inclusion and exclusion, 221
  - in labor market, 263–283
    - earnings, division of labor and, 265–268
    - employer practices, 269–273
    - worker strategies, 274–276
  - and language, 61–63
  - organizational understanding, need for, 375–377
- Race and ethnic relations, future of, 467–470
- Race differences
  - amygdala, function of, 50
  - cancer death rates, 54
  - and genetics, 198–200
  - health conditions, 93
  - health systems, 5, 191–218
  - marriage rates, 154
  - nigger, use of word, 107
  - socioeconomic circumstances, 94
  - test score gap, 93
  - unemployment, 55
  - wealth distribution, 54
- Race effect, 93
- Race First, 349
- Race neutral public policies, 58–59
- Racial advantage, structure and accumulation of, 57–59
- The Racial Basis of Civilization: A Critique of the Nordic Theory* (Henkins), 81
- Racial categories, classification, 11–13
- Racial democracy, 219–239
  - Brazil, 5, 219, 230
  - inclusion and exclusion, 220–226
  - multiculturalism, 226–229
  - and redistribution, 229–230
  - United States, racial inequality, 231–235
- Racial discrimination, *see* Discrimination
- Racial exploitation, 339
- Racial formations, 219
- Racial hegemony, 5, 319–342
  - anti-hegemonic movements, 5, 328–333
  - fair contractual agreements, 335–336
  - fair trade, 335–336
  - fair wages, 335–336
  - insurgency as strategy, 337–338
  - reparations as, 333–335
  - and violence, 336–337
- Brazil, 324
- England, 324–325
- extreme forms of, 339–340

- and globalization, 5, 319, 321, 327–328, 339
- and immigration, 327–328
- and industrial base, 324–328
- and military, 324–328
- and normalcy, claiming, 3220–323
- Russia, 326
- and social change, 323–324
- and social justice, 328–331, 334
- Sudan, 327
- United States, 324–325
- and whiteness, 10–11
- world economic remuneration and, 346
- Racial hierarchy, 13
- Racial identity, whiteness as, 1
- Racialized social system framework, 85
- Racial profiling
  - African Americans, 151
  - and “homeland security”, 299
- Racial projects, 13
- Racial stratification, 93, 361
- Racial theorization, 84–85
- Racism, 39–66; *see also* Discrimination; Global racism;
  - White racism; *specific groups*
  - accommodationist racists, 82
  - and African American families, 149
  - and Asian Americans, *see* Asian Americans
  - “blowback”, 42, 47
  - cognitive bias theory, 45–49
    - automaticity, 50–52
  - color-blind ideology, 55–56
  - and context, 52–56
    - intention, limited relevance, 54–55
    - unmotivated racial disparities, persistence of, 54
  - wealth distribution, imbalance, 54
- culture of poverty, 90–91
- denial of inequality, 91–93
- disaccumulation, 58
- disinvestment, 58
- early America, 288
- and historical capitalism, 351–356
- Hurricane Katrina aftermath, 445–446
- implicit bias, 42
- indices, demographic, 87–89
- indigenous peoples (Americas)
  - U.S. claims to sovereignty as, 20–23
- “inside the body” explanations, 52
- institutional, 60–61, 64, 150, 153
- and language, 55–66
- and law, 39
- liberal racists, 82
- limitation of significance of, 79–100
- mainstream surveys on racial attitudes, 85–87
- medical diagnoses, 52
- Nordic theory, 81
- personal bias theory, 42
- racial theorization, 84–85
- reality, racialized readings of, 93–94
- and social capital, 91–93
- and social cognition theory, 42–48
- sociology, racial considerations in establishment of, 80–84
- systemic racism, 320, 374, 429–430, 442
- as total social phenomenon, 8
- transparency, 59–61
- unconscious, 41–42, 59–61
- unintentional, 60
  - defined, 41
- wealth distribution, imbalance, 54
- and whiteness, 59–61
- white racism, 2–3, 67–78
- Raiford Prison, 242–243
- Rainbow Coalition, 347–348
- Raisin in the Sun* (Hansberry), 6, 244, 248–251
- Rape
  - of African American women, 149, 460–461
  - criminal justice system and victims, 73
- Reaganomics, 347
- Reagan, Ronald, 55, 206
  - welfare state, 369
- Real ID law, 172, 187
- Reality, racialized readings of, 93–94
- Reconstruction, 148, 223, 304
- Redistribution and racial democracy, 229–230
- Red Power, 227
- Reflexive race cognizance, 429
- Regensburg University, 447–448
- Rehearsal Room, 255
- Religion
  - Haitian Americans, 419–421
  - religious dogma, 81
- Reparations as anti-hegemonic movement, 333–335
- Reproduction
  - health systems, race and ethnic differences, 207–208
- Republican Party, 188, 224
- Requerimiento*, 21
- Resistance to globalization
  - Bolivia, 36
  - Ecuador, 32
  - Guatemala, 32
  - indigenous peoples (Americas), 31–33
  - Lakota Indians, 33
  - Nicaragua, 33
- Restructuring and labor market, 271
- Rice, Condoleeza, 103, 107
- Riggs, Marlon, 118
- “Right to Conquest”, 20, 21
- Riverside Church (NYC), 453
- Roberts, Benjamin, 456
- Robeson, Paul, 249
  - Black Popular Front, 345
  - Council of African Affairs, 366
- Rock, Chris, 104
- Rockeymoore, Maya, 206
- Roosevelt Administration
  - Federal Writers Project, 260

- Roosevelt, Franklin D.  
 and Japanese Americans, 132, 451  
 New Deal, 365, 386–387
- Roque, Frank, 142
- Rosewood (Florida), 461  
*Rosewood* (Singleton), 105
- Ross, Edward Allsworth, 82
- Roumain, Jacques, 416
- Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, 256
- Rubios, Palacios, 20n. 10
- Rural Legal Foundation of California, 179
- Russian Jews and definition of whiteness, 12
- Russia, racial hegemony, 326
- Rutgers University, 298
- Rwanda, 449
- Salinas de Gortari, Carlos, 177, 183
- Samora, Julian, 174, 183
- San Andreas accords, 34
- Sanchez, Loretta, 184
- Sandinistas, 27, 33
- San Francisco  
 Chinese immigrants, 269  
*San Francisco Chronicle*, 139
- Schengen Agreement, 165n. 4, 167
- Schneider, Alan, 243
- Schools, *see* Educational organizations
- Schwazernegger Arnold, 187, 188
- Scientific culture, 352
- Second Reconstruction, 293, 344
- Segregation, *see also* Segregation (Jim Crow laws)  
 Mexican Americans, 171  
 occupational, 266–268
- Segregation (Jim Crow laws), 8, 455–465  
 Black Codes, 455–456  
 collectibles, racist, 117–118  
 education, 458  
 expulsion/property loss, 461–462  
 housing markets, 58  
 implementation of legal segregation laws, 456–457  
 indices, demographic, 87  
 as institutional discrimination, 67  
 narratives  
 interview data, 457  
 lynchings, 459–461  
 property loss, 461  
 rape, 460  
 resistance to legal segregation, 462  
 resistance to, 462  
 unmeasured, 89  
 violence, 458  
 long-term effects, 463  
 lynchings, 8, 149, 223, 458–461  
 rape, 149, 460–461
- SEI, *see* Socioeconomic index (SEI)
- Selective race cognizance, 429
- Self-determination, 27
- Sensenbrenner, James, 172, 186, 187
- The Sentencing Project, 395
- “Separate but equal” statute, 149
- September 11, 2005, 102  
 Arab-Americans, discrimination against since, 13  
 and borders, 161–163, 168, 185, 186  
 distribution of funds following, 304  
 memorial service, 311  
 silence, legislation following, 74
- Sexual harassment, defined, 75
- Sexualized images of black men, 125
- Shakespeare, William, 6  
*The Merchant of Venice*, 246  
*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 256  
*Much Ado about Nothing*, 246  
*Othello*, 6, 244–247  
*Twelfth Night*, 256  
*What You Will*, 256  
*As You Like It*, 256
- Shills, Edward, 330
- Silence regarding institutional discrimination  
 incentives for, 71–73  
 mandating, 74–75
- “Silent invasion”  
 international migration (Mexicans), 176–179
- Similarity index, 87–88
- Simpson, OJ, 4, 105, 131
- Sinclair, April, 261
- Single-parent households  
 African Americans, 153–156  
 single mothers, 388–389
- Singleton, John, 105
- “Sioux” agencies, 25
- Sioux Nation of Indians, 22, 25
- Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (Fugard), 6, 254–257
- Skin Heads, 68, 75
- Skin shade, effect on economic outcome, 270
- Slavery  
 and African American families, 145–147  
 indigenous peoples (Americas)  
 racial construction of Indians and blacks  
 (1486–1686), 15–19  
 romanticizing in popular culture, 119  
 slave diaries, 260
- Small, Albion, 82
- Smith, Adam, 81, 401
- Smith, Benjamin, 142
- Smoking  
 and pregnancy, 208–209  
 race and ethnic differences, 196
- Smythe, Hugh, 456
- SNCC, *see* Student Nonviolent Coordinating  
 Committee (SNCC)
- Social behavior, 92–93
- Social capital, 91–93  
 and inequality, 91–93, 234–235
- Social change and racial hegemony, 323–324

- Social cognition theory, *see also* Cognitive bias theory  
 and racism, 42–48
- Social Darwinism, 231
- Social differences, health systems, 5, 191–218
- Social Gospel movement, 81, 82
- Social institutions, 6–7, 373–409  
 educational organizations, *see* Educational organizations  
 and families, 155  
 organizational understanding, need for, 375–377  
 prison organizations, *see* Prison organizations  
 privatization, 376–377, 404  
 racialized social system, 374–375  
 systemic racism, 374  
 theoretical framework, 374–377  
 welfare organizations, *see* Welfare organizations
- Social justice and racial hegemony, 328–331, 334
- Social networks, 92  
 in labor market, 273
- “Social problems”, 71
- Social science movement, 81
- Social system, racialized, 374–375
- Socioeconomic conditions  
 Asian Americans, 133–135, 138  
 Cambodian Americans, 135  
 Chinese Americans, 135  
 Japanese Americans, 134  
 Korean Americans, 135  
 Pacific Islander Americans, 134, 135  
 race differences, 94  
 Vietnamese Americans, 135
- Socioeconomic index (SEI), 87–88
- Sociology, racial considerations in establishment of, 80–84
- Socrates, 189
- Sodhi, Balbir Singh, 142
- Soft skills, employer demand for, 272–273
- Sojourner Syndrome, 208
- Solana, Fernando, 177
- “A Song in the Front Yard” (Brooks), 261
- Song of the South* (film), 125–126
- Souls of Black Folk* (Dubois), 348
- South Africa  
 equal protection clause, 65
- Southern Poverty Law Center, 75
- Sovereignty, 165  
 American Indians, *see* American Indians  
 indigenous peoples (Americas), 31
- Soviet Union, collapse of, 447
- The Space (Cape Town), 254
- Spain, inquisition, 15–16n. 1
- Spelling, Margaret, 383
- Splash Mountain, 125–126
- Stackolee, 112
- Standing Rock “Nation”, 25
- “Star-Spangled Banner”, 290, 304
- “Statement of Vision toward the Next 500 Years” (Lakota Indians), 27
- State University of New York at Binghamton Working Group on Coloniality, 344, 349
- “Status Symbol” (Evans), 261
- Stephanson, Karl, 200
- Stereotypes  
 Asian Americans, 137–138  
 Aunt Jemima, 117  
 black women’s roles, 125  
 Caribbean, 412–413  
 collectibles, racist, 117–118  
*criminal-blackman*, 125  
 criminals, Black men as, 154  
 Halloween masks, 118  
 “mammy” collectibles, 117, 119  
 postcards, 117  
 toys, 117–118  
 watermelons, 117
- “Street” families, 90–91
- Street, Paul, 306
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), 434, 435
- Student’s Academic Bill of Rights, 74–75
- Sudan, racial hegemony, 327
- Sumner, William Graham, 82–83
- SUNY-Binghamton  
 anti-Asian violence, 141
- Supreme Court, 2; *see also specific decision*  
 Civil Rights Act of 1875, 149  
 discrimination, theory of, 44  
 intent doctrine, 40–41, 51  
 abandonment of, 56  
 and Mexico politics, 184–185  
 “perpetrator perspective” of, 47  
 personal bias theory, 41  
 and racial discrimination, 41–42  
 proof of, 75  
 racism, cases, 39  
 social perception, understanding of, 44  
 sovereignty over Native Nations, 23  
 Thind case, 12
- Surveys  
 Asian Americans  
 discrimination, perceptions, 138–140  
 stereotyping, 137–138  
 mainstream surveys on racial attitudes, 85–87  
 National Agricultural Workers Survey, 181
- Sylvester, David, 102
- “Sylvester’s Dying Bed” (Hughes), 259
- Symbolic violence, 3, 110–111
- Systemic racism, 320, 374, 429–430, 442
- Taft Hartley Act, 365
- Taino-Arawak peoples, 16–17
- TANF, *see* Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

- Technology, globalization, 321
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), 389–390
- declining rolls, 394
  - reauthorization of, 395
  - sanctions, 390–391
    - welfare diversion policies, 391
    - work-first policies, 390
- Test score gap, 93
- Tetonwon-Sioux, 21, 25
- Texas
- Mexican immigrants, 174, 183, 188
  - Mexican schools, 379
  - public education, 383–384
    - funding, 381
- Theater as mirror of race, ethnicity and place, 6, 241–261
- Black Voices*, 244, 255, 257–261
  - Fences* (Wilson), 244, 250–254
  - Othello*, 244–247
  - Raisin in the Sun*, 6, 244, 248–251
  - Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (Fugard), 254–257
  - Waiting for Godot*, 242–243
- Theorization of racism, 84–85
- Thien Ly, 142
- Thind, Bhagat Singh, 12
- Think Blood*, 258–259
- Thirteenth Amendment, 148, 222
- Thomas v. Eastman Kodak Co.*, 47
- Thompson-Miller, Ruth, 455–465
- The Threepenny Opera* (Brecht and Weil), 257
- Till, Emmett, 343
- Time Magazine*, 162, 344, 346
- Tohono O'odham*, 34
- Toomer, Jean, 259
- Toowoomba Sports Ground (Australia), 102
- Toussaint L'Ouverture, François Dominique, 414
- The Township Plays* (Walder), 255
- Toys, racists artifacts, 117–118
- Trail of Tears, 36, 288
- Train of Broken Treaties, 24
- Transformative love, 431
- Transnationalism
- Haitian Americans, 415–416, 424
    - citizenship and, 419
    - generations and, 416–418
    - health and, 421
    - religion and, 419–421
    - utilization of services, 421–422
- Transparency, 59–61
- Treaties Statute of 1871, 22
- Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo, 286
- “Treaty of Rome” (1952), 167
- Treaty with the Sioux Nation of Indians (1868), 25
- Troupe, Quincy, 260
- Truth, Sojourner, 203–204, 258
- T-shirts, racist stereotypes, 120, 127
- Ture, Kwame, 366
- Turner, Nat, 432
- Tuskegee Institute, 223, 433
- Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare), 256
- Tyler, John, 118
- Tzotzil* communities, 35
- Uncle Remus, 125–126
- Uncle Tom's Cabin* (film), 119
- Unconscious discrimination, 41–42, 60–61
- U.N. Convention for the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, 185
- Understanding Interracial Unity* (Thomas), 432
- Unemployment
- African Americans, 150
  - race and ethnic differences, 55, 266
- Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*, 205
- UNIA, 434
- Uniform Crime Report, 75
- Unintentional discrimination, 56–57, 63–64
- Unintentional racism, 60
- defined, 41
- United Nations
- Convention for the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, 185
  - Security Council, 449
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 163, 182
- United States, *see also* America; *specific topics*
- “American,” defined, 302, 307
  - American Dream, 6, 285, 304–306
  - assimilation, 313–314
  - British settlers, 287, 362
  - development of nation, 286–294
    - as empire, 307–310
  - equal opportunity, 314
  - founding principles, 295–299
  - national identity, 292, 309, 310
  - patriotism, 303–304
  - racial hegemony, 324–325
  - racial inequality, 231–235
    - consequences of, 232–235
    - income, 232
    - social problems, analysis of, 231–232
    - wealth, 232
  - symbols of an “American”, 299–304
    - patriotism, 303–304
    - wealth, 296
- United States and Carreras de Velazco in Mexico* (Hoffman), 187
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 163, 182
- Universalism, 354
- Urban Institute, 390, 396
- Urbanization, African American families, 149–150
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 446

- U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 396
- U.S. Census  
 definitions of whiteness, 11–13
- U.S. Congress  
 children in military, 296  
 GAO, 178–179
- U.S. Constitution, 74
- U.S. Department of Defense, 297
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), 192, 394  
 cardiovascular disease (CVD), 201  
*Healthy People 2014*, 192–193
- U.S. Department of Justice, 35
- U.S. Department of Labor, 172, 181  
 Mexican immigrants, 166, 187  
 undocumented immigrants, 188
- USDHHS, *see* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS)
- U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), 176
- U.S. labor market, *see* Labor market
- U.S. News and World Report*, 72
- U.S. Secretary of Labor, 167
- Utilitarianism, 401
- Utilization of services
- Haitian Americans, 421–422
- Vera, Herná, 467–470
- A Very Haitian Story* (Danticat), 422–423
- Vesey, Denmark, 432
- Vietnamese Americans  
 anti-Asian violence, 142  
 discrimination, 138  
 intermarriage, 136  
 socioeconomic conditions, 135  
 Vietnam War, treatment during, 132
- Vietnam War  
 Vietnamese Americans, treatment during, 132
- Violence  
 against African Americans (1879–1960), 149  
 and anti-hegemonic movements, 336–337  
 Asian-Americans, anti-Asian violence, 140–142  
 global racism, 443, 450–453  
 Jim Crow era, 459–461  
 long-term effects, 463  
 lynchings, 8, 149, 223, 458–461  
 rape, 149, 460–461  
 symbolic, 3, 110–111
- Visas  
 temporary visa programs, Mexican immigrants, 186
- Voting  
 African Americans, 223, 336–337  
 age of voters, 296  
 Freedom Summer, 436
- Voting Rights Act of 1965, 223, 296, 336, 366
- Wagner Labor Act of 1935, 169
- Waiting for Godot* (Beckett), 242–243
- Walder, Dennis, 255
- Walker, Alice, 260
- Wallace, George, 171
- Waller, Fats, 259
- Wall Street Journal*, 448
- Ward, Frank Lester, 82
- War on poverty, 331, 369, 387–388
- War on terrorism, 331
- Washington, Booker T., 83, 433, 434
- Washington, George, 35
- The Washington Post*, 48, 138, 139, 298, 306
- Washington v. Davis*, 2, 40
- Watermelons, racist stereotypes, 117
- Wealth  
 distribution, imbalance, 54  
 polarization of, 296  
 racial inequality, 232
- We Are Not What W, seem* (Bush), 434
- Weber, Max, 430
- Webster, Noah, 289
- Weil, Kurt, 257
- Welfare organizations, 385–395  
 caseworkers and clients, 391–393  
 defining characteristics, 375–376  
 New Deal, 386–387  
 reform  
 debates, pre-0–0, 388–389  
 12000, 389–390  
 understanding of, 393–395  
 social support, early forms, 386
- TANF, 389–390  
 declining rolls, 394  
 reauthorization of, 395  
 sanctions, 390–391  
 welfare diversion policies, 391  
 work-first policies, 390  
 war on poverty, 331, 369, 387–388
- Wen Ho Lee, 131
- “We Real Cool” (Brooks), 261
- West, Kanye, 102–103
- What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (Sumner), 83
- “What to the Slave is Your Fourth of July” (Douglass), 286
- What You Will* (Shakespeare), 256
- White, Armond, 123
- “White man’s burden”, 11
- Whiteness, 1, 9–14, 358  
 and American identity, 309–310  
 Asia, 9  
 “being American,” equation with, 6  
 definition, 9–10  
 global identities, 13  
 social definition, 12  
 U.S. Census, 11–13  
 hegemony, 10–11  
 privilege and, 13  
 racial stratification and, 13

- and racism, 59–61
- “Whitening” thesis
  - Asian Americans, 137–140
- White on Arrival (WOA), 12
- White racism, 2–3, 67–78
  - culture of poverty, 90–91
  - denial of inequality, 91–93
  - indices, demographic, 87–89
  - limitation of significance of, 79–100
  - mainstream surveys on racial attitudes, 85–87
  - Nordic theory, 81
  - popular culture and, 3–4, 115–129
    - advertising images, 120–121
    - collectibles, 117–118
    - drama, 118
    - film and television, 121–123
    - films, 122–124
    - forecasting, 125–126
    - historical background, 116–119
    - present-day, 119–125
    - today, historical images, 118–119
  - racial theorization, 84–85
  - reality, racialized readings of, 93–94
  - and social capital, 91–93
  - sociology, racial considerations in establishment
    - of, 80–84
- “White republic”, 225
- White, Ronald C., 82
- White supremacy, legislated basis of, 223
- White, Walter, 366
- WHO, *see* World Health Organization (WHO)
- Will, George, 369
- Willis, Mark, 445
- Wilson, August, 6, 244, 250–254
- Wilson, Pete, 171, 187
- Wilson, William Julius, 3, 79
- Winfrey, Oprah, 311
- Women
  - African Americans
    - perceived dominance over men, 153
    - rape, 149, 460–461
  - Asian Americans
    - earnings, 134
    - expression, 201
    - in labor market
      - collective bargaining, 276
      - vision of labor and earnings, race and ethnic differences, 266–268
      - structuring, 271
      - ft skills, employer demand for, 273
    - popular culture, white racism and
      - lack women’s roles, 125
- Won Joon Yoon, 142
- Worcester v. Georgia*, 21
- Words, social function, 3, 101–114
- Work, Clemens P., 74
- Worker strategies in labor market, 274–276
- Work-first policies, 390
- Working Group on Coloniality, 344, 349
- World Health Organization (WHO), 210–211
- World system, 356–360
  - modern, 360–364
- World War I
  - African American migration, 223
  - immigrants, 179
- World War II
  - African American migration, 223
  - chemical weapons, 444
  - Chinese Americans, treatment, 132
  - GI Bill, 277
  - Japanese Americans, treatment, 4, 131, 132, 139
  - Mexican population, 172–173
  - Nazis, 225, 354, 356
  - power of U.S. after, 346
  - U.S. entry, 170
  - world economy following, 343
- Wounded Knee, 22, 24, 36
- Wright, Erik O., 94
- Wright, Richard, 258, 260
  - Black Poplar Front, 345
- Yale University, 451
- “Yellow peril” slur, 132
- Zapatismo*, 34
- Zapatistas, 27, 30, 31, 33, 35
  - insurgency, 337–338
  - Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, 34
- Zapotecs, 32
- Zedillo, Ernesto, 177, 179, 182
- “Z effect”, 257
- Zimbabwe, 362