

Reclaiming a Du Boisian Perspective on Racial Attitudes

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ABSTRACT: This article asserts that Du Boisian sociology included a strong role for racial prejudice in analyzing the conditions and dynamics of African American social life. The article examines Du Bois's empirical social scientific legacy with a special focus on *The Philadelphia Negro* and how he treated racial prejudice in this seminal work. It then examines the turn away from a concern with racial prejudice in modern sociological analysis and identifies the necessity of returning to the theoretical holism exemplified by Du Bois if sociological theory on race and racism are to advance.

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The American Negro, therefore, is surrounded and conditioned by the concept which he has of white people and he is treated in accordance with the concept they have of him.

—W.E.B. Du Bois ([1940] 1995)

W.E.B. Du Bois is most widely known as an essayist, biographer, social commentator, and activist. His life's project involved an interrogation of the problem of race and the pursuit of freedom for African Americans (indeed the pursuit of freedom for all those trapped on the wrong side of the color line in a colonial, imperialistic, and capitalistic world order). In what is surely his most oft quoted passage, Du Bois declared,

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea. (Du Bois [1903] 1997, 45)

Deep and timeless social insights of this kind, including his discussion of double-consciousness, life behind the veil, and his broad visionary humanism constitute the universally recognized aspects of Du Bois's legacy.

Yet, for much of Du Bois's long and productive life he was an empirical social scientist. He pioneered in the conduct of comprehensive community social surveys, in the documentation of black community life, and in the theoretically grounded analysis of black-white relations. Were it not for the deeply entrenched racism in the United States during his early professional years, Du Bois would be recognized alongside the likes of Albion Small, Edward A. Ross,

Robert E. Park, Lewis Wirth, and W. I. Thomas as one of the fountain-heads of American sociology. Had not racism so thoroughly excluded him from placement in the center of the academy, he might arguably have come to rank with Max Weber or Emile Durkheim in stature.¹ Today, urban anthropologists, historical economists, political scientists, social psychologists, and sociologists all attempt to claim a piece of the Du Boisian legacy (Bay 1998).

My purpose here is to add to the growing stream of scholarship reclaiming and building upon the contributions of W.E.B. Du Bois the empirical social scientist. At core, I argue that Du Bois's sociological analysis of the status of African Americans reflected a foundational concern with prejudice and racial attitudes. It is essential to reconsider and resuscitate this aspect of Du Boisian sociology. Modern sociologists have abandoned, more often implicitly but sometimes quite explicitly so, a perspective on racial inequality that embraces a role for racial identities, attitudes, and beliefs. The result has been energy misspent in well-worn race versus class polemics and a failure to understand the social underpinnings of a changing but durable racial divide.

My argument begins with a consideration of Du Bois the social scientist. This discussion draws heavily on his magisterial work, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899). From this I extract several ideas about the epistemology of Du Bois and his specific theoretical formulation regarding the dynamics of race. Next, I review the turn in

sociology away from aspects of the type of approach that Du Bois epitomized. Finally, I provide modern examples of the role of racial attitudes and beliefs in the status of African Americans.

RACIAL ATTITUDES IN DU BOISIAN ANALYSIS

Du Bois as scientist

Du Bois was a committed empirical social scientist. He was openly critical of sweeping generalizations and the sort of grand theorizing common in the emerging field of sociology:

The biological analogy, the vast generalizations, were striking, but actual scientific accomplishment lagged. For me an opportunity seemed to present itself. I could not lull my mind to hypnosis by regarding a phrase like "consciousness of kind" as scientific law. . . . I determined to put science into sociology through a study of the condition and problems of my own group. I was going to study the facts, any and all facts concerning the American Negro and his plight, and by measurement and comparison and research, work up to any valid generalization which I could. (Du Bois [1940] 1995, 51)

His inductive approach and zeal for gathering facts had been sparked during his years at Harvard by Albert Bushnell Hart and were subsequently nurtured by the German political economist Gustav Schmoller during Du Bois's studies at the University of Berlin (Rudwick 1974; Bulmer 1991; McDaniel 1998). He shared Schmoller's belief that sensible social reform would flow from

complete understanding of the relevant social facts and dynamics.

To be sure, Du Bois's career shifted decisively in the direction of activism and political commentary after 1910. His belief in the power of facts and knowledge to persuade dimmed. Yet his regard for scientific investigation, measurement, and evidence continued long after the era in which he completed *The Philadelphia Negro*. Thus, in 1944 in his essay for Rayford Logan's edited volume *What the Negro Wants*, Du Bois summarized his own life work as having three stages, with scientific research a critical ingredient of the first and third stages. The third stage, which stretched from 1928 to 1944, Du Bois dedicated to "scientific investigation and organized action among Negroes, in close co-operation, to secure the survival of the Negro race, until the cultural development of America and the world is willing to recognize Negro freedom" (Du Bois 1944a, 70). Hence, some 40 years after *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois reasserted the need for scientific evidence in his project of pursuing black freedom. He struck a similar note in a 1948 essay for *Phylon* assessing change in race relations in the United States (Du Bois 1948).

In *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois set out to provide a comprehensive analysis of Philadelphia's Seventh Ward, then the largest concentration of blacks in the city. He developed six interview and enumeration protocols. He rejected the reigning ideas in social science which would have faulted basic black capabilities for the impoverished condi-

tion of most blacks. Instead, he crafted a historically grounded portrait of blacks whose circumstances, by and large, had clear social or environmental roots. Although this is necessarily a compacted treatment, his analytical framework stressed the interplay of six factors: (1) a history of enslavement, servitude, and oppression; (2) demographic trends and compositional factors (for example, disproportion of women to men); (3) economic positioning and competition with free whites both native born and European immigrants; (4) racial prejudice and discrimination; (5) the resources, internal structure, dynamics, and leadership of the black community itself; and (6) moral agency and black self-determination. Of all these, the burden of slavery and the weak position of blacks in the economic structure were surely the primary factors in Du Bois's model. Du Bois was thus careful to not make prejudice the central or most important variable in his analysis. Yet the force of prejudice was ubiquitous and of unavoidable consequence in his analysis of the dynamics of race relations in Philadelphia.

Du Bois on the role of prejudice

Du Bois saw racial prejudice as a constituent factor in the structural placement of blacks in the labor and housing markets. Consider first the labor market. An early chapter on occupations in *The Philadelphia Negro* asserts the critical role of prejudice in erecting a color bar to economic opportunity for blacks:

In the realm of social phenomena the law of survival is greatly modified by human

choice, wish, whim, and prejudice. . . . Now it is sufficient to say in general that the sorts of work open to Negroes are not only restricted by their own lack of training but also by discrimination against them on account of their race; that their economic rise is not only hindered by their present poverty, but also by a widespread inclination to shut against them many doors of advancement open to the talented and efficient of other races. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 98)

Du Bois documented the extent to which blacks were locked into the most menial and low-wage positions. He concluded that "the cause of this peculiar restriction in employment of Negroes is twofold: first, the lack of training and experience among Negroes; second, the prejudice of the whites" (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 111).

Du Bois saw racial prejudice as acute among working-class whites and as operating in lockstep with the economic interests and ambitions of working-class whites. Prejudice was an element of his account of why white workers strove to displace black workers:

Partially by taking advantage of race prejudice, partially by greater economic efficiency and partially by the endeavor to maintain and raise wages, white workmen have not only monopolized the new industrial opportunities of an age which has transformed Philadelphia from a colonial town to a world-city, but have also been enabled to take from the Negro workman the opportunities already enjoyed in certain lines of work. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 127)

Prejudice and economic motives both contributed to whites' efforts to seal off opportunities from blacks. "To re-

peat, then," Du Bois wrote, "the real motives back of this exclusion are plain: a large part is simple race prejudice, always strong in working classes and intensified by the peculiar history of the Negro in this country. Another part, however, and possibly more potent part, is the natural spirit of monopoly and the desire to keep up wages" (129).

Du Bois was careful not to reduce prejudice to economic motives. Indeed, he suggested that quite irrational actions might be undertaken in service of anti-black prejudice. His discussion of black occupational and job opportunities concludes:

All these considerations are further complicated by the fact that the industrial condition of the Negro cannot be considered apart from the great fact of race prejudice—indefinite and shadowy as that phrase may be. It is certain that, while industrial co-operation among the groups of a great city population is very difficult under ordinary circumstances, that here it is rendered more difficult and in some respects almost impossible by the fact that nineteen-twentieths of the population have in many cases refused to co-operate with the other twentieth, even when the co-operation means life to the latter and great advantage to the former. In other words, one of the great postulates of the science of economics—that men will seek their economic advantage—is in this case untrue, because in many cases men will not do this if it involves association, even in a casual and business way, with Negroes. And this fact must be taken account of in all judgments as to the Negro's economic progress. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 146-47)

For this reason, economic historian Jacqueline Jones (1998, 104) rightly

stresses that Du Bois does not develop an economically deterministic analysis.

Du Bois was equally forceful about the role of prejudice in restricting black options in the housing market. This too has bearing on fundamental quality-of-life experience issues since where one lives immediately affects exposure to a variety of potentially unwanted or even hazardous social conditions. Although the level of segregation had not reached anything like it would in later years, Du Bois concluded that blacks faced discrimination in seeking housing and in what they paid for housing. Thus, he reported that

three causes of even greater importance . . . are the limited localities where Negroes may rent, the peculiar connection of dwelling and occupation among Negroes and the social organization of the Negro. The undeniable fact that most Philadelphia white people prefer not to live near Negroes limits the Negro very seriously in his choice of a home and especially in the choice of a cheap home. Moreover, real estate agents knowing the limited supply usually raise the rent a dollar or two for Negro tenants, if they do not refuse them altogether. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 295)

He went on to note that proximity to potential job opportunities also influenced where blacks lived as did a desire to be near traditional black community institutions.

Prejudice and racial attitudes were so central to Du Bois's descriptive assessment and analytical framework that he devoted an entire chapter to "The Contact of the Races"—with sections on color preju-

dice, benevolence, and the intermarriage of the races. That the reason for the chapter and the thread holding together its sections was racial prejudice—the ideas, beliefs, feelings, and consequent patterns of behavior of whites toward blacks—he declared at the very outset:

Incidentally throughout this study the prejudice against the Negro has been again and again mentioned. It is now time to reduce this somewhat indefinite term to something tangible. Everybody speaks of the matter, everybody knows that it exists, but in just what form it shows itself or how influential it is few agree. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 322)

Although Du Bois never posited a clear conceptual definition of racial prejudice, he systematically recounted its dynamics and effects. He identified six specific types of effects of prejudice: (1) restriction of blacks to menial work roles; (2) vulnerability to displacement due to competition from native whites or white immigrants; (3) resentment of black advancement and initiative; (4) vulnerability to financial exploitation; (5) inability to secure quality education for children or to shelter them from societal prejudice and discrimination; and (6) a wide array of discourteous and insulting treatment in “social intercourse.”

Although Du Bois mainly describes actual forms of discrimination, he explicitly invokes an underlying individual mind-set and larger social climate of prejudice as the root of the discrimination. For example, without directly using the term “stereotypes,” he describes how general images and beliefs about blacks

come to constrain all blacks: “Being few in number compared with the whites the crime or carelessness of a few of his race is easily imputed to all, and the reputation of the good, industrious and reliable suffer thereby” (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 323). Similarly, he refers to the expectations and tastes of whites as constraining black advancement. Accordingly, “men are used to seeing Negroes in inferior positions; when, therefore, by any chance a Negro gets in a better position, most men immediately conclude that he is not fitted for it, even before he has a chance to show his fitness” (324).

Du Bois recounts 20 cases of blacks capable in the skilled trades, such as book binders, typesetters, carpenters, and stone-cutters, who were excluded from work in their respective fields. His research identified numerous blacks with training in the skilled trades who were unable to secure appropriate employment or who had been driven out of suitable positions:

In the matter of the trades, however, there can be no serious question of ability; for years the Negroes filled satisfactorily the trades of the city, and to-day in many parts of the South they are still prominent. And yet in Philadelphia a determined prejudice, aided by public opinion, has succeeded nearly in driving them from the field. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 329)

He identified several exceptional instances in which blacks achieved employment in a skilled trade. But in Du Bois’s analysis, the extraordinary intervention required in each case proved the general rule of an almost absolute color bar against blacks in

access to employment in the skilled trades. He was quite unequivocal about the importance of prejudice to this color line:

The chief agency that brings about this state of affairs is public opinion; if they were not intrenched, and strongly intrenched, back of an active prejudice or at least a passive acquiescence in this effort to deprive Negroes of a decent livelihood, both trade unions and arbitrary bosses would be powerless to do the harm they now do; where, however, a large section of the public more or less openly applaud the stamina of a man who refuses to work with a "Nigger," the results are inevitable. (332-33)

The nature and effects of the prejudice varied by gender and by class in Du Bois's analysis. Black women were stereotyped into a highly restrictive set of roles:

At a time when women are engaged in bread-winning to a larger degree than ever before, the field open to Negro women is unusually narrow. This is, of course, due largely to the more intense prejudices of females on all subjects, and especially to the fact that women who work dislike to be in any way mistaken for menials, and they regard Negro women as menials par excellence. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 333-34)

He goes on to recount nine instances of black women completely turned away from work or closed out of more skilled positions and instead made to scrub or wash.

These indignities, rebuffs, and profound constraints on one's own life chances and those of one's children Du Bois argued were acutely

felt among the most talented segment of the black population:

Besides these tangible and measurable forms there are deeper and less easily described results of the attitude of the white population toward the Negroes: a certain manifestation of a real or assumed aversion, a spirit of ridicule or patronage, a vindictive hatred in some, absolute indifference in others; all this of course does not make much difference to the mass of the race, but it deeply wounds the better classes, the very classes who are attaining to that which we wish the mass to attain. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 350)

He noted a deep irony here. Rather than creating the sort of blacks they ideally wanted, white prejudice served to depress the most talented and to profoundly alienate the most marginal within the black community. Thus, white prejudice and discrimination contributed to crime, illicit behavior, and social disorder rather than to success, mobility, and harmony. In a manner disturbingly analogous to the "modern incarceration state," as Du Bois saw it,

the class of Negroes which the prejudices of the city have distinctly encouraged is that of the criminal, the lazy, and the shiftless; for them the city teems with institutions and charities; for them there is succor and sympathy; for them Philadelphians are thinking and planning; but for the educated and industrious young colored man who wants work and not platitudes, wages and not alms, just rewards and not sermons—for such colored men Philadelphia apparently has no use. (352)

He concludes the section on color prejudice by calling on the "best conscience" of white Philadelphia to re-

alize its duty to the black citizens of the city.

His final substantive chapter discusses the "duty of the whites." Here again, he stressed the need for new attitudes:

We need then a radical change in public opinion on this point; it will not and ought not to come suddenly, but instead of thoughtless acquiescence in the continual and steadily encroaching exclusion of Negroes from work in the city, the leaders of industry and opinion ought to be trying here and there to open up new opportunities and give new chances to bright colored boys. (Du Bois [1899] 1996, 395)

Du Bois tried to craft a final word on the role of prejudice that did not paint most white Philadelphians as deliberate oppressors:

Again, the white people of the city must remember that much of the sorrow and bitterness that surrounds the life of the American Negro comes from the unconscious prejudice and half-conscious actions of men and women who do not intend to annoy. (396-97)

Black progress required action on both the economic and the attitudinal front.

Du Bois's analytical concern with prejudice lasted long after his completion of *The Philadelphia Negro*. In an essay in the *American Journal of Sociology*, where his ambit was global, he still employed prejudice as a central concept (Du Bois 1944b). Likewise, a concern with racial attitudes and prejudice appears repeatedly in *Dusk of Dawn* ([1940] 1995), particularly the chapter "The Con-

cept of Race." Du Bois's concern with prejudice was thus by no means a passing phase of his early intellectual career.

Du Bois's understanding of the nature of prejudice seemed to underscore its basis in ignorance and acquiescence to social custom. In this sense, his conceptualization is not far from ways of understanding prejudice still common in the social sciences (Katz 1991; Pettigrew 1982). Later in life, he would come to believe that prejudice had deeper psychological and irrational roots. He would occasionally argue that economic arrangements and interests preceded deep racial prejudice. At some points, he even speculated that there was a special perversity or animus underlying white hostility to African Americans.

A number of pioneering black sociologists shared Du Bois's belief that a full analysis of the status of African Americans required engaging issues of racial attitudes and prejudice. For example, Charles S. Johnson's *The Negro in American Civilization* (1930) devoted an entire chapter to racial attitudes. In a subsequent research monograph, Johnson discussed the importance of stereotypes to black-white relations (Masuoka and Johnson 1946). To be sure, Johnson emphasized the economic and situational underpinnings of prejudice and racial conflict. Yet, like Du Bois, he saw racial attitudes as an essential element in analyzing race relations:

The attitude one holds toward another group becomes an important tool for racial adjustment as well as for researches

in the field. The tendency to act, a mental set toward an object—in short, an attitude—is a form of conduct. It is an element in social interactions: it constitutes the core of social institutions and personalities. It is for this reason that one should understand the nature of racial attitudes. (Masuoka and Johnson 1946, 7)

In *Black Metropolis*, Drake and Cayton dedicated several chapters to analyzing the dynamics of the color line. In discussing the difference between southern and northern prejudice, Drake and Cayton made it clear that migration to the Midwest had not eliminated prejudice and discrimination from the experience of African Americans (Drake and Cayton [1945] 1993, 101). Even Cox's *Caste, Class and Race* ([1948] 1970) devoted a chapter to race prejudice, intolerance, and nationalism. Although he saw economic relations as fundamental and racial prejudice as an ideology of exploitation promulgated mainly by and for capitalists, Cox did not dismiss racial prejudice as unimportant epi-phenomena. Instead, he recognized that any full account of racial dynamics, conflict, and antagonism had to engage the question of attitudes and prejudice.

SOCIOLOGICAL DISINTEREST IN PREJUDICE

With the noteworthy exception of the Chicago School, the founding figures of sociology gave short shrift to matters of race relations. Race prejudice, discrimination, and racism were not central concerns of Marx, Weber, or Durkheim (Blauner 1972; Stone 1985; Omi and Winant 1986). It was the crush of world events—

fascism, nazism, the Holocaust, the collapse of colonial institutions in Africa and India, the establishment of the United Nations, and the emergence of a powerful civil rights movement in the United States—that ultimately compelled sociologists to devote more systematic attention to issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality.

The two decades following World War II witnessed an explosion of research on race and ethnic relations, much of it emphasizing a prejudice-discrimination paradigm. The major works during this era include Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (1944), Adorno and colleagues' *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Bettelheim and Janowitz's *Social Change and Prejudice* (1964), Williams, Dean, and Suchman's *Strangers Next Door* (1964), Selznick and Steinberg's *The Tenacity of Prejudice* (1969), as well as countless research articles, edited volumes, and monographs. Although increasingly under challenge from power and conflict models, the prejudice approach to race relations continued its intellectual dominance through much of the era of rioting and civil disorder in the 1960s, as epitomized by such works as Marx's *Protest and Prejudice* (1967), Campbell and Schuman's study for the Kerner Commission (1968), and Sears and McConahay's *The Politics of Violence* (1973). But by this later time, the dominance of the prejudice-discrimination paradigm had passed.

As forms of social protest and turmoil mounted in the 1960s, a

younger generation of sociologists turned to power and conflict models to understand race relations. These approaches stressed historical, structural, and economy-centered analyses of race relations. Blauner's *Racial Oppression in America* (1972), which articulated his internal colonialism model, is in some respects the paradigm-establishing work in this genre. To be sure, there had been precursors of such theoretical formulations, especially Cox's *Caste, Class and Race* ([1948] 1970). And strong critiques of the prejudice-discrimination model had been heard earlier. For example, Arnold Rose (1956) and Herbert Blumer (1958) had challenged the emphasis on prejudice, questioning the link between prejudice and discrimination.

But it was Blauner who most centrally articulated a view that race and racism were historical and structural forces in their own right. He insisted that racism had an independent institutional base that did not require prejudice in order to exert effect. His critique of prior research identified four shortcomings of prior sociological models; among these was the focus on prejudice:

The processes that maintain domination—control of whites over nonwhites—are built into the major social institutions. These institutions either exclude or restrict the participation of racial groups by procedures that have become conventional, part of the bureaucratic system of rules and regulations. Thus there is little need for prejudice as a motivating force. Because this is true, the distinction between racism as an objective phenomenon, located in the actual existence of

domination and hierarchy, and racism's subjective concomitants of prejudice and other motivations and feelings is a basic one. (Blauner 1972, 9-10)

Issues of privilege, group interests, exploitation, and the routine mobilization of biased institutional arrangements and practices—rather than prejudice—should be at the center of analyses of race.

Although a few have pursued the internal colonialism model as such, Blauner's emphasis on structural arrangements as sufficient analytical foundation for examining race relations has had more lasting effects. Certainly this is seen in Bonacich's work on split-labor market theory (1972). In some ways, it is also seen in Wilson's declining significance of race thesis (1978). His theoretical framework, although taking racial ideologies seriously (see Wilson 1973), stresses the changing economic and political structures of race relations (Wilson 1978). Wilson's argument is organized around three major epochs of race relations that reflect distinctive structural configurations of the economy and the polity.

Certainly the critique of studies of prejudice has not vanished. Stephen Steinberg (1998) identifies a focus on attitudes and prejudice as one of the fundamental flaws of social science analyses of race. For Steinberg, analyses that focused on prejudice and discrimination "were ahistorical abstractions that, if anything, obscured the unique aspects of racial oppression" (Steinberg 1995, 87). Likewise, Bonilla-Silva's (1997) recent efforts to develop an argument

about structural racism and racialized social processes is heavily critical of examinations of prejudice (though he is equally critical of the failures of Marxist and other purely material determinist positions). Both arguments are easily shown to be oversimplified and, more important, miss the core idea exemplified by Du Bois: powerful social analysis need not deny the force of prejudice and discrimination in order to show the importance of economic and political factors.

THE MODERN ROLE OF RACIAL ATTITUDES IN RACIAL INEQUALITY

Studies of prejudice and efforts to theorize how prejudice influences the status of African Americans have not disappeared from the scene (Tuch and Martin 1997; Schuman et al. 1998). Yet the level of skepticism within the discipline remains high. I suggest that the sort of nuanced and organic view of how racial prejudice relates to and influences the structural positioning of African Americans, as developed by Du Bois in *The Philadelphia Negro*, is sorely needed. There are strong reasons to believe that the modern-day disadvantages of African Americans in the labor market, in the housing market, in politics, in the educational arena, and in myriad forms of interpersonal social interaction with whites are strongly linked to modern forms of racial prejudice. While there are no doubt structural conditions and processes that facilitate the reproduction of racial inequality largely without regard to prejudice—that is,

wealth inequalities (see Oliver and Shapiro 1995)—I follow in Du Bois's footsteps in insisting that prejudice is a constituent element in the modern reproduction of systematic racial inequality.²

First, accumulating evidence shows that negative racial attitudes are part of the problem of high unemployment faced by African Americans. Recent in-depth interviews with employers seeking to fill low-skill positions suggest that they often hold very negative stereotypical images of blacks, especially of young black men. Kirschenman and Neckerman (1991) found powerful evidence of racial stereotyping that informed employer preferences and decisions in Chicago. The negative stereotypes not only influenced perceptions and hiring decisions but prompted employers to utilize selective recruitment and other screening mechanisms that had the effect of sorting out many potential black job applicants. Waldinger and Bailey (1991) found that white construction contractors, unions, and workers deliberately kept blacks out of construction work even as the demand for low-skill construction workers grew in the New York area.

As a result, "if the employment problems of blacks result from a mismatch of their skills with the job requirements of urban employers, then construction should be the one industry where there should be black workers aplenty. . . . Jobs requiring little schooling there may be in construction, but few of them go to black workers" (Waldinger and Bailey 1991, 314). Thus, even though blacks were in no sense a wage threat to

white workers, they still were effectively excluded from this avenue of well-paying low-skill work. While economic self-interest is no doubt one factor at work here, so is racial prejudice.

A recent carefully designed auditing study conducted by the Urban Institute found clear-cut evidence of discrimination in access to low-skill, entry-level positions. In one out of five audits, the white candidate advanced further than the black applicant, even though each possessed identical credentials except for race. Differential behavior could include not being allowed to submit an application, no offer of an interview, and finally not being offered a job. They did find some occasions of favorable treatment of blacks relative to whites, but the general pattern was that "if equally qualified black and white candidates are competing for a job, differential treatment, when it occurs, is three times more likely to favor the white applicant than the black" (Turner, Fix, and Struyk 1991, 62-63).

Second, negative racial attitudes play a part in the perpetuation of residential segregation by race. Sociologists increasingly recognize spatial mobility as a key aspect of broader socioeconomic mobility (Massey and Denton 1993). Hence, to find that prejudice both affects where whites prefer to live and constrains where blacks feel comfortable living suggests that prejudice exerts effects on black opportunity through the dynamics of the housing market. Farley and colleagues (1994) found that negative stereotypes of African Americans strongly predicted

whites' willingness to share integrated neighborhood space with blacks. 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 studies showed that the effect of negative stereotyping on attitudes toward residential integration was independent of perceptions about the average social class status of blacks or other racial minorities. That is, distinctly racial stereotypes influenced whites' willingness to live in integrated communities. Conversely, apprehension about racial discrimination constrains blacks' willingness to be the first family to enter a traditionally all-white neighborhood. There is some evidence that this sentiment may be on the rise (Farley et al 1993).

Third, a wide body of evidence is accumulating to show that racial prejudice affects politics. Black candidates for office typically encounter a degree of difficulty securing white votes, based partly in racial prejudice (Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Pettigrew and Alston 1988). The potency of racial prejudice seems to vary with the racial composition of electoral districts and the salience of race issues in the immediate political context (Reeves 1997). Moreover, it is increasingly clear that white candidates can use covert racial appeals to mobilize a segment of the white voting public under some circumstances. For example, the deploy-

ment of the infamous Willie Horton ad during the 1988 presidential campaign heightened the concern with race issues among the voting public and accentuated the impact of racial prejudice on electoral choices (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mendelberg 1997).

Likewise, recent fundamental reforms of welfare policy have taken place in a highly racialized political climate. Both historical research (Quadagno 1994) and a variety of public opinion studies (Gilens 1999) make it plain that racial divisions and racial prejudice have been one of the central weaknesses in the development of American welfare policy. Indeed, Gilens analyzes a wide array of national sample survey data and finds that anti-black racial attitudes are perhaps the central element of white hostility to certain features of welfare provision (that is, food stamps, AFDC, and general relief).

CONCLUSION

A century ago, Du Bois published *The Philadelphia Negro*, a work now recognized as a sociological classic. He developed a highly detailed portrait of black social life in Philadelphia. Part of the legacy of his analysis has lost the theoretical holism which linked structural issues of the economy and labor market dynamics to more social psychological and microsocial issues of prejudice and interpersonal discrimination. Sociology would do well to revisit the model Du Bois established.

It is worth emphasizing two points that are not parts of the argument I advance here. First, I do not suggest

that Du Bois gave us a brief to emphasize surveys and direct measurement of racial attitudes as the only methodological touchstone for examining prejudice. Indeed, none of the six interview protocols developed in *The Philadelphia Negro* include direct measures of racial attitudes. Although I do believe that direct measurement of such attitudes is possible, necessary, and intellectually productive (Schuman et al. 1998), the central point here concerns theory development and the fundamental elements of any theoretical account of the modern dynamics of the status of African Americans. If Du Bois was right then and continues to be relevant today, as I believe he was and is, then theoretical formulations that deny the relevance of racial attitudes and of prejudice are flawed.

Second, I do not suggest that the nature of prejudice and discrimination today is identical to that observed and analyzed by Du Bois 100 years ago. To the contrary, I have argued elsewhere that the type of essentially emergent or quasi-Jim Crow racist ideology that Du Bois found has increasingly been replaced by a more free market or laissez-faire racist ideology (Bobo 1997; Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997). The new laissez-faire racism involves the acceptance of muted but negative racial stereotypes about black behavior (that is, more violence-prone, lazier, more sexually irresponsible, less intelligent as compared to whites on average). Whereas these differences would have been seen as of constitutional or biological origin in Du Bois's era, laissez-faire racism

understands them as reflecting a cultural and volitional distinction: that is, under the new ideological regime, race differences are a matter of degree, not kind, and involve a lack of effort on blacks' part, not human nature. The new racism is more subtle, malleable, and penetrable than that observed by Du Bois—this is a qualitatively different ethos and era. Doors to black participation in society are not completely shut—civil rights law stands as a bulwark against such practices. But an array of subtle hurdles and covert processes repeatedly work to constrain black opportunity and performance.

The effort to erect purely "structural theories of racism" is likely to fail. Although the effort to improve upon earlier research paradigms makes sense, there is no need to recreate the theoretical excesses of a bygone era. Strong and more fully specified analyses of racial inequality will seek to link macrosocial conditions to microsocial process, to show the interplay of social structure and personality, and thereby follow Du Bois's example of linking the status of African Americans to both prejudice and other features of social organization.

Notes

1. Du Bois was one of the few American sociologists of his era to actually take a seminar with Weber. His book *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, published in 1899, is preceded by Durkheim's *Suicide* (1897) by only two years. Although *The Philadelphia Negro* is now recognized as a classic sociological community survey (Converse 1987, 23; Bulmer 1991; and more generally see Broderick 1974;

Rudwick 1974; McDaniel 1998), Du Bois was intellectually ostracized by white sociologists in his own time (Rudwick 1969; Green and Driver 1976; Key 1978). Lacking placement in a mainstream university and the recognition of his peers, "Du Bois was denied that attention, because he was black, because the condition of black Americans was not a matter of major political or scholarly concern around 1899, and because a racially stratified system of higher education gave him no significant opportunities for sustained interaction with his white peers in the academic community" (Bulmer 1991, 185-86).

2. Even in the case of wealth inequality, racial prejudice plays a part, both direct and indirect. Some forms of racial prejudice, such as discrimination in the housing market based in prejudice, affect blacks' capacity to accumulate wealth. More indirectly, the denial of societal responsibility for racial inequality and the clear resistance in public opinion to serious discussion of reparations for slavery to African Americans constitute fundamental barriers to overcoming the gaping racial disparities in accumulated wealth.

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