Mapping Racial Attitudes at the Century's End: Has the Color Line Vanished or Merely Reconfigured?

Lawrence Bobo
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lbobo@wjh.harvard.edu

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"The color-line is not static; it bends and buckles and sometimes breaks."

--St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton,
Black Metropolis; A Study of Negro Life
In a Northern City, 1945

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade assessments of racial an ethnic relations in the U.S. have increasingly polarized. Early in this decade essayist and political scientist Andrew Hacker declared: "A huge racial chasm remains, and there are few signs that the coming century will see it closed" (1992, p. 219). Civil rights activist and legal scholar Derrick Bell offered the bleak analysis that "racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society" (1992, p. ix).[1][2] These claims, however, only seemed to set the stage for even more dramatic declarations. Thus, in 1996 Hispanic legal scholar Richard Delgado published a book provocatively entitled *The Coming Race War?.- And Other Apocalytic Tales of America After Affirmative Action and Welfare* (Delgado 1996). Not to be outdone, Black columnist Carl Rowan published *The Coming Race War in America.- A Wake-Up Call* (Rowan 1996). A reaction seemed inevitable. Thus, in 1997 conservative analysts Stephan and Abigail Thernstrorn argued that "The foundation of progress for many blacks is no longer fragile. Progress is real and solid" (p. 535). This position was echoed by the eminent historical sociologist Orlando Patterson who maintained that "Being Afro-American is no longer a significant obstacle to participation in the public life of the nation. What is more, Afro-Americans have also become full members of what may be called the nation's moral community and cultural life" (1997, p.17). And journalist

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[1] It is worth nothing that the Los Angeles riots of 1992 did not serve as the inspiration for either Hacker's or Bell's book. For example, neither book includes an index entry for "Rodney King." Hence, trends and events quite apart from this dramatic uprising prompted these two analysts.

Jim Sleeper goes so far as to deride the sort of analyses offered by those such as Hacker, Bell, Rowan, Delgado, and others as so much "Liberal racism" (1997).

The empirical social science literature examining racial attitudes and relations is no less divided. Sociologists Joe Feagin recently argued that: "The basic racial problem in the United states is white racism. White racism is a social disease that afflicts the minds, emotions, behaviors, and institutions of white Americans. White racism pervades every nook and cranny of U. S. society" (1997, p. 29). Political psychologist David Sears developed a densely argued and analytically detailed assessment of the claim that race- neutral political values, as opposed to anti-black animus, lay at the base of many white Americans discontent with social policies targeted on the basis of race. After examining data from three national surveys and one Los Angeles based survey he and his colleagues concluded: the strength of the findings here will lay to rest the notion that white opposition to racially targeted policies is primarily motivated by nonracial considerations, or that any racially based motivation is limited to a few poorly educated ethnocentrics or believers in white supremacy. Racism is considerably more widespread in American society than that, it cannot be reduced to the older forms of prejudice familiar in the pre-civil rights era, and it continues to have quite pervasive effects. It is not a pleasant aspect of our society, but it is not one that should be swept under the carpet, either (Sears et al., 1997, p. 49). Others vehemently disagree. This conclusion is directly antithetical to that reached by Sniderman and Carmines (1997). On the basis of a series of experiments embedded in large scale surveys examining whites' views on affirmative action, they argued that: "It is simply wrong to suppose that racial prejudice is a primary source of oposition to affirmative action ... racism turns out to be just one of a string of explanations offered for opposition to affirmative action that don't cash out" (Sniderman and Carmines 1997, p.144). Likewise, some analysts of trend data have also ventured broad generalizations about a decline in racism. Thus, according to public opinion researchers Niemi, Mueller and Smith: "Without ignoring real signs of enduring racism, it is still

fair to conclude thatAmerica has been successfully struggling to resolve its Dilemma and that equality has been gaining in ascendancy over racism" (1989, p. 168).

And so the battle is joined. This great debate, whether waged at the level of public intellectuals or between empirical social scientists, raises serious questions about race attitudes and relations, as well as about the success and health of American democracy, as we near the century's conclusion. My task, in a sense, is to answer the question of whether America is moving toward becoming a genuinely "color-blind" society or remains a society deeply polarized by race. I approach this task as a social scientist who has long studied the social psychology of race in America. As is by now obvious, studies of racial attitudes in the U.S. present a difficult puzzle. On the one hand, several recent studies emphasize the steadily improving racial attitudes of white Americans, especially in terms of their attitudes toward African Americans. These attitudinal trends are reinforced by many more tangible indicators, most notably the size, relative security, and potentially growing influence of the black middle class. On the other hand, there is evidence of persistent negative stereotyping of racial minorities, evidence of widely divergent views of the extent and importance of racial discrimination to modem race relations, and evidence of deepening feelings of alienation among black Americans. These more pessimistic attitudinal trends are reinforced by such tangible indicators as the persistent problem of racial segregation of neighborhoods and schools, discrimination in access to housing and employment, innumerable everyday acts of racial bias and numerous signs of the gulf in perception that often separates black and white Americans.

The main empirical assessment part of this chapter focuses on five aspects of the research on racial attitudes: (1) the predominant and important trend toward positive change concerning the goals of integration and equal treatment; (2) the evident difficulty of moving from these goals to concrete support for change in social policy and individual living conditions; (3) the problem of persistent stereotyping; (4) the differing views of racial discrimination; and (5) the possible deepening of black alienation. Wherever possible I emphasize trends. It is essential to have a

sense of whether and how much things have changed if we are to make sense of where we stand today or might head in the future. Although my analysis will emphasize what we know about the views of white Americans toward African Americans, I will cast a multiracial scope at several important points.

By way of foreshadowing what is to come let me say that we now have a deeply rooted national consensus on the ideals of racial equality and integration. These high ideals founder on racial differences in preferred levels of interaction; they founder on sharp racial differences in beliefs about racial discrimination, they founder on the persistence of negative racial stereotypes; and they result in policy stagnation and mutual misunderstanding. Although America has turned away from Jim Crow racism, it heads into an uncertain future. With specific regard to the black-white divide, Pulitzer prize winning journalist David Shipler comes as close as anyone has to understanding the special character of this cleavage when he wrote:

But the fountainhead of injustice has been located between blacks and whites, and that legacy remains the country's most potent symbol of shame. Nothing tests the nation, or takes the measure of its decency, quite like the rift between black and white .... I have sought and found common denominators at a level of attitude that transcend boundaries of place. Everywhere I have looked, I have seen a country where blacks and whites are strangers to each other (1997, p. x).

Before preceding it will be useful to define several terms, specifically, it seems essentially to provide some anchorage for the terms race and ethnicity, attitude, prejudice, and racism. There is no settled consensus on how to define and use the terms race and ethnicity (Petersen 198 1; Alba 1992). Common use tends to understand race as biologically-based differences between human social groups, differences that are typically observable in terms of skin color, hair texture, eye shape and other physical attributes. Ethnicity tends to be understood in more cultural terms, pertaining to such factors as language, religion, and nationality. For most

social scientists, including this chapter, the critical aspect of concepts of race and ethnicity is that both are fundamentally social constructions (Omi and Winant 1985; Stone 1985; See and Wilson 1989). Although racial distinctions often result in sharper and more persistent barriers compared to ethnic distinctions this is not invariably the case and both share elements of presumed common descent or ascriptive inheritance. As a result, I conceive of race as a special case of an ethnic distinction.[3] Racial and ethnic categories and labels vary over time and place in both meaning and salience. I use the terms "white" or "Euro-American", "black" or "African American," "Asian," or "Asian American," and "Hispanic," "Hispanic American," or "Latino." It is important to emphasize that each of these broad social categories may conceal important subgroup differences defined along lines of nativity, national origin, class, gender, and other important dimensions.

Social psychologists have long understood attitudes as involving "a favorable orunfavorable evaluation of an object" (Schuman 1995, p. 68). In the present case, the attitude objects are racial and ethnic groups and their attributes, aspects of relations between groups, and preferences regarding public policies relevant to race, close and personal contact, and assessments of the character of intergroup relations.[4] Attitudes are important guides to likely patterns of social behavior, a point to which I return below.

Racial attitudes, however, are not automatically indicia of racial prejudice or of racism. Both prejudice and racism are themselves complex, internally differentiated concepts. As a result, throughout all that follows below, it would be inappropriate to interpret patterns for a single racial

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[3] Some have argued vigorously for discontinuing to use the term race. An early forceful proponent of this position was Ashley Montagu and Gordon Allport (1954) also shared this belief. More recent advocacy for skepticism about the use of the term race comes from the Thernstroms (1997) and from Patterson (1997). 1 retain the term here for two reasons. First, it still comports with prevailing social usage and understanding. And since the core mission here is to convey the state of public opinion on these matters it constitutes something of distraction to insist on a vocabulary that distorts what much of the mass public thinks. Second, as Petersen explained very eloquently: "Whether the removal of a word would also eradicate group antipathies is doubtful; one suspects that with another classification Jews and Gypsies would have been murdered just as beastially. In any case, deleting the term does not remove the need for some designation" (1981, p. 7). Ironically, the fear and hesitation regarding the term race has the perverse effect of reaffirming the misplaced assumption of genuine biological underpinnings for "racial" distinctions.

3 We thus rely on a multidimensional conception of racial and ethnic attitudes (Jackman 1977; Bobo 1983). While some social scientists still defend the utility of thinking of racial attitudes as arrayed along a single prejudice to tolerance continuum (Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn 1993), in practice most analysts acknowledge the utility of conceptualizing racial attitudes has having several broad conceptual types. To be sure, some critics argue that examinations of racial attitudes are intrinsically static and destined simply to show declining prejudice (Bonilla-Silva 1996; Steinberg 1998). This view is easily refuted once one adopts a

attitude question, or even for major conceptual groupings, as indicating a fundamental or more global change in the level of either prejudice or racism. Such generalizations and interpretations should be made with great caution since social phenomena may remain powerfully "racialized" even as one way of understanding prejudice or racism is undergoing major change (Bonilla-Silva 1996). Social psychologist Thomas F. Pettigrew suggested that prejudice involved "irrationally based negative attitudes against certain ethnic groups and their members" (1981, p. 2) Prejudice thus involved an "antipathy accompanied by a faculty generalization" (Pettigrew 198 1, p. 3). Sociologists Katherine O'Sullivan See and William Julius Wilson suggest that the term prejudice be reserved for the "attitudinal dimension

of intergroup relations, to the processes of stereotyping and aversion that may persist

even in the face of countervailing evidence" (1989, p. 227). Prejudice is thus distinct from

racism. They suggested that "racism is a more complex belief system that prescribes and

legitimates a minority group's or an out-group's subordination by claiming that the group

is either biogenetically or culturally inferior. ...There are two components to

racism that are not present in prejudice: an ideology that justifies social avoidance and

domination by reference to the 'unalterable' characteristics of particular groups and a

set of norms that prescribe differential treatment for these groups" (See and Wilson 1989, p.

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multidimensional framework and devotes even the most cursory attention to studies of change over time (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo and Krysan 1997).

(Pettigrew 198 1; Gaertner and Dovidio 1986; Jones 1988; Sears 1988), there is also good reason to try to maintain a distinction between the two. First, there is value in clearly differentiating individual and societal levels of analysis. Using the term prejudice to speak to the individual level and racism to speak to the cultural and societal levels helps to maintain greater conceptual clarity. Second, in a larger context where the term racism has become heavily loaded with potential to alienate as well as to stigmatize and given that it has often been used carelessly, there is some value to insisting on delimited and careful use of the term.

II. MAJOR PATTERNS IN RACIAL ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

A. New Principles of Equality and Integration: The single clearest trend in studies of racial attitudes has involved a steady and sweeping movement toward endorsing the principles of racial equality and integration. The data arrayed in figures 1, 2, and 3 show much of this trend. When major national assessments of racial attitudes were first conducted in the 1940s, clear majorities of White Americans advocated that we be a society that segregated its schools (e.g., Same Schools, Figure 1), neighborhoods (e.g., Residential Choice, Figure 2), and public transportation, that practiced job discrimination against African Americans (e.g., Equal Jobs, Figure 3), and that drew a sharp line against the possibility of mixed or interracial marriages. Thus, in the early 1940s 68%, of white Americans expressed the view that Black and White school children should go so separate schools, 54% felt that public transportation should be segregated, and 54% felt that Whites should receive preference over blacks in access to jobs. By the early 1960s each of these attitudes had declined substantially. So much so that the questions on public transportation and access to jobs were dropped from national surveys in the early 1970s: virtually all white Americans endorsed the idea that transportation should be integrated and that access to jobs should be equal without regard to race. The issue of integrated schools

remained more divided. However, the trend here has been equally steady. Thus, by 1995 fully 96% of White Americans expressed the view that White and Black school children should go to the same schools.

Three points about this transformation of basic principles or norms that should guide race relations bear noting. First, there is some variation across domains of life in the degree of endorsement of the principle of racial equality and integration. In general, the more public and impersonal the arena, the greater the evidence of the movement toward endorsing ideals of integration and equality. Thus, support for unconstrained access to housing for blacks has also undergone tremendous positive change, but still lags behind the case of schools or jobs. More telling, willingness to allow racially mixed marriages still encounters some resistance, with I in 5 whites as recently as 1990 supporting laws that would ban such marriage. And an even higher fraction as the figure shows, personally disapproving of such marriages (see Figure 4).

Second, African Americans have long rejected segregation. Although the available pool of data for tracing long-term trends in the views of African-Americans is much more limited than that for Whites, it is clear that the Black population has overwhelming favored integrated schools and neighborhoods and desired equal access to employment opportunity. And blacks have long been less likely than whites to object to racially mixed marriages, presumably because such strictures were viewed as an element in a system of race-based oppression.

Third, the positive trend among whites on these principles across the domains of schools, public transportation, jobs, housing, politics, and even intermarriage is steady and unabated. Despite intense discussion of a possible "racial backlash" in the 1960s in response to black protests, or in the 1970s in response to school busing efforts and the implementation of affirmative action, or even more recently in the wake of events such as

the riots in Los Angeles in 1992, the support for principles of racial equality and integration has been sweeping and robust. So much so, that it is reasonable to describe it as a change in fundamental norms with regard to race.

B. Complexity of Changing How We Live and What We Want Government to Do: Unfortunately, it is not possible to infer from the tremendous positive change on principles of equality and integration that either public policy or the texture of day-to-day life for most Americans would quickly come to mirror this apparent consensus on ideals. Consider first the issue of integrating neighborhoods and schools. It is clear that numbers matter, as the figure shows (see Figures I and 2). When surveys ask whites about their willingness to live in integrated areas or to send their children to integrated schools, as the proportion of blacks rises the willingness to enter a situations falls. Race is thus not irrelevant to most whites as they consider personal involvement in concrete situations.Surveys have documented a steady increase in the openness to both residential and school integration. So much so, that almost no whites object to having a black neighbor or to sending their own children to an integrated school. But objections rise considerable as the number of Black students grows (e.g., compare trends for Few to Half to Most, Figure 1).

The meaning of integration also differs for blacks and whites. It is clear that most whites prefer to live in overwhelmingly white neighborhoods even though open to having a small number of blacks in their neighborhood. Blacks prefer to be present in substantial numbers, numbers large enough to generate discomfort in the eyes of most whites and impractical on a large scale basis: it is not possible, given differences in population size, for all blacks to live in a neighborhood that is at least half black.

With respect to public policy issues, we are all aware there have been longstanding debates over equal opportunity policies and affirmative action. The trend data suggest that there is a significant substantive division in opinion. Programs that are

compensatory in nature--that aim to equip minorities to be more effective competitors or that engages in special outreach and recruitment efforts--are reasonably popular. Policies that call for explicit racial preferences have long been unpopular, with the use of quotas rejected by whites and blacks alike.

There is, however, a sharp divergence of opinion about affirmative action type policies by race as well. The next two figures make just this point, drawing on data from surveys conducted in Los Angeles (Figures 5 and 6). Blacks but also Latinos tend tosupport affirmative action type policies whether aimed at improving training and competitive resources of minority group members or calling for "special preferences" in hiring and promotion. But a majority of Whites support the more compensatory policies while resisting strongly "preferential" policies.

C. Persistent Negative Stereotyping: A major piece of the puzzle behind the limits to integration and to social policy with respect to race lies in the problem of anti-minority, especially anti-Black stereotypes. There is evidence that negative racial stereotypes of minority groups, especially of Blacks and Latinos, remain common among Whites. This finding contradicts the common assumption that people will not openly express negative views of blacks in response to survey questions. As Sniderman and Carmines put it: "It is simply wrong to suppose that there is a shortage of white Americans willing to say, publicly, something overtly negative about black Americans" (1997, p. 63). There is also evidence that minority groups may also stereotype one another, though the story here is a good deal more complicated.

It is important to clarify what is meant by a stereotype. Stereotypes are now commonly defined as "a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of the members of a particular social category" or as "a set of cognitions that specify the personal qualities, especially personality traits, of members of an ethnic group" (Ashmore and Del Boca 1981, p. 13). Or as Hamilton and Trolier put it, stereotypes are "cognitive structures that contain the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about human groups" (1986, p. 133). This latter amplification on the definition underscores that stereotypes involve assumptions or expectations about the likely capacities and

behaviors of members of a social group. Such expectations have a strong potential to influence behavior toward and interaction with members of the stereotyped social group.

At one time, the notion of stereotype also denoted beliefs about members of a minority group that were categorical or extreme, negative in valence, rigidly held, and as a consequence of these features, inherently bad (see Ashmore and Del Boca 1981; Jackman 1994). Modem social scientists, however, limit the meaning of the stereotype concept to the ideas or perceptions about groups, without assuming these ideas are necessarily categorical, negative, rigid or even bad (Ashmore and Del Boca 1981;Stephan 1985). As a matter of definition it is better to think of stereotypes much like any other cognition. Whether these other traditionally assumed characteristics exist is a matter for empirical assessment.

Social psychologists commonly draw a distinction between cultural stereotypes and personal stereotypes or personal beliefs. Cultural stereotypes refer to widely shared ideas about members of particular racial or ethnic group (Devine 1989; Devine and Elliot 1995). Any particular individual, while almost certainly aware of the broad cultural stereotype about a salient racial or ethnic groups, need not personally accept or adhere to the stereotype. Hence, it is of both analytical and (as we shall argue) practical importance to recognize the distinction. Stereotypes are generally understood to have several sources or origins (see Pettigrew 1981; Duckitt 1992; Brown 1995). Stereotypes may have a social learning basis, such as socialization into a particular culture or other direct and vicarious social experiences (i.e., through the media) with members of particular racial or ethnic group; they may have a motivational basis in some externality or instrumental consideration (i.e., it is easier to exploit and deny rights to those one perceives as inferior) or in a value or personality attribute of the individual (i.e., those with strongly ethnocentric, intolerant, or authoritarian outlooks are usually found to hold more negative stereotypes of minority groups members); and they may have a basis in cognitive biases in perception and information processing (i.e., rare or infrequently occurring phenomena, especially if given a strongly negative evaluation, can assume

unwarranted prominence in memory, such as a perception of minority group members as prone to crime and violence). After a long period of inattention, survey researchers began to focus attention on racial stereotypes following the work of Mary Jackman. Beginning with Jackman (Jackman and Senter 1980 and 1983; Jackman 1994), several major social surveys over the past two decades have showed that negative stereotypes of racial and ethnic minorities, especially involving whites views of African Americans, remain widespread (Smith 1990; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Bobo and Kluegel 1993 and 1997). In part, this resurgence of interest reflected a move to different ways of measuring stereotypes. Bi-polar trait rating or other means of expressing relative judgments replaced previous reliance on categorical agree or disagree statements. In part, this resurgence of interest reflected a perception that racial stereotypes had, in fact, changed in form of expression to a more qualified nature, which the methodological innovation allowed researchers to tap.

Gauging the exact level of negative stereotyping is not an easy task. One relatively conservative estimate is offered by Sniderman Piazza who maintain that:

> Notwithstanding the cliche that whites will not openly endorse negative racial stereotypes for fear of appearing to be racist, large numbers of them-rarely less than one in every five and sometimes as many as one out of every two-agreewith frankly negative characterizations of blacks, particularly characterizations of blacks as irresponsible and as failing to work hard and to make a genuine effort to deal with their problems on their own (1993, p. 12).

This accounting is complicated a bit on two scores. First, many whites are found to also hold positive trait perceptions of blacks, not merely negative ones. Second, only a minority of whites would hold uniformly negative views of blacks, according to Sniderman and Carmines roughly 22% of their 1991 national sample.

It is important to note that the spread of negative stereotypes observed depends on

both the exact trait examined and the method of assessment. On the latter point, absolute ratings of blacks, for example, tend to reveal less prevalent negative stereotypes than do relative or difference score ratings comparing image of whites and of blacks. For example, Jackman's 1975 survey found that 25% of whites gave absolute negative ratings of blacks intelligence, 30% did so concerning whether blacks were dependable, and 36% did so concerning whether blacks were lazy. However, when contrasted to how these white respondents rated whites as a group the degree of stereotyping is usually higher. Thus, 37% gave a more negative relative stereotype rating to blacks concerning laziness, 56% did so concerning dependability, and 57% did so concerning intelligence.

A similar pattern of nontrivial absolute negative ratings and of even more broadly negative relative ratings of blacks obtains for data from the 1990 General Social Survey. Thus, Bobo and Kluegel (1997, p. 100- 101) show that 31 % of whites gave blacks a low absolute rating in terms of intelligence, 47% did so in terms of laziness, 54% did so concerning proclivity to violence, and 59% did so concerning preference to live off of welfare. The relative ratings are higher in each instance, sometimes substantially so. Thus, the figures are 54% rating blacks as less intelligent compared to the rating for

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4 In some absolute sense, that almost I in 4 whites holds consistently negative stereotypes of blacks is not a large number. But, given that almost all whites express some negative stereotypes of African Americans and nearly I out 4 hold firmly negative views, the potential for anti-black bias in many settings is actually quite large.

whites, 62% rating blacks as lazier, 56% rating blacks as more prone to violence, and fully 78% rating blacks as preferring to live off of welfare as compared to whites.

Jackman and others (Jaynes and Williams 1989; Bobo 1997; Bobo and Kluegel 1997) make the important point that racial stereotypes are now more qualified in character. The perceived differences between blacks and whites are expressed, if not also understood, as a matter of degree rather than categorical distinction. But also, the differences appear to be understood or interpreted in more cultural and volitional terms. To the extent there are differences, comparatively few whites appear to believe they are inherent or biological in origin. We return to this matter below in discussing how people perceive and explain racial inequality and discrimination.

These negative stereotypes often also apply in whites of Latinos (Smith 1990). In addition, although whites views of Asian Americans are seldom as negative as those regarding blacks and Latinos, even Asians typically receive unfavorable relative ratings from whites. Thus, the 1990 GSS reported well over 50% of whites rated blacks and Latinos as less intelligent. Similar proportions rated blacks and Latinos as prone to violence. Well over two-thirds rated blacks and Latinos as actually preferring to live off of welfare.

One example of such patterns is shown in the figure. Substantial fractions of Whites rated Blacks and Latinos as less intelligent, as preferring to live off of welfare, and as hard to get along with socially. Research suggests that these stereotypes differ in several important ways from stereotypes that were prevalent in the past. First, they are much more likely to be understood as the product of environmental and group cultural traditions than was true in the past. In the past, they were unequivocally taken as the product of natural endowment. Second, there is growing evidence that many Whites are aware of traditional negative stereotypes of Blacks, as anyone immersed in American culture would be, but personally reject the negative stereotype and its implications. The problem is that in many face-to-face interactions, the old cultural stereotype controls perception and behavior. The end result is bias and discrimination against minorities.

There is strong reason to believe that these stereotypes are socially consequential. Research suggests that these stereotypes probably influence interpersonal interactions (Anderson 1990; Feagin and Sikes 1994), processes of racial residential segregation (Farley et al 1994; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996), and the larger political environment (Bobo and Kluegel; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Peffley, Hurwitz and Sniderman 1997). For example, recent research indicates that whites are typically more fearful of a black stranger than an equally unknown white stranger (St. John and Heald-Moore 1995 and1996). Based on a survey involving the use of sophisticated experimental vignettes, St. John and Heald-Moore (1995) found that whites were more fearful of black than white strangers. Furthermore, this was true irrespective of other situational factors such as time of day or neighborhood characteristics. The degree of fear was strongly conditioned by only two factors: young blacks males were feared more than others and feelings of fear and vulnerability were greatest among older whites. In subsequent work, St. John and Heald-Moore (1996) found a strong interaction between race of the stranger, level of fear, and level of racial prejudice among whites. As they summarized the research results:

> We found that for whites encounters with black strangers in public settings evoke more fear of victimization than encounters with white strangers. We also found that the effect of the race of strangers encountered is conditioned by racial prejudice. That is, encounters with black strangers evoke greater levels of fear in whites who have high level of prejudice than in whites who have lower levels. However, even whites who gave the least prejudiced response to all the items of the prejudice scale were more fearful of encounters with black than with white strangers. (St. John and Heald-Moore (1996, p. 281).

This work implies that the interaction between blacks and whites in many public settings is rife with the potential for missteps, misunderstanding and insult. Certainly precisely this sort of dynamic is suggested by qualitative interviews with middle class African

Americans (Feagin 1991; Cose 1993; Feagin and Sikes 1994).Negative stereotypes appear to play a role in reproducing larger structural patterns of racial residential segregation (Massey and Denton 1993). Based on data from the 1992 Detroit Area Study, Farley and colleagues (1994) found that negative stereotypes of African Americans strongly predicted whites willingness to share integrated neighborhood space with blacks. In subsequent work involving data from the Los Angeles county Social Survey, Bobo and Zubrinsky (1996) found that this effect was not restricted to whites reactions to blacks. The effect of negative stereotypes on openness to residential integration also applied when whites were reacting to the prospect of Hispanic neighbors or to the prospect of Asian neighbors. Importantly, both of these surveys showed that the effect of negative stereotyping on attitudes on residential integration was independent of perceptions about the average class status of blacks, in the case of the 1992 DAS, or of blacks, Latinos, and Asians in the 1992 LACSS. That is, distinctly racial stereotypes influence whites willingness to living in integrated communities.

Stereotypes also appear to play an important role in modem politics, especially with regard to some types of race-targeted social policies (Bobo and Kluegel 1993) as well as to some issues with a more implicit racial component such as crime (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997) and welfare related policy issues (Gilens 1995 and 1996a; Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997). Research in this area makes clear the general importance of racial attitudes, but also often highlights the complex and conditional nature of the effects of negative racial stereotypes. For example, using survey-based experimental data from a 1994 survey in Lexington, Kentucky, Hurwitz and Peffley (1997) found that the impact of negative stereotypes of blacks on views of crime, criminals, and crime policy issues hinged on other contextual information. Aspects of the nature of the crime,of the criminal, and of the policy all matters. To the extent these contextual features wereconsistent with the broad cultural stereotype of blacks as part of a violent, self-perpetuating, ghetto poor underclass the more pronounced the effect of negative

stereotypes on the judgments made. For example, stereotypes about blacks strongly influenced the degree of hostile reactions to a black car-jacking suspect but not to a black corporate embezzler. The former suspect is a stereotype consistent street thug and elicits a powerful resonance with underlying stereotypes about blacks. The latter is white-collar executive and thus even though described as black, reactions in this instance are weakly related to underlying stereotypes of blacks. They also found that negative stereotypes encouraged support for punitive responses to crime, but had no impact on views of crime prevention policies. Thus, stereotypes of blacks were not uniformly of political relevance, but if other contextual information was stereotype consistent, a strong reverberation with the underlying stereotype emerged.

        D. <u>Disagreement on the Prevalence of Racial Discrimination:</u> In many ways, the centerpiece of the modern racial divide comes in the evidence of sharply divergent beliefs about the current level, effect, and very nature of discrimination. Blacks and Latinos, and many Asian Americans as well, feel it and perceive it in most domains of life. Many whites acknowledge that some discrimination remains; yet they tend to down play its contemporary importance. The figure gives an example of these perceptions (Figure 6).

        However, minorities not only perceive more discrimination, they see it as more "institutional" in character. Many whites tend to think of discrimination as either mainly a historical legacy of the past or as the idiosyncratic behavior of the isolated bigot. In short, to white America, the officers who beat Abner Louima constitute a few bad apples. To African Americans, they are the tip of the iceberg. White America regards the Texaco tapes as shocking. To black America the tapes merely reflect the ones who got caught.

        But the difference in perception cuts deeper than this. For African Americans and Latinos (and to a lesser extent among Asians) modem racial bias and discrimination are central factors in the problem of minority disadvantage. While many whites recognize that discrimination plays some part in higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and a range of hardships in life that

minorities often face, the central cause is usually understood to be the level of effort and cultural patterns of the minority groups themselves (Schuman 1971; Apostle et al 1983; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Schuman et al 1997). For minorities, especially African Americans, if race remains a problem it is because of something about how our institutions operate. For many whites, it is mainly something about minorities themselves.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the sharp divide over the understanding and experience of racial discrimination to the present day racial impasse inAmerica.

E. Deepening Pessimism and Alienation: In many comers there is a feeling of pessimism about the state of race relations. A 1997 survey conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Research found that only 2 in 5 Blacks rated race relations in their community as "excellent" or "good" and that more than 1 in 5 rated race relations as "poor." In contrast, 59% of Whites rated local race relations as "excellent" or "good" though better than I in ten rated them as "poor." The results of a recent Gallup survey are, in some respects, more pessimistic. There, roughly a third of Blacks and Whites described race relations as having gotten worse in the past year. What is more, 58% of Blacks and 54% Whites expressed the view that "relations between blacks and whites will always be a problem for the United States."
This problem takes the form of particularly acute cynicism and alienation among Black Americans, though there are some signs of frustrations among Latinos and some Asians as well. Among Blacks, University of Chicago political scientist Michael Dawson's, National Black Politics Survey, conducted in 1993, found that 86% of African Americans agreed with the statement that "American society just hasn't dealt fairly with black people." Fifty-seven of African Americans rejected the idea that "American society has provided black people a fair opportunity to get ahead in life. And 81 % agreed with the idea that "American society owes black people a better chance in life than we currently have."

A major survey of Los Angeles county residents that I conducted in 1992 shows

that while Blacks expressed the highest and most consistently alienated views, an important

fraction of the Latino and Asian population do so as well. Thus, for example, 64% of Latinos in

LA County and 42% of Asians agreed with the idea that their groups were owed a better chance

in life (Figure 7). This places these two groups in between the high sense of deprivation observed

among African Americans and the essentially non-existent feeling of deprivation observed among

Whites.

  The concern over Black cynicism, however, is acute for two reasons. First, there

are signs that the feelings of alienation and deprivation are greatest in an unexpected place:

among the Black middle class, especially so among well-educated and high earning African

Americans. Second, there is a concern that these feelings of alienation and deprivation may be

contributing to a weakening commitment to the goal of racial integration. Among the potentially

discouraging signs in this regard are a recent significant rise in the number of African Americans

who think it is time to form a separate national political party (Figure 8). The 1993 National

Black Politics Survey showed that this figure was at 50%, up substantially from about 30% in

1984. In addition, African Americans continue to feel a strong connection between the fate of the

group as a whole and that of the individual African American. Thus, the 1993 National Black

Politics Study shows a slow but steady rise in the proportion of African Americans who

expressed the view that there was a strong connection between their fate as anindividual and the

fate of the group as a whole. This tendency is especially pronounced among highly educated

African Americans.

  In her wide-ranging assessment of data on black public opinion political

scientist Jennifer Hochschild identifies black disaffection, particularly among the middle class, as

one of the most disturbing trends for the future of American democracy. This disaffection, she

finds, expresses itself not merely as "black rage," grievance and alienation. But it also involves a

deep questioning of the American dream and prospects for the future. At one level, this reflects

the uncertainties of racial minority status, especially for the middle class, in society that has not yet overcome racism. Thus, according to Hochschild:

> ... middle-class blacks find their lives much more problematic than do middle-class whites, so the comfort that a broader education, better job, and more money usually bring to whites is denied to similarly situated blacks. Thus the paradox of succeeding more and enjoying it less (1995, p. 93).

This paradox has quite wide-ranging social implications. As a result of it, she writes:

> Black and white increasingly diverge in their evaluations of whether the American dream encompasses African Americans .... middle-class blacks are increasingly disillusioned with the very ideology of the dream itself, and poor blacks may not be far behind....

> The ideology of the dream has always relied on previously poor Americans not only achieveing upward mobility, but also recognizing that they had done so, feeling gratified, and consequently deepening their commitment to the dream and the nation behind it. That, very roughly speaking, has been the experience of most immigrants. But middle-class blacks are not following theprescribed pattern. They recognize their own mobility, they are pleased by it, but their commitment to American dream is declining, not rising. That is an unprecedented risk to an ideology that depends so heavily on faith in its ultimate fairness and benevolence

(Hochschild 1995, pp. 86-87). The sense of alienation among many blacks then includes a profound critique of American institutions and culture. As Cornell West put it: "The accumulated effect of the black wounds and scars suffered in a white-dominated society is a deep-seated anger, a boiling sense of rage, and a passionate pessimism regarding America's will to justice" (West 1993, p. 18).

In an earlier era, these sorts of ideas would have been associated with activist Malcom X: the "prophet of black rage," according to Cornell West. The connection between the insight and rhetoric of Malcolm X and the dilemma of the modem

black middle class is not hard to unearth. As West put it: "One rarely encounters a picture of Malcom X (as one does of Martin Luther King, Jr.) in the office of a black professional, but there is no doubt that Malcolm X dangles as the skeleton in the closet lodged in the racial memory of most black professionals" (1993, p. 97).

The survey data and summaries of them, however, cannot convey the full depth and range of black responses. The meaning of this potentially very important trend is worthy of extended attention to some black who have recently given voice to this sense of discontent. For example, in his recent autobiography journalist Sam Fulwood describes coming to consciousness as a "blue chip black," one of those African Americans slated for success in the mainstream white economy. A teacher explains to him that unlike his friends, he will be attending the traditionally white junior high school because "I am absolutely certain that you can hold your own with the best" white students. This became a defining moment for the young Fulwood, hopeful that a bright future free of racial bias would be his. His adult life experiences proved sharply disillusioning however. He explained that:

> "I evolved that day into a race child. I believed I would, in due time, illuminate the magnificient social changes wrought by racial progess. Overt racial barriers were failing and 1, son of a minister and a schoolteacher, fully credentialed members of Charlotte's black middle class, thought my future would be free of racism and free of oppression. I believed I was standing at the entrance to the Promised land. Now, as the twentieth century exhausts itself, I am awakening from my blind belief in that American dream. I am angrier than I've ever been" (Fulwood 1996, p. 2).

The depth of his sense of rage grew upon returning to the U.S. from a trip in South Africa. As he explained:

> I returned from South Africa with a new definition of American-style racism and classism, and how they acted like a pair of invisible hands molding thecontours of my life. I wasn't in control of my destiny in the United States; I was living in Alice's

Wonderland. The rules of life were always defined by someone white who decided

whether what I did was acceptable, legal behavior. I knew more of the rules, so I played

the game better than poorer blacks, who didn't know or didn't care to play the game at all.

But I was still only a pawn in

the white man's match. (Fulwood, 1996, p. 164).

Over the course of my life, I realized, so much had changed in me, but so little had

changed in the outside world. Racism surrounded me. I could perceive it, but I was

powerless to prove conclusively to anyone who was not black how corrosive it could be

(Fulwood 1996, p. 208).

Or as it also saw it: "I have a boulder of racial attitudes on my back, and at work I must

toil among white people and pretend that the dead weight is not there" (Fulwood 1996, p.

213). In the end, Fulwood decides to live in an affluent black suburb and, more important, to

assure that daughter is raised with a more acute sense of racial identity and of the challenge posed

by enduring racism than was he. "My daughter," he declares in the opening pages of the book,

"will not be a second generation blue-chip black, laboring under the mistaken belief that race will

one day be coincidental, unimportant or ignored in her life" (1996, p. 5).

Fulwood's reflections on race would be worth perhaps of comment but not serious

reflection if these were his views along. They are not. Journalist Jill Nelson writes with a deeper

sense of bitterness and despair than does Fulwood. For her much of the dilemma of black middle

class success comes in having to suppress feelings of rage against a society and a world of work

still massively insensitive to the historic and modem weight of racism in order to maintain a

precarious middle class livelihood. Thus, Nelson writes:

I've also been doing the standard Negro balancing act when it comes to dealing with

white folks, which involves sufficiently blurring the edges of my being so thet they don't

feel intimidated, while simultaneously holding on to my integrity. There is a thin line

between Uncle Tomming and Mau-Mauing. To fall off that line can mean disaster. On the one side lies employment and self-hatred: on the other, the equally dubious honor of unemployment with integrity. Walking that line as if it were a tightrope results in something like employment with honor, although I'm not sure exactly how that works" (1993, p. 10).

Or, somewhat like Fulwood, the eminent religion scholar C. Eric Lincoln writes of the both the permeating quality of the racial divide and of the pain of being rendered social invisible by virtue of race. On the former he writes:

> In America, race is the touchstone of all value, the prism through which all else of significance must be refracted before relationships can be defined or relevance ascertained. There is no order of reality large enough to transcend its pervasiveness, small enough to escape its intrusiveness, or independent enough to avoid its imprimatur" (Lincoln 1996, pp. 45-46.)

On the matter of voicelessness and social invisibility he writes:

> Every black American knows firsthand the slander of invisibility. Anonymity. It comes in a thousand ways: a word, a gesture, a conversation that moves over and around him as though he or she were not present. Invisibility is most painful when it is preclusive-jobs not offered, invitations not issued, opportunities dennied. It is a lifelong incubus from which few if any African Americans ever escape completely, no matter what their achievements. Racial anonymity derives from the presumption of inconsequence-the inconsequence of black persons and of their achievments, actual or potential (Lincoln 1996, p. 94).

Even mainstream political figures such as Kweisi Mfume, while succumbing to a sense of black alienation, nonetheless shares many of these same sentiments. In explaining the

moment, during his college days, when he changed his name from Frizzell Gray to Kweisi

Mfume he explains:

> Anyone who spent more than a moment with me knew that I believed that a terrible hoax
> was being played on black people in this country. I believed that most of us were going to
> live and die without ever having experienced anything near what was promised in the
> Declaration of Independence about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We weren't
> at all protected under the laws of the land-black people were citizens in name only. We
> were a people chronically and institutionally disenfranchised, feeding off the scarps of
> the educational system, the job market, and any other channels leading to a life of dignity
> (1996, p. 189.)

This realization brought with it a decision to change his name and other aspects of his

thinking and demeanor. As he put it:

> Yet, black people were expected to believe in the American Dream as much as white
> people did. Why should we? The very notion was obscenely cynical, and any black man
> or woman who thought differently was living in a fool's paradise. My disdain for the
> system as evident as new wave of militancy engulfed my persona. I didn't just *wear* a
> bush, I *was* a bush that burned with revolutionary fervor, from the wildfires of racism and
> prejudice that smoldered around me (Mfume 1996, p. 189, emphasis in original).

III. THEORETICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MAJOR PATTERNS

How to interpret the set of patterns described above is no simple task. There is, in

fact, probably no one theory that can adequately capture the full complexity of the patterns described above. Here we will consider four broad schools of thought that have been widely discussed: symbolic racism theory, political ideology and value commitment theory, aversive racism theory, and notions of group position and laissez faire racism theory. Each theoretical tradition has identified important features of dynamics of modem racial attitudes and relations, though as I will suggest below the laissez faire racism approach may offer the most promise for integrating the useful contributions across these several approaches.

Aversive racism should be distinguished from dominative racism. The latter involves open derogation and oppression of racial minority group. Aversive racism has been defined by social psychologists Samuel Gaertner and John Dovidio as involving racism among the well-intentioned (1986). Accordingly, in the post civil rights era, most white Americans hold many racially egalitarian outlooks (as summarized above). Indeed, it is likely racial egalitarianism is an important aspect of self-conception. At the same time, most whites are exposed to a history, culture, and current set of social forces that encourage negative feelings and beliefs toward African Americans. This creates, at level not necessarily open to conscious awareness or manipulation, a deep ambivalence toward African Americans. The practical result, as they have shown in a convincing program of field and laboratory experimental research, is that whenever the norm of racial egalitarianism is rendered ambiguous, differential and negative treatment of African Americans by whites tends to occur. This research is impressive not merely for its experimental basis, but also for focusing on observable behaviors, not merely attitudinal expression. Furthermore, it resonates powerfully with sociological research, whether it be ethnograpic (Anderson 1990), in-depth interview material (Feagin and Sikes 1994), or survey responses (Sigelman and Welch 1989; Bobo and Suh forthcoming; Forman, Williams and Jackson 1997), which point to the subtlety and complex character of much modem racial discrimination. The lesson for the broader argument that I wish to sketch is that whites attitudes are often ambivalent and that under certain

conditions that ambivalence can result in substantial and repeated behavioral discrimination against African Americans.

Symbolic racism is a theory of modem prejudice proposed by David Sears and his colleagues (Kinder and Sears 198 1; Sears 1988). It maintains that a new form of politically potent anti-black prejudice emerged after the civil rights era. The waning of "old-fashioned racism," or more appropriately "Jim Crow racism," which involved overt derogation of blacks as inferior to whites and explicit insistence on racial segregation, opened the door to newer, more subtle anti-black sentiments. These new sentiments fused deeply rooted anti-black feelings, typically learned early in life, with long-standing American values such as the Protestant work ethic. When blacks demand integration or such policies as affirmative action, under this theory, many whites react with opposition based on this attitude. The symbolic racist resents blacks' demands and views them as unfair impositions on a just and good society. Although it began as an effort to understand the dynamics of black-white relations, especially in the politic al realm, it has been extended to include how whites respond to Hispanics and to such issues as bilingual education and immigration policies (Huddy 1997).

Empirically, the research has first sought to establish that narrow, objective self-interest has little bearing on why black candidates for political office become controversial (Kinder and Sears 198 1; Citrin, Sears and Green 199x), or why whites mobilize against school busing (Sears, Hensler and Speer 1979; McConahay 1982), or why whites may oppose affirmative action (Sears 1988). Thus, for example, having children in the public schools or living in an area where busing is used for desegregation does not affect attitudes on school busing. Second, the symbolic racism research has set out to establish that measures of traditional, old-fashioned, or Jim Crow prejudice do not predict issue positions or candidate preferences as strongly as do measures of symbolic racism. The latter concept has been measured in a great variety of ways, with the last decade suggesting some consensus that it involves resentment of

minority demands, resentment of special treatment or consideration of minorities, and a tendency to deny the potency of racial discrimination (Sears 1988; Kinder and Sanders 1996). Numerous studies support, in broad outline, just this sort of pattern.

The theory has been the subject of wide controversy and critical assessment (see Bobo 1983 and 1988; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Weigel and Howes 1985; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986; Sidanius, Devereux and Pratto 1992; Tetlock 1994; Wood 1994, to cite a few). It is not our purpose to wade through all of the specific conceptual and empirical critiques. Four considerations loom large, however, in my assessment that the theory does not take us far in making sense of the current complex array of racial attitudes. First, the items typically used to measure the concept do not survive face- validity scrutiny as measures of "racism." From the outset, the concept has perhaps been provocatively but also mistakenly labeled. That is, the items do not invoke a belief in either the inherent biological inferiority of blacks or of the clear cultural inferiority of blacks, nor do they expressly call for inferior treatment. (No doubt this is much of the reason that Kinder abandoned use of the phrase "symbolic racism," instead now referring to the same cluster of attitudes, more simply and appropriately, as "racial resentment" Kinder and Sanders 1996). The main response of Sears and others to this critique has been to show that measures of symbolic racism are correlated with affective reactions of blacks. While no doubt having some relation to level of prejudice, this is certainly not dispositive.

Second, the predictive power of symbolic racism measures appears to owe much to the close conceptual proximity of the concept to most of the dependent variables it is used to predict. Virtually all of the component items of symbolic racism/racial resentment measures have an explicit political element (i.e., attitudes toward civil rights leaders or blacks' political demands), or involve arguments and positions that are core elements of debate about racial related social policies (i.e., blacks should get ahead without any special treatment). To find that such attitudes

are close correlates of attitudes toward affirmative action is hardly telling proof of the emergence of a qualitatively new form of racism.

Third, an important argument about bases of symbolic racism has not been borne out. That is, a number of studies have failed to find a strong and clear connection between symbolic racism and measures of individualism as the theory originally specified. Instead, beliefs about egalitarianism--or more accurately anti-egalitarianism-have usually been found to contribute to symbolic racism. This makes symbolic racism appear much more like, at least, a theory-driven or motivationally based response, with the basis having something to do with preserving at least group-based interests and privilege (see Bobo 1988).

Fourth, at no point, even in the most extensive theoretical statements offered after more than two decades of research. Do the symbolic racism researchers attempt an explanation of why Jim Crow racism went into decline or why modem or symbolic racism (racial resentment) assumes the specific form and content it does. This significant omission in theoretical development is, however, a virtual necessity of the logic of the theory. To wit, this model of prejudice expressly denies that there is any material social basis to the formation of anti-black attitudes outside of processes of socialization and the operation of routine cognitive and emotional psychological processes.

Yet, the symbolic racism researchers do have an important part of the story right. Something about the socially and politically relevant attitudes toward blacks did change. The change is probably better understood in terms of the changing nature of the underlying stereotypes about African Americans and unsympathetic understanding of the causes of modem racial economic inequality. At least, we do not need a new theory of prejudice and racism to account for this transformation or whole new type of "symbolic" attitude. The factors of more qualified stereotypes and individual/cultural blaming attributions for inequality, together combine to encourage skepticism, if not outright opposition, to a range of race-targeted social policies. But

the change in stereotypes and patterns of attribution for black-white economic inequality have meaningful historical and social roots. To fashion this sort of argument, however, it is necessary to introduce the concept of laissez faire racism.

In the post World War II period the predominant pattern of racial attitudes among white Americans has shifted from Jim Crow racism to a modem day laissez-faire racism. We have witnessed the virtual disappearance of overt bigotry, demands for strict segregation, advocacy of governmentally enforced discrimination, and adherence to the belief that blacks are the categorical intellectual inferiors of whites. Yet, Jim crow racism has evidently not been supplanted by an embracing and democratic vision of the common humanity, worth, dignity and equal membership in the polity for blacks. Instead, the tenacious institutionalized disadvantages and inequalities created by the long slavery and Jim Crow eras are now popularly accepted and condoned under a modem free-market or laissez racist ideology.

Although the full laissez-faire racism argument cannot be developed here, its emergence reflects crucial changes in the economy and polity that at once undermined the structural basis for the Jim Crow social order of the American South and yet left in place the patterns of racial residential segregation, economic inequality, racialized identities, and anti-black outlooks that existed on a national basis (Bobo, Smith and Kluegel 1997; Bobo and Smith 1998). This new pattern of belief involves staunch rejection of an active role for government in undoing racial segregation and inequality, an acceptance of negative stereotypes of African Americans, a denial of discrimination as a contemporary social problem, and attribution of primary responsibility for black disadvantage to blacks themselves.

Much of the broad empirical basis for the laissez faire racism argument has been reviewed above. Bobo and Kluegel (1997) examined four hypotheses derived from the theory of laissez faire racism using data from the 1990 GSS. They found, first, that contemporary racial stereotyping and perceived social responsibility for black conditions

constitute distinct attitudinal dimensions as contrasted to traditional Jim Crow racists outlooks. Second, they found that Jim Crow racist outlooks were more strongly rooted in region of residence (South versus nonsouth), age, and level of education than were the elements of laissez faire racism (stereotyping and social responsibility beliefs). This is consistent with the conclusion that Jim Crow racism is older, more regionally specific ideological system whereas laissez faire racism is the more contemporary, nationally shared outlook. Third, they also found that beliefs about the general socioeconomic inequality (not race-specific) played a larger role in stereotyping and social responsibility for black condition beliefs than they did in Jim Crow racism. As they argued "If Jim Crow racism is no longer seen to serve the defense of economic privilege, then there is no reason to expect that beliefs that justify the stratification order in general will affect it. If elements of laissez-faire racism are seen as defending white economic privilege, then justifications of economic inequality in general should motivate stereotyping and the denial of social responsibility for blacks' conditions" (Bobo and Kluegel 1997, pp. 96-97). Fourth, they found that although both Jim Crow and laissez-faire racism play apart in whites support for race-targeted social policies, the elements of laissez faire racismwere stronger influences.

Of course, it is possible to doubt the need to invoke racism at all as a central element of the modem racial divide. At least at the level of politics and political debate, this precise point has been the message offered by Paul Sniderman and colleagues (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1997). They developed a three part argument. First, they assert that racism is not an important part of the modem politics of race, especially in terms of the debate over affirmative action. Second, if many whites object to affirmative action or other race-targeted policies, it has more to do with broad American values about fairness, justice, individualism and traditional conservatism than with racism or prejudice. In short, there are principled foundations to the politics of race, deriving from political values and ideology. Accordingly, those advancing the symbolic racism argument have seriously misunderstood the

current political divide over affirmative action. Third, to the extent prejudice now matters in politics, it is generally most pronounced among the least political sophisticated segments of the public (Sniderman and Piazza 1993) and poses the greatest political challenge among liberals (Sniderman and Carmines 1997).

Sniderman and Carmines analyze a number of survey-based experiments. Spanning nearly a decade now, Sniderman's program of research is innovative, vigorously pursued, and has identified a number of intriguing empirical patterns. By drawing on survey based experiments, as Schuman and Bobo (1988) proposed, Sniderman and Carmines are able to combine the power of controlled experiments with the representativeness of national surveys: the certainty of casual inference and ability to generalize results are thus greater. These advantages notwithstanding, neither the core argument they make nor some of most important experiments survive close scrutiny. Here I will focus on three critical experiments to illustrate that each suffers from flaws in design and, unfortunately, even more serious deficiencies of interpretation that reach far beyond what the data themselves will actually sustain. The latter is a grave problem inasmuch as Reaching Beyond Race is deliberately written to appeal to nonspecialists who, absent an extraordinarily critical eye, are likely to be seriously misled by what Sniderman and Carmines report and, sadly, perhaps even more so by what they claim.

First, consider what Sniderman and Carmines label as "the Mere Mention" experiment. This experiment constitutes an egregious misrepresentation of research results in all that Sniderman and Carmines report so it is worth considering in detail. The ultimate implication of the experimental results, they argue, is that "the mere mention of affirmative action turns out to sharpen hostility to blacks" (Sniderman and Carmines 1997, p. 40). They reach this conclusion by asking a randomly selected subset of white respondents to a survey in Lexington, Kentucky about their stereotypes of blacks before

or after a question on affirmative action. They find that stereotypes of blacks are substantially more negative-that blacks are seen as lazier, ore irresponsible, and as more arrogant-if the stereotypes are assessed after the affirmative action question than before. This is powerful finding, especially since it figures so directly into the larger political debate on whether affirmative action stigmatizes black (or other minority) beneficiaries (see Sowell ; Glazer 1975).

Before accepting Sniderman and Carmines interpretation, it is useful to look at the exact question they asked on affirmative action. It will instantly become clear that this should be labeled the "zero-sum, strong quota for the unqualified" experiment not the grossly misleading "mere mention" experiment. Given the packaging as a "mere mention" experiment one might have expected to learn that the question made brief and vague reference to "affirmative action for blacks." What the question actually says, however, is:

> In a nearby state, an effort is being made to increase dramatically the number of blacks working in state government. This means that a large number of jobs will be reserved for blacks, even if their scores on merit exams are lower than those of white who are turned down for the job. Do you favor or oppose the policy?

This is the "mere mention" experiment! The question explicitly states that the policy seeks to (1) "dramatically" affect the number of blacks employed, that this (2) will include "reserved" positions for blacks, and that (3) more qualified whites will lose out. If this experiment had not produced greater hostility to blacks then it would have been an astounding result indeed. Sadly, this sort of glib and plainly distorted packaging is characteristic of the book throughout. Does affirmative action as normally implemented produce hostility? We do not know, despite the strong implication let by Sniderman and Carmines.

Second, consider what Sniderman and Carmines label as "the List" experiment. The first experiment poses lists that differ in length, one half of respondents are asked a

three item list and the other randomly selected list are asked a fourth item concerning affirmative action. After the list is presented respondents are asked merely to indicate how many items-not which-made them feel upset or angry. Sniderman and Carmines find that respondents list more things that upset them on the four item list rather than the three item list. They interpret that as powerful evidence that whites are angry about affirmative action. Unexpectedly, they find that white liberals are at least as upset as white conservatives when given a clearly covert way of saying so. The design flaw, of course, is that one list not only refers to affirmative action, but it also differs in the number of items. As a result, it is not legitimate to conclude that solely the substance of the item in the list, rather than the length of the list, is the reason for the observed experimental effect.

They attempted to solve this clear weakness by replicating the experiment, but this time using lists of equal length. The problem now becomes one of illegitimate interpretation. What does it mean to report feeling "upset" when presented with the a series of four statements one of which includes "black leaders asking the government for affirmative action"? Unfortunately, we don't actually know. Certainly when asked directly, white liberals and those committed to racial equality in general are more supportive of affirmative action. But when asked the list the number of statements that "upset" them liberals name essentially the same number as do conservatives. Sniderman and Carmines interpret this pattern to mean that: "when they think they can express their feelings unobtrusively, whites who attach the most importance to racial equality are just as likely to be angry or upset over affirmative action as those who attach the least importance to it" (1997, pp. 52-53). This is not at all clear. It is easily possible, indeed almost certainly often the case, that an arena of political controversy arouses uncomfortable feelings without that meaning opposition to the policy in question. Consider the case of a women's right to have an abortion. The very idea may be quite personally upsetting and strongly disapproved of. However, it would be wholly inappropriate to conclude that the sense of agitation and discomfort aroused bymentioning the issue means that one opposes abortion rights. This is particularly

telling analogy given that one would expect more of this type of discomfort precisely among liberals rather than among conservatives, a pattern exactly parallel to what Sniderman and Carmines find in the race domain.

Third, consider the case of the "Helping Hand" experiment. One half of the sample was asked if they supported "government assistance for blacks" and a randomly selected half was asked if they supported "government assistance for new immigrants from Europe." The experiment also manipulates whether those in need of assistance are "hard working: or "have trouble working" as a manipulation of the level of deservingness. They find that blacks are extended greater support for govermnent assistance than "new immigrants from Europe" whether or not they are presented as hard working. Sniderman and Carmines interpret this result as meaning that race is not the issue, since most whites are at least as, if not more, reluctant to commit government resources to a comparable white individual (new immigrant from Europe) than to a black individual. As should be obvious, the experimental manipulation itself, however, makes this interpretation impossible. In addition to manipulating race, the stimulus "new immigrants from Europe" obviously also introduces individuals who are both non-citizens and who by definition have no historical (or contemporary) claim to suffering discrimination and oppression in the U.S. On the basis of this grossly confounded experimental stimulus, however, Sniderman and Carmines conclude that it is not assistance to blacks per se that troubles many whites, but that race-targeted policy has any particularistic focus. "There is, in short," they write, "reason to believe that whites are less likely to support a policy restricted to blacks than one extended to both blacks and whites, because it is group exclusive rather than group inclusive" (Sniderman and Carmines 1997, pp. 110- 111). Sadly, this experiment, as designed, simply does not support this conclusion. It supports the conclusion that white non-citizens, lacking a historical or contemporary claim to discrimination are less likely to be perceived as deserving of government assistance than are black citizens who can assert historic and contemporary claims of discrimination.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The glass is half full or half-empty, depending upon what one chooses to emphasize. If one compared the racial attitudes prevalent in the 1940s with those commonly observed today, it is easy to be optimistic. A nation once comfortable as a deliberately segregationist and racially discriminatory society has not only abandoned that view, but also positively endorses the goal of racial integration and equal treatment. There is no sign whatsoever of retreat from this ideal despite many events that many thought would call it into question. The magnitude, steadiness, and breadth of this change should be lost on no one.

The death of Jim Crow Racism has left us in an uncomfortable place, however, a place that I sometimes call a state of Laissez Faire racism. We have high ideals, but openness to very limited amounts of integration at the personal level remains, there is political stagnation over some types of affirmative action, quite negative stereotypes of racial minorities persist, and a wide gulf in perceptions regarding the importance of racial discrimination remains. The level of misunderstanding and miscommunication is thus easy to comprehend.

The positive patterns in attitude and belief have important parallels in more concrete social trends. Two examples: Matching the broad shift in attitudes on the principle of residential integration and openness to at least small amounts of real racial mixing in neighborhoods are the demographic data showing modest declines in racial residential segregation in most metropolitan areas and in the growing suburbanization of Blacks, Latinos and Asians. In addition, the greater tolerance for interracial marriages, including Black-White marriages, is mirrored in the significant rise in the number of such unions. (Though we should always bear in mind that attitudes are but one important input to behavior. Most centrally, situational constraints, such as equal opportunity mandates and anti-discrimination laws or the expectations of significant others in

our lives, affect whether or not and when there is a correspondence between individual

attitude and behavior. And, of course, racial segregation remains a severe problem and Black-White intermarriages are the least common form of racial intermarriage for Whites.)

Is it possible to change attitudes? The record of change that I have reviewed makes it plain that attitudes can change and in important ways. Education and information can help. The better educated, especially those who have gone onto college are typically found to express more positive racial attitudes. It is also clear that many Americans hold inaccurate beliefs about the size of racial minority groups and about such social conditions as group differences in the level of welfare dependency. However, education and informational campaigns are unlikely to do the job that remains ahead of us if we are to genuinely become one society in the next century. Attitudes are most likely to change when the broad social conditions that create and reinforce certain types of outlooks change and when the push to make such change comes from a united national leadership that speaks with moral conviction of purpose. That is, it is essential to speak to joblessness and poverty in the inner city, to failing schools, and to a myriad forms of racial bias and discrimination that people of color often experience, but have not yet effectively communicated to their fellow White Americans.

To pose the question directly: Are we moving toward a color-blind society or toward deepening racial polarization? America is not a color-blind society. We stand uncomfortably at a point of defeating Jim Crow racism, but unsure whether to, on the one hand, through benign neglect, allow the current inequalities and polarization to take deeper root, or, on the other hand, to face directly and proactively the challenges of bias, miscommunication and racism that remain.

As a people, we feel quite powerfully the tug, indeed the exhortation, of Dr. King's dream to become a nation that embodies the ideals of racial equality and integration. We appear to be at a point of uncertainty, misunderstanding and re-assessment. It is important to seize upon the steady commitment to ideals of racial equality and integration. The risk of failing to do so, is that a new, free-market ideology of racism--laissez faire racism--may take hold, potentially worsening an already serious racial divide.

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