

Racialized Politics

THE
DEBATE
ABOUT
RACISM
IN
AMERICA

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ONE Race in American
Politics
Framing the Debates

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The place of African Americans in American society has been a controversial question on the political agenda throughout American history. The system of chattel slavery established at the very outset generated intense debates for over two hundred years, even in the framing of the major founding documents of the nation, and ultimately triggered a bloody Civil War. Even after formal emancipation, the Southern "Jim Crow" system of official discrimination and segregation and parallel, though somewhat milder, practices in the North kept blacks in an officially designated lower-caste status.¹

That began to erode after World War II, perhaps most symbolically in 1954 in the unanimous Supreme Court ruling that racially separate school systems were unconstitutional because they were inherently unequal. Steadily growing institutional strength and political organization in Southern black communities soon led to increasingly numerous civil rights protests. Federal government policy finally shifted dramatically when the 1964 Civil Rights Act provided guarantees of equal opportunity and the 1965 Voting Rights Act secured full black enfranchisement.

Ironically, Northern urban ghettos almost immediately began to erupt in "long hot summers" of violence. Racial problems came to be viewed by the general public as among the nation's "most important problems," and many observers felt that America was in a state of racial crisis.² A presidential commission concluded with great pessimism that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—

separate and unequal" (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968, 1). And racial issues have been on the political agenda ever since. Beginning in the 1970s, court-ordered busing produced extensive protest and eventually massive levels of "white flight." Racially tinged issues, such as welfare, crime, "permissive judges," and government regulation, have been the subject of strenuous political debate and draconian legislation for three decades. Now referenda aimed at abolishing affirmative action in government are increasingly appearing on state ballots.

It would be surprising if the effects of 350 years of formalized racial inequality could be quickly eliminated. Much progress has been made, of course. But significant racial gaps in most domains of the quality of life continue to exist. And the races are highly polarized about what to do about them. The role of government is perhaps the most centrally contested issue. The authors represented in this volume have major differences of opinion, as will be seen, but they all share the belief that the opinions of the electorate will in the end be decisive.

This book, then, focuses on the nature of public opinion about race in the United States and on its effects on politics. However, public opinion does not exist in a vacuum. It is about something. In our case, that something concerns the reality of blacks' lives in America and what government should be doing about it. This chapter begins, therefore, with a brief appraisal of blacks' situation in America. Though much progress has been made in the last half century, blacks continue to be substantially disadvantaged relative to whites, and that racial gap seems not to have closed much in recent years. We then review how government policy has addressed it over the past four decades. The policies of the 1960s focused on prohibiting explicit racial discrimination against individuals. They were soon supplemented by tougher actions aimed at the tenacious and subtle roots of racial inequality. These in turn have come under increasingly skeptical scrutiny by Congress and the Supreme Court. We then turn to public opinion about racial issues. Although all Americans now overwhelmingly endorse formal racial equality, whites and blacks sharply disagree about most racial policies, and whites themselves are quite divided. Finally, we take up the central thrust of the book, the principal competing theories about the sources of white public opinion about race, variously emphasizing prejudice, social structure, or ordinary politics. The main body of the book consists of the debates among these theories. We hope that col-

lecting in one place this collision of intellectual approaches will represent a valuable contribution.

THE CURRENT STATE OF BLACK AMERICA

In 1965, many were hopeful that the guarantee of formal equal rights would result in the end of most racial inequalities. Since then, there has indeed been much improvement. Nevertheless, blacks today remain at a substantial disadvantage by most standard indicators. This gap between the races has in many respects not narrowed appreciably for the past two decades.³

Perhaps the ultimate bottom line is life expectancy. Though blacks' longevity has improved substantially in the past half century, the racial gap in it has scarcely changed at all.⁴ To understand such a difference, it is natural to turn first to basic socioeconomic indicators. Blacks have always been substantially more likely to be unemployed than whites. That difference has not varied greatly since the mid-1970s, with the black unemployment rate holding at about double that for whites in good times or bad.⁵ To be sure, among the employed, blacks have moved up the occupational ladder substantially. For example, the proportion of black men in white-collar occupations increased from 5 percent in 1940 to 22 percent in 1970 and then again to 32 percent in 1990. But the proportion of whites in such occupations has also substantially increased, so blacks remain severely underrepresented in almost all higher-status occupations.⁶

Blacks' income increased greatly in the years after World War II, both in absolute terms and relative to whites. For example, the black/white ratio in median annual earnings for men increased from 43 in 1940 to 73 in 1980. Since then, blacks' income has continued to increase in absolute terms, but the black/white ratio has not improved further. Moreover, blacks have considerably less economic reserve than do whites. Black households earned about 60 percent as much as the average white household in 1988, but had only 8 percent as much net worth.⁷

Blacks' educational level also showed impressive improvement after World War II. In 1940, 49 percent of the black population had less than five years of schooling, as opposed to only 16 percent of whites. By 1990, blacks were over 90 percent as likely as whites to be high school graduates. But a high school education is no longer as valuable as it once was. Blacks' rate of college enrollment also in-

creased sharply through the 1970s, and the racial gap in initial college enrollment had virtually been eliminated by 1980. But since then, the racial gap in college enrollment has increased substantially, and blacks' rate of college graduation is falling off (see Farley 1996, 231).⁸

Blacks and whites remain surprisingly isolated from one another. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1993, 2) concluded that, as of 1980, "no group in the history of the United States has ever experienced the sustained high level of residential segregation that has been imposed on blacks in large American cities for the past fifty years."⁹ At that time, Reynolds Farley and his colleagues (1978) proposed the image of "chocolate city—vanilla suburbs" to describe the phenomenon of black-dominated central cities surrounded by nearly all-white suburbs. Since then, blacks have increasingly moved into the suburbs. Often that simply reflects the spillover of black residential areas beyond city limits, however, and blacks remain the most residentially segregated minority group.¹⁰ Similarly, blacks are by far the least likely of all minority groups in America to engage in racial or ethnic intermarriage; as of 1990, only about 6 percent of all marriages by young African Americans were interracial (see Farley 1996, 264).¹¹

Blacks have become an increasingly important political force in their own right. Black registration and turnout surged following passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and today are comparable to those of whites in the nation as a whole.¹² Black voters are among the most loyal supporters of the Democratic Party at the same time that they generally demonstrate a strong sense of racial solidarity in politics.¹³ One result is that the number of black elected officials has increased enormously since the civil rights era, most elected in majority black constituencies.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the racial gap persists in this realm as well. The best rule of thumb is that prominent black candidates tend to split the electorate along racial lines. They usually receive almost all the black vote, while the white vote divides on the basis of racial attitudes, party identification, and ideology.¹⁵ Blacks elected in majority white constituencies are the exception.¹⁶ So while 11 percent of the voting-age population is black, less than 2 percent of America's elected officials are.

The size of the black middle class has increased substantially. The percentage of blacks earning at least twice the poverty-line level of income rose from 1 percent in 1940 to almost 50 percent by the mid-1970s. But in this respect, too, progress has slowed markedly; that proportion has not changed since then (Farley 1996, 255). Also, even this emerging black middle class continues to have much less finan-

cial reserves than does the white middle class. As Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (1993, 93) put it, "An accurate and realistic appraisal of the economic footing of the black middle class reveals its precariousness, marginality, and fragility."¹⁷

At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of blacks living in poverty declined sharply until the 1970s, but has remained about constant since then. This is reflected in the concentration of poverty in racially segregated neighborhoods, high levels of male joblessness in central cities, high rates of black involvement in violent crime as both victims and perpetrators, and high rates of female-headed families and out-of-wedlock births (Bobo 1997a; Wilson 1997). For example, at any given time, about one-third of all young black men are enmeshed in the criminal justice system—whether incarcerated, on parole, or on probation. And far more black than white children are born out of wedlock, and far more are living in female-headed households. In these areas, there has been little improvement, either in absolute terms or relative to whites.¹⁸

At a broad level, then, blacks now have greater opportunity and are much better off than they were before World War II. Still, a substantial racial gap remains in many areas. That much seems to be largely agreed upon. But the trend in those gaps remains a matter of controversy. Some, such as Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom (1997), see a continuing convergence between the races, even if slower in the last two decades, so that the gaps are likely to disappear with time. Others perceive progress as having essentially come to a halt two decades ago. For example, Farley concludes that "black-white discrepancies on the most important indicators of economic status have been persistent for at least two decades" (1996, 263–68).¹⁹ And there are prominent long-term pessimists. Andrew Hacker concludes that the United States confronts "a huge racial chasm . . . and there are few signs that the coming century will see it closed" (1992, 219). Derrick Bell argues that "racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society. Indeed, the racism that made slavery feasible is far from dead in the last decade of twentieth century America; and the civil rights gains, so hard won, are being steadily eroded" (1992, ix, 3).

A second matter of dispute concerns the causes of these racial gaps. Some critique black culture. Blacks show a lack of work ethic; they self-segregate rather than taking a chance on living in integrated neighborhoods; they engage in violent crime rather than obeying the law; and they are irresponsible about their families, sexuality, alcohol, and drug use, leading to the continued deterioration of the black nuclear

family (e.g., D'Souza 1995; Sowell 1994; Roth 1994; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997). Others point to white racism and a wide range of discriminatory practices, such as arbitrary traffic stops by white police, restrictive home mortgage lending policies, differential imposition of the death penalty, and white taxpayers' refusal to provide resources to overcome racial disadvantage.²⁰ Considerable systematic research has been done on racial discrimination in domains such as employment, housing, education, financial services, health care, the retail market, and the criminal justice system. Recent reviews conclude that it continues to be real and pervasive.²¹ Even middle-class blacks prove to be exposed to relentless and ubiquitous personal experiences of discrimination (Feagin and Sikes 1994; also see Hochschild 1993).

FEDERAL RACIAL POLICY

The fate of African Americans, and of race relations in America, will depend on many factors. At this juncture, however, Americans find themselves in a period of great controversy and collective uncertainty about racial problems. Some of the greatest controversies now concern the proper role of government in dealing with those problems.

Between the end of Reconstruction and the end of World War II, the federal government rarely addressed the problem of race, and the two political parties differed little on such questions. In the South, blacks had been effectively disenfranchised, and the Republican Party had virtually disappeared, leaving a nearly uncontested all-white Democratic Party in power. The national Democratic Party shied away from issues of race because its strong Southern base had disproportionate seniority-based influence in Congress. The Republican Party was restrained by its more general ideological caution about governmental action. And blacks themselves were largely politically inactive.

In the early 1960s, however, liberal Democrats began to assert leadership on civil rights, and the parties began to polarize around racial issues.²² In 1963, the Kennedy administration was somewhat reluctantly pulled into the increasing confrontations between Southern authorities and civil rights activists. Matters escalated quickly, however, and by 1965, landmark civil rights legislation was in place, providing federal guarantees for equal opportunity in a wide variety of domains. Its goal was to remove racial discrimination and so establish a race-blind standard. As Martin Luther King, Jr., said, the hope was that people would be judged by "the content of their character" rather than "the color of their skins." An "intent" standard was set: a violation of

equal opportunity could be proven only by demonstrating a specific perpetrator's deliberate intent to achieve a discriminatory outcome.

However, the new laws and affirming court decisions met with much white resistance. It soon became apparent that proving intent in the thousands of daily decisions made by state and local authorities was beyond the capacities of federal agencies or the courts. As a result, beginning in the late 1960s, new techniques to combat continuing racial discrimination began to be employed. They began to replace the "intent" standard with an "effect" standard: a rule could be defined as discriminatory even when it appeared neutral on its face as long as it could be shown to systematically reduce representation of blacks. This naturally increased the intrusiveness of the federal government on behalf of the black population in both the private sector and local government activities. And these policies were potentially especially politically vulnerable because they often were generated by court decision or administrative regulation rather than through legislation (Jaynes and Williams 1989, 224; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997).

In fact, in domain after domain, negative reaction has subsequently set in, from the courts, Congress, and conservative presidencies. School desegregation was initially the most visible issue. By the late 1960s, it was apparent that previous decisions had been insufficient to desegregate Southern schools. As a result, the Supreme Court began, in a series of unanimous decisions starting in 1968, to accept proof of mere de facto segregation rather than insisting on proof of intent to segregate. A 1971 decision mandated busing as a desegregation tool, which triggered similar judicial orders throughout the nation. Busing was, however, vastly unpopular among whites. The resulting protest quickly led to a limit on large-scale busing plans, perhaps most visibly in a 1974 decision voiding a metropolitan busing plan in the Detroit area.²³ Confining busing to the city limits allowed "white flight" to largely white suburban schools and perpetuated the de facto segregation of predominantly black schools in central cities.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act set up an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to carry out the color-blind elimination of racial discrimination in employment. However, it had no powers of enforcement and soon proved to be relatively ineffective. Here, too, government officials concluded that little change would occur as long as intent to discriminate had to be proved and turned to the effect standard. In 1970, racially proportionate hiring targets were mandated for all federal contractors.²⁴ In 1972, Congress allowed for class-action suits, which soon motivated employers to meet federal guidelines for

proportionate hiring voluntarily. However, here, too, an increasingly conservative Supreme Court began to pull back in the late 1980s.²⁵

Almost all affirmative action programs in college admissions have been voluntary. They expanded greatly in the 1970s. In the *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California* case in 1978, the Supreme Court outlawed explicit racial quotas, though still allowing race to be used as one factor among many in admissions decisions. But in the *Hopwood v. Texas* case in 1996, it ruled out preferential standards of admission to the University of Texas, and that fall a statewide initiative eliminated affirmative action by state and local governments in California, including by public universities.²⁶

Guaranteeing blacks' right to vote had been a central objective of the civil rights movement. The 1965 Voting Rights Act had placed federal officials in specific districts with histories of discrimination in order to facilitate black voter registration. Although this greatly increased black voter turnout, the number of black elected officials still fell far short of proportionality. When that act was renewed in 1982, therefore, Congress and the Justice Department agreed that legislative redistricting plans should be required to maximize the number of "majority-minority" districts, with the goal of increasing minority representation. This, too, was ultimately reversed by the Supreme Court, in *Shaw v. Reno* in 1993 (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997, 426).²⁷

Finally, the question of "multiculturalism" in educational curricula has pitted cultural minorities' desire for recognition and respect against the goal of assimilating all Americans to the broader society. Controversy has arisen over using languages other than English, teaching ethnic history, broadening the traditional canon to include other cultural traditions, requiring courses in cultural diversity, and even occasionally rewriting the curriculum entirely, as in "Afrocentric" curricula that reinterpret traditional disciplines from an African perspective. These debates also raise more fundamental questions about group-based as opposed to individually based rights, difference-blind treatment, and state neutrality with respect to groups (Glazer 1997; Hollinger 1995; Peterson 1995; Appiah and Gutmann 1996).²⁸

Effect standards for the elimination of discrimination, often now described as "race-conscious" remedies, have been intensely debated. Supporters argue that institutional racism and whites' resistance to change have been so deeply and subtly embedded in the entire fabric of American society that little would have changed if more proactive methods had not been used. They argue that demanding findings

of intent is beside the point or even a mere distracting excuse; what is needed is proof of equality. Opponents have argued that race-conscious remedies may in fact not have been necessary because substantial progress was already well under way and that such policies actually have slowed racial progress by angering otherwise sympathetic whites (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997, 538; Sniderman and Piazza 1993).

PUBLIC OPINION ON RACIAL ISSUES

In a democracy, a natural question about such a long-standing public conflict is what the public wants and why. Addressing those questions is our primary purpose in this volume.

THE JIM CROW BELIEF SYSTEM

A formalized ideology of white racial superiority began to develop in the years prior to the Civil War, in response to abolitionist challenges to slavery. After Emancipation, the Jim Crow system of legalized discrimination and segregation gradually took hold over the later years of the nineteenth century, built on the foundations of that white supremacist ideology. By all accounts, it was broadly accepted in the South and indeed was quite common throughout the nation before World War II.

It had three major components. One was "racialism," the belief that blacks were inherently inferior to whites because of their race. A second was a formal pattern of social distance and segregation, such that blacks were supposed to "stay in their place," separate and subordinate to whites, especially in public. Public facilities were racially segregated, and blacks and whites were not to be personal friends or to date or marry. A third was a legalized pattern of discrimination, such that blacks were not allowed to vote and were provided with separate and inferior schools, while whites were given preference in employment and elsewhere.²⁹

This belief system came under attack from intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s, capped most visibly in 1944 by Gunnar Myrdal's *The American Dilemma*.³⁰ Fortunately, an early survey by the National Opinion Research Center in 1942 provides benchmark data against which later changes can be measured. Since then, white support for all three elements seems to have precipitously declined. Here we draw principally on the most complete analyses available, those of Schuman

et al. (1997). Table 1.1 provides some examples. The belief that blacks are inherently inferior to whites is now at a low ebb. In the 1996 General Social Survey (GSS), only 10 percent of the white respondents to a national survey said the racial differences in jobs, income, and housing arise "because most blacks have less in-born ability to learn" (Schuman et al. 1997, 159).³¹

Support for formal segregation has also sharply diminished. In 1942, most whites supported separate schools for blacks and whites (68 percent) and segregated sections in public transit for blacks and whites (54 percent). In 1958, 96 percent of adult whites disapproved of "marriage between whites and nonwhites," and as late as 1963, 63 percent approved of laws forbidding racial intermarriage, as astonishing as that seems today. But support for formal segregation collapsed over the next decade, and today it is practically nonexistent. In the mid-1990s, only 4 percent of white adults believed that black and white children should go to separate schools, and 13 percent supported laws forbidding racial intermarriage.

Before World War II, most whites also thought formal discrimination against blacks was perfectly appropriate, but support for this had also collapsed by the end of the 1960s. In 1942, for example, most (55 percent) thought that whites should have the first chance at any kind of job, but by 1972, only 3 percent thought whites should have such preference.

These changes among whites have largely eliminated racial differences of opinion about the old Jim Crow ideology. For example, in 1995, 99 percent of blacks and 96 percent of whites thought black and white children should go to the same schools rather than to separate schools. In 1996, 97 percent of blacks and 86 percent of whites opposed whites' being able to keep blacks out of white neighborhoods (Schuman et al. 1997, 105, 107, 243). Only on the question of racial intermarriage is there much remaining difference between blacks and whites, as table 1.1 shows (Schuman et al. 1997). Interestingly enough, Myrdal himself had forecast that this might be the most difficult issue for whites to come to grips with.

Several findings in surveys of whites' racial attitudes during the 1960s gave reason for an optimistic view of the future. One was early evidence of generally liberalizing trends in attitudes about the Jim Crow ideology. The others were the substantially greater support for racial equality in the North than in the segregated South and greater support among younger and more-educated whites than among older and less-educated whites.³² If a vigorous civil rights effort in the South

TABLE 1.1 Increasing Opposition to the Jim Crow Belief System

	WHITE RESPONDENTS				BLACK RESPONDENTS
	Early	1960s	1970s	Current	Current
Racial inferiority					
Are blacks' worse jobs, income, and housing because most blacks have less inborn ability to learn? (% No)	—	—	74% (1977)	90% (1996)	89% (1996)
Segregation					
Should white and black students go to the same or to separate schools? (% Same)	32 (1942)	63 (1964)	86 (1972)	96 (1995)	99 (1995)
Do you approve of marriage between blacks and whites? (% Yes)	4 (1958)	—	27 (1972)	67 (1997)	83 (1997)
Favor discrimination					
Should Negroes have as good a chance as whites at any kind of job, or should white people have the first chance at any kind of job? (% As good)	45 (1944)	85 (1963)	97 (1972)	—	—
Existence of discrimination					
Are blacks' worse jobs, income, and housing mainly due to discrimination? (% Yes)	—	—	41 (1977)	34 (1996)	66 (1996)
Do blacks have as good a chance as whites in your community to get any kind of job for which they are qualified? (% No)	—	49 (1963)	18 (1978)	19 (1997)	53 (1997)

Source: Adapted from Schuman et al. 1997, 104–8, 156–60, 240–44, 258–62. All data are from national surveys.

Note: The percentages exclude neutral responses and missing data from the base, including responses such as "haven't thought about it" or insufficient interest to have an opinion. Wording is approximate and minor changes in wording occurred in some items over time.

could reverse three centuries of structural racism in that region and if the white population's educational level continued to rise throughout the nation, ill-educated older whites, steeped in the racism of an earlier day, would gradually be replaced by a new generation of college-educated youths, enlightened by modern social science. Cohort replacement all by itself might gradually erase the Jim Crow ideology.

Current surveys sustain that expectation (Schuman et al. 1997). White public opinion has indeed come to fully repudiate the Jim Crow doctrines so common half a century ago, as we have seen. The way was led by younger, college-educated, and Northern whites (Schuman et al. 1997; also see Glaser and Gilens 1997). This racial caste system had lasted for about 350 years, but it was almost entirely dismantled in the 25 years following World War II. Surrendering it was a truly momentous change in our society, and it came about in a relatively short period of time.

PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Whites were not blind to the racial double standard that infected our society. As shown in table 1.1, in 1963 about half of the whites (49 percent) believed that blacks in their community did not have as good a chance as whites "to get any kind of job for which they are qualified." But today most whites appear to believe that racial discrimination is no longer a significant factor. For example, 66 percent of the white respondents in the 1996 GSS said that racial differences in jobs, income, and housing were not "mainly due to discrimination." In a 1997 Gallup poll, 81 percent believed that blacks have as good a chance as whites in their own local job market, while 79 percent said that in their community "black children have as good a chance as white children to get a good education," and 86 percent said that they have "the same chance to get any housing they can afford" (Gallup Poll Social Audit 1997).

On this point, blacks and whites part company. Blacks consistently perceive more discrimination and less equal opportunity than do whites. In 1996, blacks were twice as likely as whites (66 percent to 34 percent) to believe that socioeconomic gaps between the races were "mainly due to discrimination" (Schuman et al. 1997, 157, 259).³³ Blacks were far more likely to perceive unequal opportunity in the local job market than were whites (by a 53 percent to 19 percent margin) and more likely to perceive unequal educational and housing opportunities in one's own community as well.³⁴

FEDERAL POLICIES

As we have seen, substantial racial gaps remain in most social, economic, and political indicators of well-being. But what, if anything, government should do about them remains a matter of great controversy. Despite whites' increased support for general principles of formal racial equality, they have long been quite divided about the desirability of federal intervention to accomplish such goals. Even government intervention to overcome formal discrimination was highly controversial in the 1960s. In 1964, 63 percent felt that black and white children should go to the same schools, while only 47 percent felt that the federal government should ensure that they did. Similarly, 85 percent felt that blacks should have the same chance at any kind of job, but only 43 percent felt the federal government should intervene to ensure it. These contrasts can be seen by comparing tables 1.1 and 1.2.³⁵ The white public was then deeply divided about whether the federal government should be involved in guaranteeing equal opportunity.

As indicated earlier, frustration over the ever-changing maneuvers of their opponents led government officials to propose policies that would go beyond guaranteeing equal opportunity and actually ensure greater equality between the races. These have often been described as "outcome-oriented" or "race-conscious" policies because mere evidence of numerical inequalities between the races can trigger remedial action. As can be seen in table 1.2, whites are generally more strongly opposed to these policies than to those that seem to ensure only equal opportunity. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, fewer than 20 percent of white adults usually supported busing children to ensure school integration. Opponents typically outnumbered supporters of special help for blacks and other minorities by a two-to-one margin. Special preferences for blacks in jobs and in admissions to higher education have generally been opposed by most whites, and by large margins. Similarly, experimental studies have shown that targeting programs specifically for blacks rather than for poor people in general or using race-conscious as opposed to more universalistic justifications for social programs significantly increases white opposition (Schuman et al. 1997, 123-24, 175; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Sniderman and Carmine 1997a).³⁶

These racial policy proposals not only now draw more opposition than do general principles of racial equality, but also have not shown

TABLE 1.2 Support for Racial Policies

	WHITE RESPONDENTS			BLACK RESPONDENTS
	1960s	1970s/1980s	Current	Current
Equal opportunity				
Should the government in Washington see to it that white and black children go to the same schools, or is this not the government's business? (% See to it)	47% (1964)	39% (1972)	38% (1994)	81% (1994)
Should the government in Washington see to it that black people get fair treatment in jobs, or is this not the federal government's business? (% See to it)	43 (1964)	49 (1972)	44 (1996)	91 (1996)
Equal outcomes				
Do you favor or oppose the busing of black and white school children from one school district to another? (% Favor)	—	13 (1972)	33 (1996)	59 (1996)
Should the government in Washington make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks or not make any special effort because they should help themselves? (% Make every effort)	—	38 (1972)	25 (1996)	66 (1996)
Because of past discrimination should colleges and universities reserve openings for black students or not because such quotas give blacks advantages they haven't earned (% Reserve openings)	—	29 (1986)	26 (1992)	76 (1992)
Because of past discrimination should blacks be given preference in hiring and promotion or not because it gives blacks advantages they haven't earned? (% Give preference)	—	15 (1986)	12 (1996)	59 (1996)

Source: Adapted from Schuman et al. 1997, 123–24, 176–78, 248–50, 266–70. All data are from national surveys.

Note: The percentages exclude neutral responses and missing data from the base, including responses such as “haven’t thought about it” or insufficient interest to have an opinion. Wording is approximate and minor changes in wording occurred in some items over time.

the liberalizing trends we saw earlier for those principles. There has been no increase since the 1960s in support for federal action ensuring school integration or equal employment, as shown in table 1.2.³⁷ Support for outcome-oriented policies has not increased in most other cases either. Similarly, the demographic differences that foreshadowed liberalizing changes about the old Jim Crow doctrines are consistently much reduced concerning racial policy preferences. Younger, college-educated, or Northern whites are in general somewhat more supportive of equal opportunity policies than are older, less-than-college-educated, or Southern whites, but the differences are usually smaller than on the Jim Crow-era issues. These demographic differences are still further attenuated about the more contemporary outcome-oriented policies. To be sure, whites living in the Deep South are still the most conservative on questions such as busing or special government aid to blacks. But such regional differences are less sharp on questions of affirmative action, and sometimes even reversed. Younger cohorts are not uniformly more liberal than older cohorts, and in any case, cohort differences tend to be small. The effects of educational level on attitudes toward these contemporary issues are also somewhat more complex than on the older, Jim Crow-era issues (Schuman et al. 1997).³⁸

The result is that blacks and whites are deeply divided over racial policy issues. As can be seen in table 1.2, the vast majority of blacks favor policies to guarantee equal opportunity, while whites are sharply split, or sometimes mostly opposed. Blacks’ support is not as monolithic when it comes to outcome-oriented policies, but they still draw majority black support. Both busing and preferential treatment in hiring and promotion were supported by 59 percent of the black respondents in 1996 national surveys, in contrast to the substantial white majorities opposed to them (Schuman et al. 1997).³⁹

In short, one goal of the civil rights movement of the 1960s was to outlaw formal segregation and discrimination. That goal is now virtually unanimously accepted. Almost all Americans now accept Justice Harlan’s famous dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson*: “Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens” (quoted in Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997, 33). However, the use of governmental action to achieve that goal is at best sharply contested and in some cases strongly opposed by the white majority. There is little evidence of any liberalizing changes over time about such policies, and there are no systematic demographic differences that would suggest that compositional changes in the white population will inevi-

tably lead to greater liberalization. In contrast, blacks strongly support such racially targeted policies, though with more ambivalence about so-called race-conscious policies. This necessarily produces considerable racial conflict about such policies. The contrasts between these two types of issues, and between white and black opinions, represent the starting point for the debates drawn together in this volume. It presents and extends those debates with the hope that we will all better understand our people, our nation, and perhaps even ourselves.

THEORETICAL MODELS OF WHITE OPINION

Explaining opposition to liberal racial policies among whites has been the subject of extensive research and intense debate by American social scientists over the past quarter-century. Here we try to summarize the most prominent alternatives, underlining the areas of strongest controversy. Our intent is to present these alternatives in as impartial a fashion as possible, though surely our own involvement in some of these debates will ensure that we will fall short of that hope.

These models fall into three general categories. The first grows out of the long tradition of sociopsychological analysis of racial prejudice. Such models usually begin with the assumption of early-life socialization of prejudice and social values and also rely on contemporary theories of cognitive processing. The second grows out of the sociological focus on social structure, emphasizing group differences in power, status, and economic resources as the prime movers. Ideology is often treated as a justification for such group interests. The third focuses particularly on the politics of race. It suggests that public opinion on racial policy is now primarily motivated by values and ideologies that are race-neutral. As a result, whites' opinions are strongly influenced by the exact nature of the policy proposals under consideration.

SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL MODELS

A variety of sociopsychological perspectives share the assumption that formal racial equality is now a settled issue in this society. But they also suggest that racism has not disappeared; instead, it has taken new forms. They differ about the nature of those new forms and about how racism interfaces with values and attitudes that have no manifest racial content.

SYMBOLIC RACISM, MODERN RACISM, AND RACIAL RESENTMENT One alternative is that such a new form of racism lies behind much of

whites' contemporary opposition to racial policies and black political candidates. This originated with David Sears and Donald Kinder's finding that Jim Crow racism had already been repudiated so broadly outside the South by 1969 that it was no longer a useful predictor of whites' political preferences. Instead, they found that other racial attitudes, described as reflecting "symbolic racism," were strongly associated with whites' votes against the black candidate in the close Los Angeles mayoral race in that year (Sears and Kinder 1971).

This evolved into a more general theoretical position. The new form of racism has been variously described as "symbolic racism," "modern racism," or "racial resentment," reflecting slightly different interpretations of the same general reasoning and measurement.⁴⁰ This theory embodies several general propositions. First, older forms of racism now predict attitudes toward racial policy or voting behavior only weakly, in part due to the decline in support for them.⁴¹ Second, despite that decline, the socialization of negative affect and stereotypes about blacks continues, leaving a reservoir of racial antipathy decoupled from racist beliefs. Third, blacks are perceived by many whites to violate such cherished American values as the work ethic, self-reliance, impulse control, and obedience of authority. The new racism is said to derive from a coalescing of negative racial affect with the perceived violation of such traditional values. Finally, the content of the new racism includes the beliefs that discrimination no longer poses a major barrier to the advancement of blacks, that blacks should try harder to make it on their own, that they are demanding too much, and that they are too often given special treatment by government and other elites (see Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears 1988; Sears et al. 1997; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman this volume).

In a variety of empirical studies, this new racism has been found to make large contributions to explaining whites' attitudes toward racial policy and voting preferences in elections with black candidates, over and above the effects of such alternative predictors as Jim Crow racism, political ideology, party identification, individualism, authoritarianism, or demographic variables (see Kinder and Sanders 1996; Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay 1986; Sears et al. 1997). Furthermore, whites' opposition to racial policies or black candidacies generally does not reflect a response to real personal racial threats, such as having school-age children in a district with busing or feeling personally vulnerable to being victimized by black crime. These latter findings challenge interest-based accounts of whites' racial attitudes (Sears and Funk 1991).⁴²

The symbolic racism approach has stimulated its share of controversies. The major critiques are that the various components of symbolic racism do not represent a coherent belief system, that it is indistinguishable from old-fashioned racism, that it mainly reflects ideological conservatism rather than having much to do with racism, that any association between symbolic racism and racial policy preferences is merely tautological because both measure attitudes toward special treatment of blacks by government, that its origins do not lie in a blend of antiblack affect with perceptions that blacks violate traditional values, that some of the items frequently used to measure symbolic racism can be interpreted as indexing racial threat, that group interest rather than self-interest may be the most powerful form of racial threat, and that the theory is narrowly focused on the case of American race relations rather than being more broadly applicable to cases of intergroup conflict in general (Bobo 1983, 1988b; Sidanius et al. 1992; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986b; Wood 1994).⁴³

A number of studies by proponents of the symbolic racism perspective have addressed these issues. First, the various components of symbolic racism do tend to form a coherent belief system, though there is evidence that it consists of two highly correlated subfactors focusing, respectively, on blacks' and on society's responsibilities for blacks' disadvantages (Tarnan and Sears 1998). Second, when factor analyzed, symbolic racism and old-fashioned racism form two distinct, though correlated, dimensions. Symbolic racism has the far stronger effect when both are included in multivariate analyses predicting to policy preferences (see Sears et al. 1997; Hughes 1997; McConahay 1986). Third, symbolic racism is indeed correlated with race-neutral conservatism. But when ideology is controlled for, symbolic racism remains the most powerful predictor of racial policy preferences, while ideology tends to have a minor residual effect. Fourth, when measures of symbolic racism are purged of all items referring to government or special treatment policy, the results are essentially unchanged (Sears et al. 1997; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman this volume; Tarnan and Sears 1998; also see Alvarez and Brehm 1997).

However, important questions remain. The original theory hypothesized that symbolic racism stemmed from a combination of racial affect and traditional values, especially individualism. The contribution of racial affect seems clear, but most studies to date have not found a strong contribution of individualism, at least not as conventionally measured. The origins of symbolic racism represent the crux of much current research, including that described in several chapters in this

volume.⁴⁴ Second, it seems clear that neither symbolic racism nor racial policy preferences are much influenced by racial threats to whites personally (i.e., self-interest). But the role of whites' shared group interests in maintaining the racial status quo may have been underestimated.⁴⁵ This point, too, is addressed by research in this volume.

SUBTLE, AVERSIVE, AND AMBIVALENT RACISM Other forms of a "new racism" have been described in related, but somewhat different terms. While the theory of symbolic racism has been criticized as too specific to the United States, Thomas Pettigrew and Roel Meertens have developed an analogous approach that would explain racism in Europe as well as the United States. They suggest that blatant prejudice is being supplanted in both areas by subtle prejudice, which is comprised of the defense of traditional values, the exaggeration of cultural differences, and the absence of positive emotions toward outgroups. Using a large, multinational survey, they provide evidence that subtle prejudice is indeed distinct from (though still related to) blatant prejudice, relatively distinct from political conservatism, and useful in predicting attitudes toward policies relevant to outgroups, such as policies about immigration (Meertens and Pettigrew 1997; Pettigrew this volume; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995).

Aversive racism theorists similarly believe that the decline of old-fashioned racism is genuine and that most whites now are genuinely committed to the principles of racial equality. But, as in the theory of symbolic racism, whites continue to have lingering negative feelings toward blacks. This conflict between egalitarian values and antiblack affect causes anxiety and discomfort, especially in the presence of black people. Such whites therefore are motivated to avoid blacks so that they will not be confronted with their own racist feelings (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986; Kovel 1970).

In this view, whites' avowed dedication to the principles of racial equality is real. In situations that unambiguously call for the application of principles of racial equality, whites will generally respond in nonprejudiced ways. However, in more ambiguous situations, their anxieties about African Americans may lead to the avoidance of interaction. For example, some studies of helping behavior have demonstrated discriminatory behavior against African Americans when the situation offers nonprejudiced explanations for it. When other people are available to help, declining to help a distressed black person can be justified in nonracial terms (Frey and Gaertner 1986; Gaertner and Dovidio 1977). This theory has not been applied to the case of whites'

racial policy preferences. But its reasoning would suggest that whites' latent racial anxieties should contribute to greater opposition to racial policies because such opposition can be so readily justified in nonracial terms.

Finally, the concept of racial ambivalence also describes general support for equality coupled with residual negative racial affect. Americans' general support for egalitarian values generates positive feelings toward blacks, but their equally general support for the Protestant ethic generates negative feelings toward them, creating ambivalence. Situations that prime egalitarian values should stimulate positive feelings toward blacks, whereas situations that prime individualism should stimulate negative feelings toward them. This link between negative feelings about blacks and the work ethic bears some resemblance to the theory of symbolic racism. However, the theory of racial ambivalence has stimulated less research to date than have the other approaches (see Katz and Hass 1988; Katz, Wackenhut, and Hass, 1986).

THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY One of the most influential psychological explanations of racism in the years following World War II was that certain personality pathologies lead to ethnocentrism and outgroup antagonism. Theodor Adorno and his colleagues proposed that individuals raised in a harsh disciplinary environment developed a constellation of personality characteristics including intolerance of ambiguity, cognitive rigidity, submissiveness to authority, conventionality, and intolerance of others who are weaker or different or lower in status. Together, these traits comprised the authoritarian personality syndrome and contributed to generalized ethnocentrism (Adorno et al. 1950).

After much methodological controversy, and a long period of disuse, this construct was resurrected and reorganized by Robert Altemeyer around three core themes: submissiveness to established and legitimate authorities, generalized aggressiveness, and adherence to social convention. In a variety of contexts and countries, Altemeyer's measure of right-wing authoritarianism has proven to be strongly correlated with measures of general ethnocentrism as well as measures of hostility toward a variety of specific outgroups. However, relatively little research has examined the influence of authoritarianism and generalized ethnocentrism on public opinion about racial issues (Altemeyer 1994).⁴⁶

COVERT RACISM A further perspective is that extensive racism still persists, but that new, post-civil-rights-era, normative proscriptioms now mute its overt expression. That is, even those with underlying prejudiced beliefs understand that the public expression of racism is no longer acceptable in most circles and usually comply with that norm, at least overtly. A number of sociopsychological methods have yielded evidence of such a dynamic. For example, whites attached to a supposed lie-detector apparatus (e.g., a "bogus pipeline") express more negative attitudes toward African Americans than they do on a standard self-report questionnaire (Sigall and Page 1971). Whites interviewed by black interviewers express less negative racial attitudes than they do to white interviewers (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Schuman et al. 1997). In experimental studies, whites show evidence of covert racism in terms of nonverbal leakage of antipathy toward African Americans, including greater seating distance from them, less time voluntarily spent with them, less eye contact, less verbal fluency, an altered tone of voice, and even variations in electromyographical impulses (Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe 1980; Vanman et al. 1990).

In another line of work, social psychologists have increasingly reported that social behavior and judgments can be mediated by cognition outside of conscious awareness. Implicit, automatic, or nonconscious racial attitudes may therefore be mediated by processes that are relatively unavailable to the individual's own introspection. Such processes are typically measured in terms of the relative accessibility of positive or negative responses to race-related stimuli, such as category labels or pictures presented subliminally. Implicit racial attitudes thus measured are presumably automatically activated in the presence of race-related stimuli (Devine 1989; Dovidio et al. 1997; Fazio et al. 1995).⁴⁷

Though this area clearly represents a promising new avenue of exploration, a number of questions remain. First, studies of the relationship between implicit racial attitudes and "explicit" measures (such as the standard measures of prejudice found in survey studies) have generated somewhat mixed results to date. Second, some interpret the implicit measures of racial attitudes as *bona fide* "pipelines" to an individual's true racial attitudes, circumventing biases introduced by social desirability and self-presentation (e.g., Fazio et al. 1995). Others suggest that implicit measures instead themselves represent a different type of racism, a set of overlearned, negative, affective associations to blacks (Devine 1989). Third, this research was primarily stimulated

by the theory of aversive racism, so it has generally focused on predicting whites' direct interpersonal responses to blacks, such as their nonverbal behaviors. More conscious and deliberative political judgments about racial issues may be better predicted by standard self-report measures of racial attitudes, such as those normally used in survey research (Dovidio et al. 1997).

Because these effects occur automatically and outside of awareness, and even among people low in "explicit" racism, the continued impact of racial attitudes may be even more pervasive than would be clear from considering self-report measures alone. However, there is at least some evidence that implicit racial attitudes may not always be fully activated; that they may in some circumstances be activated, but not applied in judgment; and that processing goals and self-presentational concerns may influence their application (Blair and Banaji 1996; Fazio and Dunton 1997).⁴⁸ Even taking into account such modifications, the results so far suggest that the socialization of prejudice may be more insidious and more difficult to undo than often hoped.

SOCIAL STRUCTURAL THEORIES

A second set of theories reflects a sociological emphasis on social structure and group interests. These theories generally share the view that individuals identify with their own racial and ethnic groups, that the competing interests of those groups generate intergroup conflict, and that dominant groups develop ideologies to justify and legitimize their hegemony. Whites' opposition to racially liberal policies thus flows principally from the process of protecting their own interests.

REALISTIC GROUP CONFLICT Donald Campbell organized a number of theories of intergroup relations in anthropology, psychology, and sociology into a general "realistic group conflict theory." He concluded that intergroup attitudes and behaviors tend to reflect the nature of the relationship between the groups' material interests. If the interests of the groups coincide, intergroup attitudes should be relatively positive. However, if the groups are competing over limited resources, intergroup attitudes should be more negative. From this perspective, whites' political responses to racial issues should be driven by zero-sum competition with blacks for jobs, promotions, admission slots to colleges, government contracts, or other goods. Thus, their opposition to racially ameliorative policies—and their antipathy toward the

civil rights movement, its leaders, and even blacks themselves—can be explained by the threat blacks pose to whites' privileges (Campbell 1965).⁴⁹

A heavy concentration of blacks may be particularly likely to stimulate a sense of collective threat among whites. V. O. Key, Jr., noted that the most racially conservative Southern political candidates in the Jim Crow South tended to receive their strongest support from whites living in areas most populated by blacks, presumably because white hegemony was most vulnerable in such areas (1949).⁵⁰ Such racial-context effects continue to be noted today under the rubric of power theory, especially in the Deep South. For example, in the early 1990s, white voting for the racist candidate for governor and senator in Louisiana, David Duke, was highest in areas of greatest black voter registration (Giles and Buckner 1993, 1995).⁵¹

Real conflicts of interest may be sufficient to cause negative intergroup attitudes, but they may not be necessary. Relative deprivation theory argues that the perceived discrepancy between one's actual circumstances and others' circumstances may be a stronger determinant of dissatisfaction with one's lot in life than is the absolute level of deprivation. In other words, the mere perception of group deprivation may be sufficient to trigger outgroup antagonism; real conflicts of interest may not be necessary (Vanneman and Pettigrew 1972). Social identity theorists go still further. Tendencies to give favored outcomes to fellow ingroup members and discriminate against outgroup members can occur even in experimentally formed groups without any history of conflict or competition over limited resources, or indeed any prior interaction or relationship with other ingroup members. In fact, such ingroup favoritism exhibits itself even when the randomness of their assignment into such groups is completely transparent to participants (Tajfel and Turner 1986).⁵² This perspective has not yet been widely applied to the study of public opinion on matters of race, but it has influenced some theoretical perspectives in the area.⁵³

A further distinction between self-interest and group interest has proven important. A considerable body of research has found whites' racial policy preferences to be little affected by their own *self-interest* in such racial issues. Individual whites whose own lives are most affected by issues such as busing or affirmative action generally turn out not to be more opposed to such policies than are whites who are not personally affected at all. However, whites' opposition to liberal racial policies may be more closely related to their sense of how the policy

might affect their own group's interests. That is, a sense of group interest may be more important than any sense of individual self-interest.⁵⁴ The same is true for relative deprivation. Fraternal deprivation—the sense that one's own group is deprived relative to other groups—is more politically influential than egoistic deprivation—the sense that oneself is deprived relative to other salient individuals (Yanneman and Pettigrew 1972).

THE SENSE OF GROUP POSITION Much current work is developing a variant of the group conflict perspective, treating prejudice as flowing from "a sense of group position." In this view, "the real object of prejudice . . . is beliefs about the proper relation between groups . . . [that is,] relative group positions" (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997, 38).⁵⁵ This model contains a number of basic tenets. First, people differentiate themselves from others through the use of group categories, accompanied by a belief in ingroup superiority. Second, ingroup members view members of outgroups as alien and different. Third, members of dominant groups come to believe that such membership confers legitimate proprietary rights to superior status, power, and other resources. Finally, dominant group members readily perceive threats from members of lower-status groups who desire a greater share of those resources. Thus, the sense of group position model views the affective and cognitive underpinnings of prejudice as flowing directly from realistic conflict over group interests and perceptions of threat from inferior groups. Moreover, it goes beyond the concrete economic and political interests that are central to realistic group conflict theory to focus on status as well.

Two general kinds of evidence have been provided for such perspectives. First, whites tend to oppose liberal racial policies more than do blacks, even with controls on a wide variety of demographic, ideological, and racial attitudes. This suggests that the two groups have bedrock conflicts of interest and that those conflicts of interest have important political consequences.⁵⁶ However, critics note that it is never possible to control on everything, calling for more direct measurement of the presumed mediators of these racial differences (e.g., Sears and Kinder 1985). Consistent with the group position argument, though, recent research has shown that whites who perceive greater conflict of interest between the races are the strongest opponents of liberal racial policies, again net of the other variables that we have been discussing.⁵⁷

The conceptual boundary between this model and the new racism

models is not always sharp, however. On the one hand, proponents of the former view critique some measures of symbolic racism as reflecting group interests or their rationalization. On the other hand, symbolic racism theorists find that the sense of group position model largely abandons the focus on realistic group interests and tangible threats in favor of constructs that can be construed as more symbolic.⁵⁸

Lawrence Bobo's more recent concept of "laissez-faire racism" elaborates further on the sense of group position model. It places the transformation of racial attitudes more fully within its historical context, tracing the ultimate decline of old-fashioned racism back to the demise of labor-intensive agriculture in the South.⁵⁹ Such an ideology was no longer required without a continuing need to justify whites' exploitative use of blacks as low-wage agricultural labor. However, that economic change did not undo whites' sense of entitlement to their privileged group position relative to blacks. Thus, a new form of racism developed to defend whites' dominant position within the changed economic context, in which blacks became participants in the broader national economy that is based on free market capitalism. Laissez-faire racism therefore consists of two major components: the continued negative stereotyping of blacks and the placing of responsibility for the socioeconomic racial gap on blacks themselves. In this form, blacks' primary shortcoming is no longer some inherent inferiority, but their cultural resistance to the work ethic.

Like the modern racism perspectives, this theory predicts that laissez-faire racism is distinguishable from old-fashioned racism, is a better predictor of racial policy preferences, and is closely linked to beliefs about the socioeconomic stratification system. An important distinction between the perspectives, however, lies in the purported source of the change in racial attitudes discussed earlier. Laissez-faire racism is not a new brand of racism, but instead reflects the transformation of whites' group interests and their continued defense of those interests. In contrast, the modern racism perspective focuses on the continuing socialization of negative affect toward blacks and perceptions that they violate cherished American values.⁶⁰

SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY Social dominance theory also begins with the assumption of a social stratification system that distinguishes dominant and subordinate groups. But unlike the other social structural theories, it regards individual differences in personality within these groups as crucial elements in maintaining that hierarchical system. It first assumes that human societies tend to be structured as

group-based social hierarchies. Dominant groups enjoy a disproportionate amount of power, status, and economic privilege relative to subordinate groups. Both the categorization into groups and the assignment to dominant and subordinate positions are regarded as arbitrary and socially constructed. The theory suggests that there are three broad categories of such hierarchies: age-based, in which "adults" dominate "minors"; gender-based, in which males dominate females; and a third category that varies across societies, based variously on such dimensions of stratification as race, caste, ethnicity, nationality, social class, lineage, or clan. While age and gender systems are said to be found in all social systems, the third system of social hierarchy is thought to be restricted to those societies producing sustainable economic surplus (i.e., simple horticultural, advanced agricultural, agrarian, industrial, and postindustrial societies).⁶¹

The heart of social dominance theory concerns itself with identifying the psychological, ideological, and institutional mechanisms that produce and sustain these group-based social hierarchies. One of the most important individual-level forces is *social dominance orientation*, the desire to establish and maintain such social inequalities. It has been found to be related to many attitudes about policies that favor dominant groups and disadvantage subordinate groups. Such findings have been obtained in quite a number of different cultures and nations.

Social dominance theory argues that group-based social hierarchies are driven by the interaction and reinforcement of mechanisms at one level of analysis (e.g., the psychological) with those at other levels of analysis (e.g., the institutional). For example, people with ethnocentric values are known to self-select into "hierarchy-enhancing" institutions, such as the military and the police. Moreover, such institutions tend to reward those employees who engage in antiegalitarian behaviors toward members of subordinate social groups.⁶² Similarly, those with egalitarian values will be attracted to careers in "hierarchy-attenuating" institutions, such as social work or philanthropy. These institutions will tend disproportionately to allocate positive social value to members of subordinate groups. They will in turn tend to reward most strongly those employees who exhibit such egalitarian behavior toward members of subordinate groups. As a result, institutional treatment of group members is a function of the interaction between individuals' own preferences and institutional norms.

Within social dominance theory, then, "the American dilemma" is simply a special case of more general forces that tend to maintain the

relative hegemony of some social groups over others. While the specific operations and transactions that produce group-based social hierarchy will vary from one society and/or historical epoch to another, the underlying and essential hierarchical structure itself should be relatively invariant. Social dominance theorists suggest that better understanding the choreography of these underlying mechanisms will yield both a clearer understanding of the oppressive relationships among groups in general and greater insight into the dynamics of specific group conflicts within specific historical contexts.

Finally, a perspective advanced by Mary Jackman and her colleagues shares aspects of both realistic group conflict theory and social dominance theory. This also centrally features the ideas of an interest-based social hierarchy and the collusion of dominant and subordinate groups to promote stability and avoid conflict (Jackman 1978, 1994, 1996; Jackman and Muha 1984). In contrast with realistic group conflict theory, though, she suggests that dominant groups often attempt to maintain the exploitation of subordinate groups through ideology rather than through open conflict and force. They develop ideologies that justify existing inequalities as fair and just.⁶³

Thus, Jackman interprets whites' greater support for general principles of racial equality than for liberal racial policies as primarily reflecting their attempts to maintain their dominant position. A new ideology had to be constructed as the previous ideology began to lose utility. Furthermore, she argues that higher education does not increase racial tolerance. It simply makes whites more aware of their interests and more invested in maintaining their privileges. So more education only provides them with the ability to construct a superficial facade of commitment to equality, masking their underlying resistance to any real change. Thus, educated whites present themselves as unprejudiced without having to do anything that would jeopardize their political, social, and economic dominance over blacks.⁶⁴

POLITICAL THEORIES

A third general theoretical position, associated with Paul Sniderman and his colleagues, emphasizes politics more than it does psychology or social structure. This position arose primarily out of skepticism about the causal role of racism in determining opposition to contemporary racial policies as proposed in the new racism models. It focuses on the fact that citizens get to choose only among the political alternatives organized by political institutions and presented by public leaders. Therefore, it is important to look most closely at the nature of

those alternatives. This approach is thus "institution-oriented" rather than "actor-centered." However, these authors have generally not used any particular descriptive label, so we will simply describe it as a "politics-centered" approach.⁶⁵

One proposition in particular stands at center stage: as far as whites are concerned, there is no longer *the* issue of race, no simple, emotional, gut-level response to any racial issue, driven by attitudes toward blacks themselves. Instead, the politics of race has evolved into a variety of distinct "policy agendas," such as equal treatment, social welfare for blacks, and race-conscious policies (e.g., affirmative action). Whites' attitudes vary considerably across these areas in three ways. Their level of policy support varies considerably, with opposition to affirmative action being most intense and pervasive (Sniderman and Carnines 1997a). Their policy attitudes cluster within each area rather than reflecting consistent support or opposition to all racial policies across agendas. And opposition to each set of policies is determined more by its unique politics than by racial animus or group interests. As a result, different predictive models are required to explain opposition to the three different sets of policies (Sniderman and Piazza 1993).

Most important, therefore, is general political ideology because elites tend to frame all domestic issues in ideological terms. Conservatives and liberals differ especially in the value they place on governmental solutions to social problems, so the preferred role of government should perhaps be the most central explanatory factor in whites' attitudes. But general moral values are important as well. For example, fundamental considerations of fairness and equal treatment are especially important in generating opposition to affirmative action because they "thrust in exactly the opposite direction" from it: "in the name of achieving racial equality and tolerance . . . the ideals of equality and tolerance have themselves been upended" (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, 177; Sniderman and Carnines 1997a, 3). College-educated people are especially likely to use their ideology and values in responding to racial issues because they are most practiced with such abstractions. However, this perspective takes issue with the new racism's emphasis on whites' perceptions that blacks violate individualistic values and relegates them to a minor role (Sniderman and Piazza 1993, 56-64; Sniderman and Carnines 1997a, 31-33).

These authors do recognize some continued role of racism in influencing whites' opinions about racial issues. In fact, they frequently allude to the minority of whites who continue to express negative ste-

reotypes of blacks in sample surveys. However, their view of the role of racism is rather circumscribed. Indeed, they present evidence to indicate that opposition to affirmative action is likely to generate racial hostility in addition to being the product of it (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Prejudice, in their view, is a strong determinant neither of racial policy preferences nor of seemingly nonracial explanatory factors, such as political ideology, egalitarian values, and judgments of the fairness of various policies. Such effects as it has are said to be more prominent among the less educated (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). And in their most recent writings, they emphasize the growing numbers of whites of good will toward blacks and their strengthening desire to see that blacks are better off. They suggest that the racial tolerance exhibited by most whites on matters of principle is genuine by showing that whites generally do not use race-neutral justifications to single out blacks disproportionately for negative treatment, even when given the opportunity to do so (Sniderman and Carnines 1997a, 65-70, 89-92, 135-38).

More recently these theorists have suggested that prejudice may actually be a stronger political force among liberals than among conservatives. Even nonprejudiced conservatives have principled, race-neutral reasons for opposing governmentally based racial policies, whereas prejudiced liberals are torn between their ideological preference for governmental solutions and their prejudice against blacks. They provide evidence both that prejudice has a larger impact on the racial policy attitudes of liberals than on those of conservatives and that liberals show more hesitation in expressing their attitudes toward racial policies, presumably due to their ambivalence. They suggest that liberalism is in crisis because elites' support for race-conscious remedies has generated a great deal of "unacknowledged anger" in the rank and file (Sniderman and Carnines 1997a, chap. 3).⁶⁶

Indeed, so far from race being the quintessentially intractable issue, on which white people are immovably pro or con, these theorists argue that the public can be more easily swayed about racial policies than previously supposed, if convincing moral arguments are made, because attitudes toward racial policy are at heart about politics and not race. They argue for a political reprioritization by liberals because the liberals' race-conscious policy agenda has made things worse, not better. Policies like affirmative action violate traditional American values because such policies are exclusive and race-targeted. They suggest a shift to more universalistic color-blind policies, with justifications that appeal to moral principles reaching beyond race. They

provide experimental evidence that particularistic policies have limited appeal irrespective of which particular group they are targeted for. More broadly targeted policies with universalistic justifications are capable of achieving levels of political support that could potentially equalize progress toward racial equality (Sniderman and Carnines 1997a, chap. 4).⁶⁷

This approach has earned a substantial audience because of its wide-ranging explication of the role of political values in whites' responses to racial issues and its use of a wide variety of statistical and experimental techniques. Given the heavy volume of research this approach has generated, it is perhaps not surprising that some findings fit the theoretical portrait more closely than others. For example, the most recent work presents the effects of prejudice, and its interaction with ideology, as uniform across all racial policies rather than varying according to "policy agenda" (Sniderman and Carnines 1997a, 59-97; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell this volume). Second, judgments of fairness and support for equal treatment are thought to mediate the link between race-neutral values and opinions about racial policy, but they are not measured directly and so need to be inferred from differential responses to complexly different political alternatives.⁶⁸ Third, a clever, unobtrusive measure of racial attitudes has been developed and seems to indicate that a large number of whites who express racially liberal attitudes on standard survey questions take quite the opposite position when given a covert opportunity to do so. This finding has not been explicitly reconciled with several others interpreted as showing that the good will toward blacks that many whites express on survey questions is quite genuine. Also, conservatives express no more negative attitudes toward affirmative action on this covert measure than do liberals, a puzzling contrast to the view often presented elsewhere that ideology is a central determinant of whites' attitudes toward racial policies (Gileus, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 1998).

Finally, some of the most recent research is troubling with respect to the debate with the new racism theorists. First, at some junctures, the older stereotypes about blacks do seem to have considerable influence, and a "commitment to racial equality" index has strong relationships with attitudes about affirmative action and government assistance to blacks (independent of the justification used for the latter).⁶⁹ Second, in some recent experiments, they find that opposition to racial policy is strongest when the proposed recipients are black, described in a stereotype-confirming manner, and among respondents who hold the strongest racial stereotypes: "what is crucial is not race by itself,

not welfare in the abstract, not even individual effort considered on its own, but the *conjunction* of all three symbolic elements" (Sniderman et al. 1996, 40, emphasis in original).⁷⁰ Moreover, they provide evidence that such a conjunction holds special appeal to political conservatives. Such findings would seem to be quite similar to those central to the new racism theories.

Others have also carried out research that specifically challenges some of the tenets of this political approach.⁷¹ First, despite vastly different levels of support for different racial policies, factor and regression analyses suggest that they still share an underlying racial component, whether that be racial antipathy, symbolic racism, or group-based antiegalitarianism. In addition, racial attitudes continue to have strong effects on whites' racial policy preferences even when ideology and other political values are controlled (e.g., among many others, Hughes 1997; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Sears et al. 1997). Second, this research also has provided evidence that conservative values and racism are in fact substantively related. Some go as far as to suggest that, due in part to the political party realignment around civil rights issues, racism and conservative political values are now inextricably intertwined (for discussion of this realignment, see Carnines and Stimson 1989; Edsall and Edsall 1991a). Third, as education increases, so does the relationship between racism and ideology, as well as the impact of newer forms of racism on attitudes toward racial policy (see, e.g., Sears et al. 1997; Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996). Fourth, some have begun to contest the notion that a substantial opposition to race-conscious policies stems from a sense that such policies violate color-blind principles of racial egalitarianism. Instead, one usually finds that commitment to egalitarian values strongly predicts support for almost any kind of racial policies (see Hughes 1997; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman this volume; Sidanius et al. this volume; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell this volume).

However these puzzles end up being resolved, this more political approach has played an important role in reviving research on ideological and other political values as sources of opinion on racial policy. More important, it has provided research outlining one possible political framework for placing America back on the path to racial equality.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

These theories intersect at several points that it might be useful to underline before previewing the original contributions that follow.

THE ROLES OF RACE AND RACISM

There is substantial disagreement among scholars about the extent to which the term "racism" is appropriately applied to contemporary whites' attitudes.⁷² Some see racism as having largely disappeared, along with the formal barriers to equality. Others see it as continuing, but in altered form, as some kind of "new racism." There is even disagreement about whether those "new racisms" are in fact much different from the "old racisms" or indeed about whether they reflect racism at all. In addition, there is some disagreement about the form any such new racism takes.

A central question is whether or not race and racism have major influences over whites' attitudes toward racial policy. Most have answered yes, but for different reasons. Perhaps most extreme are the implicit racism theorists, who suggest that racism matters a great deal and in ways that are outside the awareness and control of even the most egalitarian-minded individuals. The symbolic and aversive racism perspectives suggest that the power of racism can now be found in a conjunction of primitive affective responses to blacks and traditional but nonracial values, while biological racism is largely a thing of the past. The social structural theorists assert that race matters, but primarily as an expression of other forces, such as realistic conflicts of group interest or the desire to maintain the ingroup's position in the social hierarchy. At the other extreme, the politically centered theory says that race matters, but more for questions of principle than policy, and then mainly for the less educated.

There is general consensus about two aspects of the empirical data on this point. One is that blacks are far more supportive of contemporary racial policies than are whites. A second is that the "new racism" measures are quite closely correlated with whites' attitudes toward racial policies (Hughes 1997; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Sears et al. 1997). But at that point, consensus vanishes. Some hold that even old-fashioned (or blatant, or classical) racism still has a substantial effect, while others say it does not.⁷³ There is controversy over how to interpret measures of the "new racisms." Symbolic racism theorists see them as the consequence of the linkage of racial resentment and ideology stimulated by political elites in the post-civil rights era. Aversive racism theorists see them as the acceptable expression of latent negative affect toward blacks. Group-interest theorists see them primarily as reflecting perceptions of racial threat

and manifestations of group interests. Social dominance and ideological hegemony theorists view them as merely measuring one legitimizing ideology among many used to maintain the positions of dominant groups. And the politically centered theorists see them as reflecting nonpolitical ideology and/or redundant tautologies of measures of policy attitudes themselves.

A related area of controversy concerns the level of consistency in white public opinion across racial policy issues. Some believe that a strong current of racial animus underlies whites' preferences about a broad variety of racial issues, whereas others believe that there are now multiple "racial agendas."⁷⁴ Support for racial policies varies greatly across issues, as we have seen. Almost all whites support general principles of equal treatment, but are more divided about government action to ensure it, and most oppose race-conscious policies, such as preferential treatment.⁷⁵ Race-targeted policies generally draw lower levels of white support than do similar policies targeted more broadly (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Sidanius et al. this volume; Sniderman et al. 1991; Sniderman and Carnines 1997a). However, there is controversy over whether black-targeted policies are opposed more than policies targeted for other groups, such as women (Sidanius et al. this volume; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell this volume).

But even if levels of support vary quite widely across issues, a common factor of racial animus or group-based antiegalitarianism could underlie all of them. Statistics such as confirmatory factor analysis yield conflicting findings.⁷⁶ A final test of consistency asks if the predictors of these various racial policy attitudes are the same. Here, too, there are conflicting findings. The politics-oriented theorists report that whites arrive at attitudes about equal opportunity, federal treatment, and race-conscious policy on the basis of quite different considerations (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Others find that symbolic racism is the strongest predictor of attitudes in all areas of racial policy, with relatively little difference across areas (Sears et al. 1997). The debates among these different perspectives have helped to crystallize the alternative possibilities, and further research may advance us to greater consensus.

IDEOLOGY AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

A second theme concerns the role of race-neutral ideologies and values. In the hands of social structuralists, political ideology is to a significant degree a tool used by dominant groups to maintain their hege-

mony. In contrast, politically oriented theorists argue that it composes principles of self-governance reached through careful consideration and education and plays a central causal role in determining attitudes toward racial policy. In the middle, perhaps, are new racism theorists, who see components of conservative ideology as intertwined with racism, but with both making independent contributions to racial policy preferences.⁷⁷

Beliefs about the causes of inequality similarly play a major role in a number of perspectives. According to social structural theories, they provide dominant groups with justifications for the current state of inequality and the maintenance of a privileged group position. In fact, such theorists have particularly noted the importance of individualistic and the absence of structuralistic explanations of inequality as justifications for opposition to racial policy.⁷⁸ This position has culminated in the model of *laissez-faire* racism, which puts the denial of discrimination and stereotypes about blacks' lack of effort at center stage. Symbolic racism similarly invokes the denial of continuing discrimination and perceptions of blacks' lack of work ethic, though conceptualizing both as measuring a conjunction of antipathy toward blacks and traditional values rather than as being interest-based justifications for structural inequality.

Another major theme concerns traditional American values. Seymour Lipset has argued that "American exceptionalism" is based on a set of core values, of which the most relevant to racial policy issues are individualism and egalitarianism (see Lipset 1996). It has indeed often been observed that this pair of values forms an existential dilemma for many Americans when it comes to matters of race. The primary goal of the civil rights movement was racial equality, the ostensible benefit of which was that each individual, black or white, had the opportunity to succeed on the basis of his or her own merits. In that sense, the two values operated in synchrony. Today they may work in conflicting directions, as the work ethic operates at cross-purposes with racial policies that attempt to correct a free market's tendency to produce unequal outcomes.⁷⁹

Individualism in its own right was one of the building blocks of symbolic racism, along with negative affect toward blacks. It also takes center stage, along with other political values, in the politics-centered theory, where it represents a core tenet of conservatism untainted by racial considerations. In social structural theories, individualism is one among several ideological instruments serving to justify and rational-

ize group-based inequality and hierarchy. Despite this theoretical importance, however, individualism has empirically usually been only weakly related to attitudes toward racial policy. One difficulty is that many concepts have been gathered under the umbrella of individualism, including self-reliance, the value of work, the work ethic, meritocracy, individualistic attributions for disadvantage, freedom, the primacy of individual rights, and opposition to big government. However, it has generally been measured with a single scale, developed for the National Election Studies in the 1980s, that mainly emphasizes the work ethic (see Feldman 1988). A more systematic attempt at construct development and measurement is perhaps needed.

Egalitarianism was the core value of the civil rights movement, and the removal of racial inequalities remains the central goal of racial policies today. So in some sense treating egalitarian values as predictors of racial policy preferences may lead us into something close to tautology. Nevertheless, it is a central player in several of the theories we have reviewed. The symbolic racism theorists assume that white Americans broadly accept the fundamental principles of equal treatment. Aversive racism theorists see it as a key cocontributor to whites' tension and anxiety about blacks. In the politics-centered view, egalitarianism plays a dual role. Among conservatives, the commitment to color-blindness should be related to opposition to race-conscious policies, such as quotas or set-asides. But among liberals, egalitarianism should be related to support for such racial policies. And, of course, it plays an especially central role in social dominance theory, in the form of social dominance orientation, an individual-difference measure of one's desire to increase or maintain group-based social hierarchy.

Much of the empirical work on egalitarianism has also used a single measure (again, see Feldman 1988). It consistently has strong correlations with attitudes toward racial policy.⁸⁰ Another standard measure of social dominance orientation also is closely associated with racial policy preferences.⁸¹ However, the reinterpretation of egalitarianism by Sears and his colleagues in this volume suggests that multiple factors underlie the construct. One potentially reflects "pure" egalitarianism—support for equal treatment—while a second reflects resistance to further advances toward equality, resembling racial resentments and perhaps coming closer to individualism than to what most people think egalitarianism is. Plainly, the field would also benefit from further deconstruction of egalitarianism and careful measurement of its different components.⁸²

INTERESTS

The sociopsychological and sociological approaches to intergroup conflict perhaps collide most around the question of interests. The symbolic racism theory, taking a symbolic politics perspective, argued that self-interest (that is, personal racial threats) were not strong motivators of whites' racial attitudes. Realistic group conflict and politics-centered theorists criticized the symbolic racism perspective for emphasizing the role of self-interest and ignoring group interests, which were said to be more central to political life in general (compare Sears and Funk 1991 with Bobo 1983; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986b). Much subsequent theoretical and empirical work has emphasized the importance of the distinction between the two kinds of interests, with even group conflict theorists now concurring in the general weakness of self-interest (see Bobo 1983, 1988b, this volume; Hughes 1997).

Nonetheless, questions remain about the notion of group interests at both the theoretical and the empirical levels. Most obvious, most assume that blacks have a strong interest in the objectives of liberal racial policies: more equality in employment, education, housing, business, and so on.⁸³ Also, Sears and Kinder offer a distinction between symbolic and realistic group interests (Sears and Kinder 1985). The line has not been sharply defined, however. Even resources as seemingly tangible as money, political power, or territory have their symbolic elements (e.g., Lane 1991). And the sense of group position theory places more emphasis than realistic group conflict theory does on status and other more symbolic, intangible goods.

At a measurement level, there is tension about the use of objective indicators of interests as ignoring real perceived interests and/or insufficient direct measurement of those perceived interests (see Bobo 1983, as opposed to Sears and Kinder 1985). Identification with the white ingroup, for example, has to date not been much explored, and some are skeptical of interpreting the racial differences in policy preferences that remain after controlling on a wide variety of other variables as reflecting differential group interests. There is consensus here at the moment, then, that focusing on group interest is more profitable than an emphasis on self-interest. But there remains considerable theoretical and empirical work to be done.

THIS VOLUME

As with American race relations in general, the contributions in this volume represent a mixture of progress and continued conflict. The

chapters that follow represent the major theoretical positions concerning whites' attitudes toward race and racial policy. They show surprising convergence about the important variables and the most critical unresolved issues. Moreover, they provide a sampling of the sophisticated theory and methodology that are increasingly the standard for this field. They also reflect the growing trend toward examining the attitudes of groups other than white Americans, a crucial step to developing broader theory and deeper understanding. Despite this growing consensus, substantial and heated disagreements remain. We believe that such debates provide the competitive pressure that has led, and will continue to lead, to the continued refinement of our understanding of "the American dilemma." Chapters 2 through 9 present research by protagonists in these debates that helps to develop and crystallize points of similarity and difference from other perspectives. All of them present research original to this volume. Chapters 10 through 12 present comments by experts in American racial politics who have not themselves been involved in these debates. They provide the valuable perspectives of outside observers. We here briefly review the chief contributions each chapter makes to the ongoing debates.

Donald Kinder and Tali Mendelberg tackle the critically important conundrum of the role of individualism in racial politics. Despite its centrality in most historical accounts of Americans' values, it has consistently had less predictive value in explaining whites' attitudes toward racial policies than the new racism theories would suggest. These authors suggest that individualism has actually become a *part* of prejudice, in the form of racial resentment. It became incorporated into the expression of prejudice as whites increasingly abandoned old-fashioned racism in the aftermath of the 1960s and instead became preoccupied with black Americans' individualistic shortcomings. They demonstrate the importance of racial resentment and its specifically racial nature in three ways. First, they provide a detailed reanalysis of previous work by Sniderman and Michael Hagen (1985). They show that racially oriented individualism was a potent component of opposition to racial policy, but not to policies focusing on class or gender. In contrast, they find that standard measures of race-neutral individualism do not influence attitudes on racial policy issues, although they do have some effect in domains that are not explicitly racial. Second, using a quite different research approach, they show that people talk about racial resentment, but not individualism, when they are asked to think about racial policy. In contrast, other kinds of domestic policy

questions activate thoughts about individualism and the role of government, but not about race. Finally, they provide several rebuttals of the contention that racial resentment merely reflects ideological conservatism and not racial prejudice.

David Sears, P. J. Henry, and Rick Kosterman build on the general consensus that symbolic racism is a most powerful ingredient of opposition to racial policy. But they note the vexing question of its origins. Does it really stem from a mixture of racism and traditional values, particularly individualism, as originally asserted? And what is the role of egalitarian values that have no manifest connection to race? First, they provide additional evidence that symbolic racism is distinctly racial, and distinctive from conservative political ideology, in whites' attitudes. However, it seems to be more closely associated with ingratiation than with individualistic values. A deconstruction of attitudes about equality yields overwhelming support for the principles of equal treatment and opportunity, but much division about how far to pursue further equality in practice. They find that egalitarianism as ordinarily measured in public opinion data is composed of two separate dimensions. The first again taps whites' broadly consensual commitment to principles of equal opportunity and equal treatment. The second, however, appears to tap resistance to further efforts to increase equality. They then present evidence that the latter is much more closely linked to both symbolic racism and attitudes toward racial policy and, more surprising, to individualistic attributions for poverty and racial disadvantage. This suggests that the apparent link between symbolic racism and ingratiation values may not be what it seems. Symbolic racism may reflect not opposition to equal opportunity, but resentment of a "free ride" for blacks who are seen as not leading lives consistent with the ethic of individual responsibility. If so, whites' resistance to change would seem to stem more from their perceptions of blacks' lack of commitment to individualism than from ingratiation in the usual sense.

Marylee Taylor uses the effects of racial context as a way to assess the role of whites' racial sentiments in influencing their racial policy preferences. Combining survey data and Census information, she measures the size of the black population in the white respondents' environs. As it increases, so does white antipathy toward blacks on such dimensions as traditional prejudice, attitudes toward racial policy, racial resentment, perceived group threat, and individualistic attributions for black disadvantage. In contrast, racial context is not related to attitudes about nonracial social policies. She concludes that such

findings strongly suggest that opposition to racial policy is in fact based on racial considerations, and perhaps on racial threats. She anticipates, as do we, further research that outlines the processes that lead to such observed effects of racial context.

Lawrence Bobo highlights and explores three points about public opposition to affirmative action. First, many different types of social policy are grouped under the category heading of "affirmative action," and whites are not equally opposed to all of them. Second, beliefs about its costs and benefits, though a substantial part of the public debate, have not been carefully examined in studies of public opinion. Third, the role of group interests in attitudes toward racial policy has been substantially underestimated because the attitudes of blacks and other minorities have too often been ignored. He finds substantial differences among racial/ethnic groups in their attitudes toward affirmative action: blacks and Latinos are more favorable than whites, while Asians' attitudes tend to resemble whites'. Moreover, these differences survive controls on various attitudinal and demographic variables, suggesting a role for group interests. Bobo finds little evidence that such differences are moderated by education, contrary to Sniderman's politics-oriented theory.

Michael Hughes and Steven Tuch, like Sears and his colleagues, explore individualistic and structural attributions for poverty. Most important, their analysis of stratification ideology is broadened both by examining the views of Asian, Hispanic, and black as well as white respondents and by examining how they apply it to Asian and Hispanic poverty as well as to black poverty. They find that whites are the least likely to make structural attributions. However, whites are also less likely (though not to the same degree) to make individualistic attributions. These differences generally hold irrespective of target group. They also find, as expected, that structural attributions contribute to more liberal racial policy preferences. More surprising, they find that individualistic attributions cancel those effects of structural beliefs, so they, too, suggest renewed pursuit of the role of individualism. In common with other authors, they find substantial effects of racial resentment and, to some degree, political conservatism. Finally, they find substantial group differences that survive controls on a host of attitudinal and demographic variables and, like Bobo, conclude that perceived group interests may play a more substantial role in support for racial policy than previously thought.

Jim Sidanius, Pam Singh, John Hettis, and Chris Federico carry out a critical comparison of social dominance theory with Sniderman's po-

litical theory. They find that egalitarianism remains a systematically contested issue rather than being a resolved, consensual, and noncontentionous feature of American politics. The greater the general social status of one's ethnic group is, the less committed one is to social equality, even when this equality is defined in terms of equality of opportunity rather than equality of result. In two studies, they find social dominance orientation, based on a fundamentally inequalitarian stance, to be equally or even more strongly associated with racial policy attitudes than are conservatism and individualism. In addition, they find that affirmative action is opposed more if targeted for blacks than for women or the poor. Contrary to the notion that conservatives treat the targets of all such policies similarly on principle, they find that conservatives are more likely to oppose affirmative action for blacks than for other groups, while liberals tend to respond in similar vein to all three groups. Moreover, ideology had stronger effects when the policy was targeted for blacks, suggesting a close link between race and ideology. Also, highly educated conservatives were, if anything, more likely to exhibit a racial double standard than were highly educated liberals. In both studies, comprehensive structural equation models yielded stronger support for social dominance theory than for the politics-oriented view. In addition, the authors present a number of other findings potentially problematic for both the modern racism and the politically oriented positions.

Paul Sniderman, Gretchen Crosby, and William Howell carefully delineate their view that political rather than racial considerations stand at the center of whites' attitudes toward racial policy. One analysis tests the idea that the new racism is a conjunction of individualistic values and antipathy toward blacks. Such a model explains relatively little variance in their data. Second, they challenge the standard account of ideology and opposition to racial policy, presenting evidence of substantial cleavage among liberals over affirmative action. For example, when asked explicitly, conservatives are more likely than liberals to express anger about affirmative action, but liberals have more "unacknowledged anger" about it. Third, racial prejudice exerts stronger influence on racial policy attitudes among liberals than it does among conservatives, presumably because liberal ideology clashes with prejudice, while conservatives tend to be ideologically opposed to governmental solutions irrespective of their racial prejudices. Fourth, they present evidence suggesting that conservatives are not more likely to practice a racial double standard than are liberals. They also highlight the importance of politics in influencing attitudes toward ra-

cial policies, finding that support for open housing is much influenced by the specific arguments used to justify such policies. Finally, they provide their own views of areas of agreement and areas of disagreement in this contentious area of research.

Thomas Pettigrew takes on the important task of simplifying the vast number of theoretically and empirically suggested predictors of outgroup prejudice. Furthermore, he conducts these analyses in the context of an impressive multinational survey of prejudice in Europe. Focusing on the responses of the majority groups in each nation, Pettigrew finds that four basic dimensions underlie prejudice: political disengagement, lower social class, traditional conservatism, and lack of cosmopolitanism. He finds that these four dimensions of predictors differ to some extent across types of prejudice, such that lower social class is more critical to producing blatant than subtle prejudice. But similar trends tend to hold across the different national samples and target groups. Most relevant to the controversies central to this volume are two other findings. Traditional conservatism is a strong predictor of all forms of prejudice in all subsamples, and indeed predicted prejudice *more* strongly among the better educated than among the less educated. And prejudice was a strong mediator of the effects of conservatism on opposition to immigration in Western Europe.

Howard Schuman begins with concerns about analyses that infer causal relationships from correlations among racial attitude measures. Sometimes those measures seem so similar in content that the correlations may reflect not a causal relation, but two slightly different measures of the same underlying construct. One safeguard is to correlate indisputably different variables, such as racial context and racial prejudice. However, the distance between such variables opens the door to multiple interpretations. Second, he tends to concur with the central conclusion of the symbolic racism perspective that many whites who opposed racial discrimination in the 1960s later opposed much further racial change. But he notes the important distinction between equal opportunity and equal outcomes, suggesting that attitudes toward them may have different origins. He also wonders if the original assumptions about the role of individualism in symbolic racism are still justified. He notes the invidious nature of the term "racism" and finds it implausible that the many whites who oppose preferential treatment do so simply out of prejudice. He shares the basic social dominance assumption that intergroup hostility is so common as to be a normal condition of human societies. What is unusual in American race relations, then, is the relatively new, but pervasive norm proscribing dis-

paragement of minority groups. He urges greater research attention to whites who promote greater racial equality rather than focusing solely on those who oppose it.

Jennifer Hochschild suggests that some of the debates contained in this volume stem as much from differences in style of intellectual work as from substantive disagreement. Some of the authors are "splitters," who contrast alternate theories in "either-or" fashion, while others are "lumpers," who proceed in "both-and" style. The latter being more to her taste, she is inclined to find merit in all the approaches represented here. She has several suggestions for future research. First, she is critical of the narrowness of the standard conceptualization and measurement of such key concepts as affirmative action, individualism, egalitarianism, and group identity. She believes the field would benefit from a broader range of methods, supplementing the standard survey interview with focus groups, experimentation, intensive interviews, and open-ended questions. She applauds a "multifocal" approach to intergroup conflict, considering not just the American black-white divide, but also other American ethnic groups as well as European ethnic conflicts. Finally, she urges attention to social structure as well as to attitudes—indeed to how social structures may affect the life chances of minority groups without anyone intending it or recognizing it.

Michael Dawson argues that racial attitudes in America must be understood within the context of a continuing racial hierarchy. This hierarchical order has not only structured social and political life in America's past, but also affects many aspects of contemporary American life. He, therefore, generally comes down with the "social structural" rather than the "politics-centered" scholars in these debates. At the same time, he does agree with the latter that politics really do matter: even if many white Americans are unwilling to accept fundamental racial equality, their racial attitudes cannot be exclusively understood in terms of antiblack resentment, antiegalitarianism, or group dominance.

Most pointedly, he goes on to comment on the "racialization" of the research process itself. The research conducted by white and black social scientists tends to be fragmented along racial lines. Not only do minority and white social scientists often occupy separate research communities, primarily investigating opinion within their own racial groups, but also they tend to employ substantially different explanatory models. This racial division of labor may have some malignant consequences. For example, minority researchers often show consid-

erable scholarly "bilingualness" by reading and thinking about the work of both white and minority researchers, while white researchers often tend to ignore the work of minority scholars. Moreover, white social scientists tend to "normalize" their own explanatory models as more "objective" and falling within the range of acceptable scientific discourse, while perceiving the work of minority scholars as politically biased and scientifically suspect. That may not only contribute to the fragmentation of the polity as a whole, but also make it more difficult for us all to understand the intersection between race and politics in American society. Much will be gained if social scientists, like ordinary citizens themselves, make a greater effort to listen to one another across the racial divide. This book is a modest effort in this direction.

FINAL WORDS

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois forecast that the defining problem of the twentieth century would be "the color line." By 1944, Gunnar Myrdal had issued a more optimistic prediction: that the color line was not an insurmountable divide because it rested on the fundamentally unstable contradiction of racial prejudice with core American values. Over half a century later, both points of view continue to have their vigorous adherents in American social science.

"Disagreement is a powerful engine of scientific advance. It sharpens conceptual boundaries, directs attention to neglected issues, and, of course, prompts the design of would-be decisive experiments" (Gilovich, Medvec, and Kahneman 1998, 602). We agree with this description of scientific debate. The debate in this field has sometimes been acrimonious, but it has yielded increasingly focused, refined, and testable theoretical perspectives on public opinion toward racial policy. In fact, we find that the debate in this very volume suggests a number of conceptual and theoretical refinements as well as a number of intriguing new directions. Our hope is that this volume will help establish and extend a dialogue that will lead to clarification, among scholars as among peoples of different national backgrounds, of different political preferences, and, yes, of different skin colors.