FIFTH EDITION

racism without racists

color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in america

EDUARDO BONILLA-SILVA

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RACISM WITHOUT RACISTS

Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America

Fifth Edition

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Rowman & Littlefield
A wholly owned subsidiary of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB, United Kingdom

First edition 2003. Second edition 2006. Third edition 2010. Fourth edition 2014.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, 1962– author.
Title: Racism without racists : color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America / Eduardo Bonilla-Silva.
Description: Fifth edition. | Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017006078 (print) | LCCN 2017008535 (ebook) | ISBN 9781442276222 (cloth : alkaline paper) | ISBN 9781442276239 (paperback : alkaline paper) | ISBN 9781442276246 (electronic)
Subjects: LCSH: Minorities—United States—Social conditions. | Minorities—United States—Economic conditions. | Racism—United States. | United States—Race relations.
Classification: LCC E184.A1 B597 2017 (print) | LCC E184.A1 (ebook) | DDC 305.800973—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017006078

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

I do not have many real friends. I have plenty of acquaintances, but not many people that I truly trust. In my friendship kingdom, very few are allowed in. To them I dedicate this edition. Their names are irrelevant in mass communications like this one, but they all know who they are. These are the people that are indispensable to me. They all have been there for me during tough times such as the death of my brother, during a recent operation, when I have needed advice on work or life issues, or during the many times I have made mistakes in my life. My blood family is peculiar, but this, my other family, bonded by love and solidarity, counts as much as my "real" family. At the helm of my nonblood family is the only person who loves me "for real" and all the way, my wife, Mary Hovsepian. Countless people question why we are still together. The answer is that my Mary is a truly exceptional person. We have been together twenty-five years and, honestly, it feels like today is still 1988. Mary, I am not the best, but you and I together add to more than two. Thanks for loving me despite my silliness and volatility. I will try to be better to you in the next twenty-five years.

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Acknowledgments

THE LAST WORDS my mother told me before I left Puerto Rico in 1984 were: "Son, in the United States you need to walk and behave like a king." She also told me something to the effect that no matter what the "gringos" said about me, I always had to remember that "I was as good if not better than them." At the time, I did not understand her advice. Over twenty years later, I fully understand her enormous wisdom. In this country, racial "others" of dark complexion are always viewed as incapable of doing much; we are regarded and treated as secondary actors only good for doing beds in hotels or working in fast-food restaurants. Therefore, my mother's advice ("walk and behave like a king") helped me develop the much-needed emotional *coraza* (shield) to repel all the racial nonsense of "gringolandia" (Frida Kahlo was so right about this country!). Thanks *Mami!*

This *coraza* has come in handy in my sociological career, because at every step of the way, I have encountered people who have tried to block my path one way or another. Fortunately, I have also encountered along the way many people who have helped me in this, my second country. And, in truth, my experience with good and generous people has outweighed that with the bad ones. Many of the former have seen me without my *coraza* and know the real me. At my alma mater (UW–Madison), professors such as Pamela Oliver, Russell Middleton, and Erik Wright were exceedingly generous with me. So were professors Sam Cohn (now my colleague at Texas A&M), Gay Seidman, and Denis O'Hearn, all of whom I served with as a teaching assistant. Wright and Oliver were even kind enough to read and send me feedback on a working paper I wrote two years after leaving Wisconsin. The paper appeared in 1997 in *ASR* with the title

"Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation." But the most important sociological force that affected me at Wisconsin was my adviser, Professor Charles Camic. He was the perfect adviser for me. Professor Camic was knowledgeable, kind, savvy, and had an uncanny understanding of the business side of sociology. Then and now, whenever I have a "big (sociological) issue" at hand, he is one of the first people I consult. Thanks, Chas, for being there for me. I hope I am able to repay you in some way.

At Michigan there were a number of colleagues who were very nice to me: Mark Chesler, Julia Adams, Howard Kimeldorf, Muge Gocek, Silvia Pedraza, Jim House, David Williams, and a few others. However, the people who helped me navigate that "peculiar institution" were professors Donald Deskins Jr., Alford Young II, and Carla O'Connor. These three colleagues were more than my colleagues: they were my friends and allies. Thanks Don, Al, and Carla! I hope the sociological gods allow us to work together one more time before our time expires.

At my sociological house, Texas A&M University, almost everyone has helped me. In my first year there, I received more feedback and love than I did at Michigan in five years! Thus, I thank the entire sociology department at A&M for providing me almost unconditional support. I hope I have not disappointed "y'all." Also deserving special mention are two former sociological Aggies, professors Benigno Aguirre (University of Delaware) and John Boies of the U.S. Census Bureau. They both enriched my sociological and nonsociological life. I miss having lunch with John and coffee with Benigno! Last but not least at A&M, my three outstanding graduate students, David G. Embrick (whom I owe many, many, many thanks for his steadfast loyalty and hard work), Paul Ketchum, and Karen Glover, helped me with some of the data and analysis and have supported me beyond the call of duty. Thanks for all your help and support, and I hope to read your own books soon!

Other people who have loved me *de gratis* in sociological Ameri*kkk*a are Joe R. Feagin, Hernán Vera, Judith Blau, Tukufu Zuberi, Hayward Horton, Ashley Doane, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Joane Nagel, Margaret Andersen, Cedric Herring, Abel Valenzuela, Rogelio Saenz, Tyrone A. Forman, Amanda E. Lewis, Walter Allen, Eddie Telles, Michael O. Emerson, Paul Wong, Jose Padin, Veronica Dujon, Carla Goar, William Darity, Geoffrey Ward, Nadia Kim, Ramiro Martinez, Tom Guglielmo, Moon-Kie Jung, and Larry Bobo, among others. I also wish to thank the folks of the Association of Black Sociologists and the ASA Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities for supporting me over the past five years.

The data for this book were gathered while I was a professor at Michigan. I thank all the people involved with the 1997 Survey of Social Attitudes of College Students (Amanda, Tyrone, and all the undergraduate students who

helped me out!) and the 1998 Detroit-Area Study (DAS). The 1997 survey was done partly with funding from the ASA-NSF (National Science Foundation) Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline. The 1998 DAS was done with Michigan funds. However, I want to thank Jim House and Earl Lewis for funding the interview component for the 1998 DAS. Without those interviews, the 1998 DAS would have been just another run-of-the-mill survey on racial attitudes.

A significant amount of the drafting of this book was done while I was a visiting research fellow at the University of Houston Law Center in the fall of 2000, under the auspices of Professor Michael A. Olivas, director of the Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance. Michael generously hosted me when I was still an unproven commodity. Thanks, Michael. I owe you a lot! While I was in Houston, Professor Russell L. Curtis Jr. from the University of Houston Sociology Department provided me shelter and friendship. I will never forget our long discussions on almost every possible subject. Thanks, Russ!

The final drafting of this book was done at Stanford University, where I was invited to spend a year (2002–2003) as a Hewlett research fellow at the Research Institute for Comparative Studies of Race and Ethnicity, headed by Hazel R. Markus and George Fredrickson. I also wish to thank Leanne Issak, Awino Kuerth, and Dorothy Steele for helping me with all my silly problems during my time there.

This book benefited enormously from the incisive review of Professor Margaret Andersen from the University of Delaware. Maggie read this manuscript from beginning to end and made valuable suggestions that helped me make it a better—although still controversial—book. Thanks, Margaret, for doing such a terrific job!

Finally, I want to dedicate this book to five very special people in my life. First, to my brother, Pedro Juan Bonilla-Silva, who passed away in 2002. Pedro, I wish I had been able to tell you how much I love you, but a bit of machismo and a lot of family history prevented me from doing so. I will always regret that. Second, to my father, Jacinto Bonilla. I know I do not say it often, but I respect, admire, and love you. Third, to my sister, Karen Bonilla-Silva, the youngest, wisest, and nicest-looking in the Bonilla-Silva clan. Fourth, to my son, Omar Francisco Bonilla, who transcribed one of the DAS interviews quoted in this book. Omi, know that I love you and am very proud of your scholarly and artistic accomplishments. Finally, I dedicate this book to the love of my life, Mary Hovsepian. We have marinated our partnership for fifteen years (now, in 2017, twenty-nine years) and it is still as sweet and strong as the first day we formalized it. Thanks, Mary. I am eagerly waiting to see what the next fifteen years bring us.

Preface to the Fifth Edition

Many friends, colleagues, and readers have expressed curiosity about my views on Trump's election as president. Without question, Trump played with racial fire and helped mobilize both fringe groups (all old-fashioned racist organizations) and individuals (e.g., David Duke) as well as animated the worst in the white masses during the campaign with his talk about building a wall; Mexico "not sending their best (people)," but sending "people that have lots of problems" who are "bringing drugs" and "bringing crime" and "they're rapists";[1] a Muslim ban; his hesitation in condemning David Duke's endorsement of his candidacy; his comments about blacks living in "ghettoes" where "you can't walk out in the street, you buy a loaf of bread and you end up getting shot";[2] and many other things. He also has a problematic personal racial history. He was sued twice by the Department of Justice in the 1970s for discrimination in housing against blacks and in the 1990s was fined by the New Jersey Casino Control Commission for discriminating against black dealers in his casino. His aversion to blacks had family roots as his father, Fred Christ Trump, had a long record of antiblack views and actions that included participating (as a supporter) in a Klan rally when he was twenty-one years old.[3]

The question at hand is then whether we have "Racism without Racists" or "Racism with Racists." Some of my friends have even told me that my book finally reached the end of its life given that now it is clear that we have "racism with racists, period." In this fifth edition, I reiterate that the racial regime of post–civil rights America is still the "new racism" and the dominant racial ideology that glues this order is color-blind racism. The Trump moment, in my view, illustrates three fundamental things. First, no racial regime exists in purity and

isolation, that is, they always articulate[4] various modes of domination. Therefore, the new racism is dominant, but it is not the *only* way of maintaining racial order. Jim Crow never died one hundred percent, and its ideology has remained important in many sections of the nation and in segments of the white community. Second, racial regimes, much like economic ones, go through cycles. The Trump moment is quite similar to the Reagan era (1980–1988), a moment where hate crimes and racial animosity increased in significant ways in part because Reagan gave what the late Manning Marable termed as the "green lights" to racialist activity with comments on "welfare mamas" and many other things.[5] Third, ideologies have different tones of expressions and color-blind racism is no exception. I mentioned this since the book was first published in the chapter titled "Are All Whites Refined Archie Bunkers?" and in the "Conclusion." I specifically stated in the "Conclusion" the following:

> Although older, working-class white respondents (mostly in the DAS sample) were less adept at using softer, more efficient versions of the frames and style of color-blind racism than were younger, middle-class, educated ones (mostly among the college students sample), both groups were attuned to this new ideology. Yet the fact that some whites are "compassionate conservatives" on race does not change in any way the reality that all are baptized in the waters of color-blind racism. Besides, even though younger, middle-class, educated whites seem better adept at using the arsenal of color blindness, many—particularly those who were already in the labor market or close to entering it—were as crude and unsophisticated as their poorer, less-educated brethren.[6]

Thus, despite Trump and the resurgence of old-fashioned racial animus, I still contend that the clue to understand how race works in contemporary America is the language and tropes of color-blind racism. Even Trump, despite his own personal racial history and views, tried to be color-blind in the campaign (unsuccessfully to be certain) by stating that he was "the least racist person you've ever encountered,"[7] that he loved Mexicans and that Mexicans loved him back—which he demonstrated by eating a taco salad during "Cinco de Mayo"—and by insisting, "I love the Muslims," and stating, "I think they're great people."[8] Color-blind racism is the connecting tissue uniting how the vast majority of whites think, talk, and even feel about racial matters, and it is why the book is still properly titled, "Racism without Racists."

I want to take the opportunity to make one very important clarification. Albeit the book is titled "Racism without Racists," I never used the term "racist" to classify actors. This term belongs to those who believe racial analysis amounts to a clinical-like process of pointing out who is and is not a racist, a process usually based on either survey results to race-related questions or on the racial statements of actions done or uttered by some individuals

(e.g., Donald Sterling, former owner of the Clippers, is classified as a "racist" because he forbade his girlfriend from taking pictures with NBA legend Magic Johnson). I think this concept, and the analysis upon which it rests, has reached its limits and it is no longer, if it ever was, useful. Hunting for racists tends to get us off what we need to correctly understand the workings of racism in society. In the 2016 election cycle, analysts in this tradition incorrectly labeled poor and working-class whites as "racist," leaving the rest of whites who voted for Trump (and most did) as well as those who voted for Hillary Clinton outside the analysis. This is a mistake, as once a society is racialized, and all societies have been for about 500 years, all actors are racialized and become "racial subjects."[9] This does not mean that everyone in America is a "racist," a position that would take us back to the same theoretical corner. What it means is that we are all affected by racialization[10] and racial ideology. No one is free of the effects of these social forces, but the impact and direction of the effect depends on one's position in the racial order. Black people, for example, have been racialized downward since slavery. Thus, most have fought hard to produce and express counter-ideologies and narratives on race. Whites of all classes, despite moments of opportunity for change, have for the most part followed the dominant trends on race as they have always gotten a better deal than nonwhites.[11]

Yet "racial subjects" are never-finished products and have factures. Recent work, for example, on the white working class shows that they are not a monolith, as white workers can be in solidarity with people of color under certain circumstances (see, for example, Justin Gest's *The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality*[12]). American history is filled with plenty of racial hate, but also with shining moments of cross-racial solidarity. The Abolitionists, John Brown, white progressives during the civil rights movements, and young white activists today are examples of the possibilities, and it is incumbent upon social scientists, social analysts, and progressive political organizations and organizers to work to decode the making of the class-race nexus[13] and on ways to deracialize it (we will also need to de-gender it as I argue in the "Conclusion" of this book). Developing a politics of racial change is a complex matter (see my "Conclusion"), but for those of us who aspire to live in a society where race, class, gender, and other social cleavages become irrelevant, working on this riddle is a must.

New in the Fifth Edition

Now on to what I[14] added in this new edition. I left the basics unchanged; therefore, the core of the book is still my analysis of the "new racism" and of

"color-blind racism." Yet I updated the material in chapter 2 on the new racism. In chapter 10, where I had examined the Obama phenomenon in the last two editions, I shortened my discussion on Obama and added a quick analysis of the Trump moment (I worked on this revision at the time the election took place when everybody assumed Hillary Clinton was going to be elected president), as well as a discussion on contemporary social movements against racism, namely, the Black Lives Matter and the student movements. Finally, at the request of many colleagues who use this book in their classes, I retooled my "Conclusion." Now it is a very practical and idealistic (in the best sense of the word) discussion of things readers can do to "change the world." It is also a very direct conversation with my readers, hence its title, "What Is to Be Done? Talking with YOU about How to Fight Color-Blind Racism in America." The "Conclusion" is quite personal, as I open up to you, readers of this book, and reveal a lot about my political views on the kind of society I aspire to live in. This is risky, but at this stage (fifth edition of this book) and given that I am in my fifties, I have little to lose. I believe the "Conclusion" will be useful and challenging to most readers, but some will definitely not like it and see it as an example of "political correctness."[15] It is what it is.

That is all for now, and I hope this is truly the last edition of this book. Unfortunately, it might not be as the "racism without racists" I explore in this book remains firmly in place and most likely will for years to come.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva
Durham, North Carolina

1

The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America

> There is a strange kind of enigma associated with the problem of racism. No one, or almost no one, wishes to see themselves as racist; still, racism persists, real and tenacious.
>
> —Albert Memmi, *Racism*

Racism without "Racists"

Nowadays, except for members of white supremacist organizations,[1] few whites in the United States claim to be "racist." Most whites assert they "don't see any color, just people"; that although the ugly face of discrimination is still with us, it is no longer the central factor determining minorities' life chances; and, finally, that, like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,[2] they aspire to live in a society where "people are judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin." More poignantly, most whites insist that minorities (especially blacks) are the ones responsible for whatever "race problem" we have in this country. They publicly denounce blacks for "playing the race card," for demanding the maintenance of unnecessary and divisive race-based programs, such as affirmative action, and for crying "racism" whenever they are criticized by whites.[3] Most whites believe that if blacks and other minorities would just stop thinking about the past, work hard, and complain less (particularly about racial discrimination), then Americans of all hues could "all get along."[4]

But regardless of whites' "sincere fictions,"[5] racial considerations shade almost everything in America. Blacks and dark-skinned racial minorities lag well behind whites in virtually every area of social life; they are about three times more likely to be poor than whites, earn about 40 percent less than whites, and have about an eighth of the net worth that whites have.[6] They also receive an inferior education compared to whites, even when they attend integrated institutions.[7] In terms of housing, black-owned units comparable to white-owned ones are valued at 35 percent less.[8] Blacks and Latinos also have less access to the entire housing market because whites, through a variety of exclusionary practices by white realtors and homeowners, have been successful in effectively limiting their entrance into many neighborhoods.[9] Blacks receive impolite treatment in stores, in restaurants, and in a host of other commercial transactions.[10] Researchers have also documented that blacks pay more for goods such as cars and houses than do whites.[11] Finally, blacks and dark-skinned Latinos are the targets of racial profiling by the police, which, combined with the highly racialized criminal court system, guarantees their overrepresentation among those arrested, prosecuted, incarcerated, and if charged for a capital crime, executed.[12] Racial profiling on the highways has become such a prevalent phenomenon that a term has emerged to describe it: driving while black.[13] In short, blacks and most minorities are "at the bottom of the well."[14]

How is it possible to have this tremendous degree of racial inequality in a country where most whites claim that race is no longer relevant? More important, how do whites explain the apparent contradiction between their professed color blindness and the United States' color-coded inequality? In this book I attempt to answer both of these questions. I contend that whites have developed powerful explanations—which have ultimately become justifications—for contemporary racial inequality that exculpate them from any responsibility for the status of people of color. These explanations emanate from a new racial ideology that I label *color-blind racism*. This ideology, which acquired cohesiveness and dominance in the late 1960s,[15] explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics. Whereas Jim Crow racism explained blacks' social standing as the result of their biological and moral inferiority, color-blind racism avoids such facile arguments. Instead, whites rationalize minorities' contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks' imputed cultural limitations.[16] For instance, whites can attribute Latinos' high poverty rate to a relaxed work ethic ("the Hispanics are mañana, mañana, mañana—tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow")[17] or residential segregation as the result of natural tendencies among groups ("Does a cat and a dog mix? I can't see it. You can't drink milk and scotch. Certain mixes don't mix.").[18]

Color-blind racism became the dominant racial ideology as the mechanisms and practices for keeping blacks and other racial minorities "at the bottom of the well" changed. I have argued elsewhere that contemporary racial inequality is reproduced through "new racism" practices that are subtle, institutional, and apparently nonracial.[19] In contrast to the Jim Crow era, where racial inequality was enforced through overt means (e.g., signs saying "No Niggers Welcomed Here" or shotgun diplomacy at the voting booth), today racial practices operate in a "now you see it, now you don't" fashion. For example, residential segregation, which is almost as high today as it was in the past, is no longer accomplished through overtly discriminatory practices. Instead, covert behaviors such as not showing all the available units, steering minorities and whites into certain neighborhoods, quoting higher rents or prices to minority applicants, or not advertising units at all are the weapons of choice to maintain separate communities.[20] In the economic field, "smiling face" discrimination ("We don't have jobs now, but please check later"), advertising job openings in mostly white networks and ethnic newspapers, and steering highly educated people of color into poorly remunerated jobs or jobs with limited opportunities for mobility are the new ways of keeping minorities in a secondary position.[21] Politically, although the civil rights struggles have helped remove many of the obstacles for the electoral participation of people of color, "racial gerrymandering, multimember legislative districts, election runoffs, annexation of predominantly white areas, at-large district elections, and anti-single-shot devices (disallowing concentrating votes in one or two candidates in cities using at-large elections) have become standard practices to disenfranchise" people of color.[22] Whether in banks, restaurants, school admissions, or housing transactions, the maintenance of white privilege is done in a way that defies facile racial readings. Hence, the contours of color-blind racism fit America's new racism quite well.

Compared to Jim Crow racism, the ideology of color blindness seems like "racism lite." Instead of relying on name calling (niggers, spics, chinks), color-blind racism otherizes softly ("these people are human, too"); instead of proclaiming that God placed minorities in the world in a servile position, it suggests they are behind because they do not work hard enough; instead of viewing interracial marriage as wrong on a straight racial basis, it regards it as "problematic" because of concerns over the children, location, or the extra burden it places on couples. Yet this new ideology has become a formidable political tool for the maintenance of the racial order. Much as Jim Crow racism served as the glue for defending a brutal and overt system of racial oppression in the pre–civil rights era, color-blind racism serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post–civil rights era. And the beauty of this new ideology is that it aids in the maintenance of

white privilege without fanfare, without naming those who it subjects and those who it rewards. It allows a president to state things such as, "I strongly support diversity of all kinds, including racial diversity in higher education," yet, at the same time, to characterize the University of Michigan's affirmative action program as "flawed" and "discriminatory" against whites.[23] Thus whites enunciate positions that safeguard their racial interests without sounding "racist." Shielded by color blindness, whites can express resentment toward minorities; criticize their morality, values, and work ethic; and even claim to be the victims of "reverse racism." This is the thesis I will defend in this book to explain the curious enigma of "racism without racists."[24]

Whites' Racial Attitudes in the Post–Civil Rights Era

Since the late 1950s surveys on racial attitudes have consistently found that fewer whites subscribe to the views associated with Jim Crow. For example, whereas the majority of whites supported segregated neighborhoods, schools, transportation, jobs, and public accommodations in the 1940s, less than a quarter indicated they did in the 1970s.[25] Similarly, fewer whites than ever now seem to subscribe to stereotypical views of blacks. Although the number is still high (ranging from 20 percent to 50 percent, depending on the stereotype), the proportion of whites who state in surveys that blacks are lazy, stupid, irresponsible, and violent has declined since the 1940s.[26]

These changes in whites' racial attitudes have been explained by the survey community and commentators in four ways. First, are they *racial optimists*. This group of analysts agrees with whites' common sense on racial matters and believes the changes symbolize a profound transition in the United States. Early representatives of this view were Herbert Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley, who wrote widely influential articles on the subject in *Scientific American*. In a reprint of their earlier work in the influential collection edited by Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark, *The Negro American,* Sheatsley rated the changes in white attitudes as "revolutionary" and concluded,

> The mass of white Americans have shown in many ways that they will not follow a racist government and that they will not follow racist leaders. Rather, they are engaged in the painful task of adjusting to an integrated society. It will not be easy for most, but one cannot at this late date doubt the basic commitment. In their hearts they know that the American Negro is right.[27]

In recent times, Glenn Firebaugh and Kenneth Davis, Seymour Lipset, and Paul Sniderman and his coauthors, in particular, have carried the torch for racial optimists.[28] Firebaugh and Davis, for example, based on their analysis of survey results from 1972 to 1984, concluded that the trend toward less anti-

black prejudice was across the board. Sniderman and his coauthors, as well as Lipset, go a step further than Firebaugh and Davis because they have openly advocated color-blind politics as *the* way to settle the United States' racial dilemmas. For instance, Sniderman and Edward Carmines made this explicit appeal in their book, *Reaching beyond Race*:

> To say that a commitment to a color-blind politics is worth undertaking is to call for a politics centered on the needs of those most in need. It is not to argue for a politics in which race is irrelevant, but in favor of one in which race is relevant so far as it is a gauge of need. Above all, it is a call for a politics which, because it is organized around moral principles that apply regardless of race, can be brought to bear with special force on the issue of race.[29]

The problems with this optimistic interpretation are twofold. First, as I have argued elsewhere,[30] relying on questions that were framed in the Jim Crow era to assess whites' racial views today produces an artificial image of progress. Since the central racial debates and the language used to debate those matters have changed, our analytical focus ought to be dedicated to the analysis of the new racial issues. Insisting on the need to rely on old questions to keep longitudinal (trend) data as the basis for analysis will, by default, produce a rosy picture of race relations that misses what is going on on the ground. Second, and more important, because of the change in the normative climate in the post–civil rights era, analysts must exert extreme caution when interpreting attitudinal data, particularly when it comes from single-method research designs. The research strategy that seems more appropriate for our times is mixed research designs (surveys used in combination with interviews, ethnosurveys,[31] etc.), because it allows researchers to cross-examine their results.

A second, more numerous group of analysts exhibit what I have labeled elsewhere as the *racial pesoptimist* position.[32] Racial pesoptimists attempt to strike a "balanced" view and suggest that whites' racial attitudes reflect progress and resistance. The classical example of this stance is Howard Schuman.[33] Schuman has argued for more than thirty years that whites' racial attitudes involve a mixture of tolerance and intolerance, of acceptance of the principles of racial liberalism (equal opportunity for all, end of segregation, etc.) and a rejection of the policies that would make those principles a reality (from affirmative action to busing).[34]

Despite the obvious appeal of this view in the research community (the appearance of neutrality, the pondering of "two sides," and this view's "balanced" component), racial pesoptimists are just closet optimists. Schuman, for example, has pointed out that, although "White responses to questions of principle are . . . more complex than is often portrayed . . . they nevertheless do show in almost every instance a positive movement over time."[35] Furthermore, it is his belief that the normative change in the United States is

real and that the issue is that whites are having a hard time translating those norms into personal preferences.

A third group of analysts argues that the changes in whites' attitudes represent the emergence of a *symbolic racism*.[36] This tradition is associated with the work of David Sears and his associate, Donald Kinder.[37] They have defined symbolic racism as "a blend of anti-black affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic."[38] According to these authors, symbolic racism has replaced biological racism as the primary way whites express their racial resentment toward minorities. In Kinder and Sanders's words,

> A new form of prejudice has come to prominence, one that is preoccupied with matters of moral character, informed by the virtues associated with the traditions of individualism. At its center are the contentions that blacks do not try hard enough to overcome the difficulties they face and that they take what they have not earned. Today, we say, prejudice is expressed in the language of American individualism.[39]

Authors in this tradition have been criticized for the slipperiness of the concept of "symbolic racism," for claiming that the blend of antiblack affect and individualism is new, and for not explaining why symbolic racism came about. The first critique, developed by Howard Schuman, is that the concept has been "defined and operationalized in complex and varying ways."[40]Despite this conceptual slipperiness, indexes of symbolic racism have been found to be in fact different from those of old-fashioned racism and to be strong predictors of whites' opposition to affirmative action.[41]The two other critiques, made forcefully by Lawrence Bobo, have been partially addressed by Kinder and Sanders in their book, *Divided by Color*. First, Kinder and Sanders, as well as Sears, have made clear that their contention is not that this is the first time in history that antiblack affect and elements of the American Creed have combined. Instead, their claim is that this combination has become *central* to the new face of racism. Regarding the third critique, Kinder and Sanders go at length to explain the transition from old-fashioned to symbolic racism. Nevertheless, their explanation hinges on arguing that changes in blacks' tactics (from civil disobedience to urban violence) led to an onslaught of a new form of racial resentment that later found more fuel in controversies over welfare, crime, drugs, family, and affirmative action. What is missing in this explanation is a materially based explanation for why these changes occurred. Instead, their theory of prejudice is rooted in the "process of socialization and the operation of routine cognitive and emotional psychological processes."[42]

Yet, despite its limitations, the symbolic racism tradition has brought attention to key elements of how whites explain racial inequality today. Whether this is "symbolic" of antiblack affect or not is beside the point and

hard to assess, since, as a former student of mine queried, "How does one test for the unconscious?"[43]

The fourth explanation of whites' contemporary racial attitudes is associated with those who claim that whites' racial views represent a *sense of group position*. This position, forcefully advocated by Lawrence Bobo and James Kluegel, is similar to Jim Sidanius's "social dominance" and Mary Jackman's "group interests" arguments.[44] In essence, the claim of all these authors is that white prejudice is an ideology to defend white privilege. Bobo and his associates have specifically suggested that because of socioeconomic changes that transpired in the 1950s and 1960s, a *laissez-faire racism* emerged that was fitting of the United States' "modern, nationwide, postindustrial free labor economy and polity."[45] Laissez-faire racism "encompasses an ideology that blames blacks themselves for their poorer relative economic standing, seeing it as the function of perceived cultural inferiority."[46]

Some of the basic arguments of authors in the symbolic and modern racism[47] traditions and, particularly, of the laissez-faire racism view are fully compatible with my color-blind racism interpretation. As these authors, I argue that color-blind racism has rearticulated elements of traditional liberalism (work ethic, rewards by merit, equal opportunity, individualism, etc.) for racially illiberal goals. I also argue like them that whites today rely more on cultural rather than biological tropes to explain blacks' position in this country. Finally, I concur with most analysts of post–civil rights matters in arguing that whites do not perceive discrimination to be a central factor shaping blacks' life chances.

Although most of my differences with authors in the symbolic racism and laissez-faire traditions are methodological (see below), I have one central theoretical disagreement with them. Theoretically, most of these authors are still snarled in the prejudice problematic and thus interpret actors' racial views as *individual psychological* dispositions. Although Bobo and his associates have a conceptualization that is closer to mine, they still retain the notion of prejudice and its psychological baggage rooted in interracial hostility.[48] In contrast, my model is not anchored in actors' affective dispositions (although affective dispositions may be manifest or latent in the way many express their racial views). Instead, it is based on a materialist interpretation of racial matters and thus sees the views of actors as corresponding to their systemic location. Those at the bottom of the racial barrel tend to hold oppositional views and those who receive the manifold wages of whiteness tend to hold views in support of the racial status quo. Whether actors express "resentment" or "hostility" toward minorities is largely irrelevant for the maintenance of white privilege. As David Wellman points out in his *Portraits of White Racism*, "prejudiced people are not the only racists in America."[49]

Key Terms: Race, Racial Structure, and Racial Ideology

One reason why, in general terms, whites and people of color cannot agree on racial matters is because they conceive terms such as "racism" very differently. Whereas for most whites racism is prejudice, for most people of color racism is systemic or institutionalized. Although this is not a theory book, my examination of color-blind racism has etched in it the indelible ink of a "regime of truth"[50] about how the world is organized. Thus, rather than hiding my theoretical assumptions, I state them openly for the benefit of readers and potential critics.

The first key term is the notion of *race*. There is very little formal disagreement among social scientists in accepting the idea that race is a socially constructed category.[51] This means that notions of racial difference are human creations rather than eternal, essential categories. As such, racial categories have a history and are subject to change. And here ends the agreement among social scientists on this matter. There are at least three distinct variations on how social scientists approach this constructionist perspective on race. The first approach, which is gaining popularity among white social scientists, is the idea that because race is socially constructed, it is not a fundamental category of analysis and praxis. Some analysts go as far as to suggest that because race is a constructed category, then it is not real and social scientists who use the category are the ones who make it real.[52]

The second approach, typical of most sociological writing on race, gives lip service to the social constructionist view—usually a line in the beginning of the article or book. Writers in this group then proceed to discuss "racial" differences in academic achievement, crime, and SAT scores as if they were truly racial.[53] This is the central way in which contemporary scholars contribute to the propagation of racist interpretations of racial inequality. By failing to highlight the social dynamics that produce these racial differences, these scholars help reinforce the racial order.[54]

The third approach, and the one I use in this book, acknowledges that race, as are other social categories such as class and gender, is constructed but insists that it has a *social* reality. This means that after race—or class or gender—is created, it produces real effects on the actors racialized as "black" or "white." Although race, as other social constructions, is unstable, it has a "changing same"[55] quality at its core.

In order to explain how a socially constructed category produces real race effects, I need to introduce a second key term: the notion of *racial structure*. When race emerged in human history, it formed a social structure (a racialized social system) that awarded systemic privileges to Europeans (the peoples who became "white") over non-Europeans (the peoples who became "nonwhite").[56] Racialized social systems, or white supremacy[57] for short, became

global and affected all societies where Europeans extended their reach. I therefore conceive a society's racial structure as *the totality of the social relations and practices that reinforce white privilege*. Accordingly, the task of analysts interested in studying racial structures is to uncover the particular social, economic, political, social control, and ideological mechanisms responsible for the reproduction of racial privilege in a society.

But why are racial structures reproduced in the first place? Would not humans, after discovering the folly of racial thinking, work to abolish race as a category as well as a practice? Racial structures remain in place for the same reasons that other structures do. Since actors racialized as "white"—or as members of the dominant race—receive material benefits from the racial order, they struggle (or passively receive the manifold wages of whiteness) to maintain their privileges. In contrast, those defined as belonging to the subordinate race or races struggle to change the status quo (or become resigned to their position). Therein lies the secret of racial structures and racial inequality the world over.[58] They exist because they benefit members of the dominant race.

If the ultimate goal of the dominant race is to defend its collective interests (i.e., the perpetuation of systemic white privilege), it should surprise no one that this group develops rationalizations to account for the status of the various races. And here I introduce my third key term, the notion of *racial ideology*. By this I mean *the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify* (dominant race) or *challenge* (subordinate race or races) *the racial status quo*. Although all the races in a racialized social system have the *capacity* of developing these frameworks, the frameworks of the dominant race tend to become the master frameworks upon which *all* racial actors ground (for or against) their ideological positions. Why? Because as Marx pointed out in *The German Ideology*, "the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force."[59] This does not mean that ideology is almighty. In fact, as I will show in chapter 7, ideological rule is always partial. Even in periods of hegemonic rule,[60] such as the current one, subordinate racial groups develop oppositional views. However, it would be foolish to believe that those who rule a society do not have the power to at least color (pun intended) the views of the ruled.

Racial ideology can be conceived for analytical purposes as comprising the following elements: common frames, style, and racial stories (details on each can be found in chapters 3, 4, and 5). The frames that bond together a particular racial ideology are rooted in the group-based conditions and experiences of the races and are, at the symbolic level, the representations developed by these groups to explain how the world is or ought to be. And because the group life of the various racially defined groups is based on hierarchy and domination, the ruling ideology expresses as "common sense" the interests of the dominant race, while oppositional ideologies attempt to challenge that

common sense by providing alternative frames, ideas, and stories based on the experiences of subordinated races.

Individual actors employ these elements as "building blocks . . . for manufacturing versions on actions, self, and social structures" in communicative situations.[61] The looseness of the elements allows users to maneuver within various contexts (e.g., responding to a race-related survey, discussing racial issues with family, or arguing about affirmative action in a college classroom) and produce various accounts and presentations of self (e.g., appearing ambivalent, tolerant, or strong minded). This loose character enhances the legitimating role of racial ideology because it allows for accommodation of contradictions, exceptions, and new information. As Jackman points out about ideology in general, "Indeed, the strength of an ideology lies in its loose-jointed, flexible application. *An ideology is a political instrument, not an exercise in personal logic:* consistency is rigidity, the only pragmatic effect of which is to box oneself in."[62]

Before I can proceed, two important caveats should be offered. First, although whites, because of their privileged position in the racial order, form a social group (the dominant race), they are fractured along class, gender, sexual orientation, and other forms of "social cleavage." Hence, they have multiple and often contradictory interests that are not easy to disentangle and that predict a priori their mobilizing capacity (Do white workers have more in common with white capitalists than with black workers?). However, because all actors awarded the dominant racial position, regardless of their multiple structural locations (men or women, gay or straight, working class or bourgeois), benefit from what Mills calls the "racial contract,"[63] *most* have historically endorsed the ideas that justify the racial status quo.

Second, although not every single member of the dominant race defends the racial status quo or spouts color-blind racism, *most* do. To explain this point by analogy, although not every capitalist defends capitalism (e.g., Frederick Engels, the coauthor of *The Communist Manifesto,* was a capitalist) and not every man defends patriarchy (e.g., *Achilles Heel* is an English magazine published by feminist men), *most* do in some fashion. In the same vein, although some whites fight white supremacy and do not endorse white common sense, *most* subscribe to substantial portions of it in a casual, uncritical fashion that helps sustain the prevailing racial order.

How to Study Color-Blind Racism

I will rely mostly on interview data to make my case. This choice is based on important conceptual and methodological considerations. Conceptually, my focus is examining whites' racial ideology, and ideology, racial or not, is

produced and reproduced in communicative interaction.[64] Hence, although surveys are useful instruments for gathering general information on actors' views, they are severely limited tools for examining how people explain, justify, rationalize, and articulate racial viewpoints. People are less likely to express their positions and emotions about racial issues by answering "yes" and "no" or "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" to questions. Despite the gallant effort of some survey researchers to produce methodologically correct questionnaires, survey questions still restrict the free flow of ideas and unnecessarily constrain the range of possible answers for respondents.[65]

Methodologically, I argue that because the normative climate in the post–civil rights era has made illegitimate the public expression of racially based feelings and viewpoints,[66] surveys on racial attitudes have become like multiple-choice exams in which respondents work hard to choose the "right" answers (i.e., those that fit public norms). For instance, although a variety of data suggest racial considerations are central to whites' residential choices, more than 90 percent of whites state in surveys that they have no problem with the idea of blacks moving into their neighborhoods.[67] Similarly, even though about 80 percent of whites claim they would not have a problem if a member of their family brought a black person home for dinner, research shows that (1) very few whites (fewer than 10 percent) can legitimately claim the proverbial "some of my best friends are blacks" and (2) whites rarely fraternize with blacks.[68]

Of more import yet is the insistence by mainstream survey researchers on using questions developed in the 1950s and 1960s to assess changes in racial tolerance. This strategy is predicated on the assumption that "racism" (what I label here "racial ideology") does not change over time. If instead one regards racial ideology as in fact changing, the reliance on questions developed to tackle issues from the Jim Crow era will produce an artificial image of progress and miss most of whites' contemporary racial nightmares.

Despite my conceptual and methodological concerns with survey research, I believe well-designed surveys are still useful instruments to glance at America's racial reality. Therefore, I report survey results from my own research projects as well as from research conducted by other scholars whenever appropriate. My point, then, is not to deny attitudinal change or to condemn to oblivion survey research on racial attitudes, but to understand whites' new racial beliefs and their implications as well as possible.

Data Sources

The data for this book come primarily from two similarly structured projects. The first is the 1997 Survey of Social Attitudes of College Students, based on

a convenient sample of 627 college students (including 451 white students) surveyed at a large midwestern university (MU henceforth), a large southern university (SU), and a medium-sized West Coast university (WU). A 10 percent random sample of the white students who provided information in the survey on how to contact them (about 90 percent) were interviewed (forty-one students altogether, of which seventeen were men and twenty-four women and of which thirty-one were from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds and ten were from the working class).

Although the data from this study are very suggestive and, I believe, essentially right, the study has some limitations. First, it is based on a convenient, rather than a representative, sample, limiting the capacity for generalizing the findings to the white population at large. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that the bias in that sample is in the direction of *more* racial tolerance, since researchers have consistently found that young, college-educated whites are more likely to be racially tolerant than any other segment of the white population.[69] Another limitation of the study is that interviews were conducted only with white respondents. Thus, this data set does not allow us to examine whether or not their views are different from blacks'. Finally, due to budget constraints, the sample was small, albeit large when compared to most interview-based work.[70]

The second data source for this book is the 1998 Detroit Area Study (DAS). This data set overcomes many of the limitations of the college students' data set, since the former is based on a representative sample and includes a significant number of interviews with both white and black respondents. The 1998 DAS is a probabilistic survey of four hundred black and white Detroit metropolitan-area residents (323 whites and 67 blacks). The response rate was an acceptable 67.5 percent. As part of this study, 84 respondents (a 21 percent subsample) were randomly selected for in-depth interviews (sixty-six were whites and seventeen were blacks). The interviews were race matched, followed a structured interview protocol, were conducted in the respondents' homes, and lasted about one hour.

The major limitation of the 1998 DAS data set is that the respondents are black and white only. As the United States has become a multiracial society, one has to be concerned about the generalizability of an analysis based on findings on blacks and whites. Although I posit color-blind racism is the general ideology of the post–civil rights era, I realize that a fuller analysis should include the views of other people of color. Thus, I will bring to bear data from other sources in my conclusion to show how other people of color fit into the notion of color-blind racism. On a final note regarding the 1997 Survey of Social Attitudes of College Students and the 1998 DAS, I am well aware that some readers may question their continued validity. However, both survey

research as well as interview-based research (e.g., Bush 2004; Gallagher 2002; etc.) done since have produced similar results, thus adding strength to my arguments in this book.

Politics, Interpretation, and Objectivity

Social scientific research is always a political enterprise. Despite the Enlightenment's dream[71] of pure objectivity, the problems we pose, the theories we use, the methods we employ, and the analyses we perform are social products themselves and to an extent reflect societal contradictions and power dynamics. This view has become more acceptable in the social sciences today than it was ten or twenty years ago.[72] Accordingly, it is harder for social scientists today to defend sociologist Max Weber's call for a separation between researcher, method, and data.[73]

My scholarly goals in this book are to describe the main components of color-blind racism and explain their functions and to use these components to theorize how future U.S. race relations might look. I hope this effort helps social analysts to get over the present impasse on the nature and meaning of whites' racial views. Yet, by accomplishing my scholarly goals, I also hope to attain a much larger and important political goal: uncovering the basic profile of the main ideology reinforcing contemporary racial inequality. By definition, then, my work is a challenge to post–civil rights white common sense; to the view that race no longer matters; and to anyone who believes that the problems afflicting people of color are fundamentally rooted in their pathological cultures.[74] More specifically, I want to advance an argument (the sophisticated nature of color-blind racism), an approach (analyzing racial ideology rather than "prejudice"), and a politics (fighting racial domination based on a group rights'[75] agenda) that assist scholars and activists alike in their research and struggle against color-blind nonsense. I also hope that this book will serve as a wake-up call to color-blind liberal and progressive whites and confused members of minority communities who may favor equal opportunity but not affirmative action, who believe discrimination is not an important factor shaping the life chances of people of color, or who still wonder if racial minorities do in fact have an inferior culture that accounts for their status in America. Nevertheless, recognizing the political nature of research is not a green light for sloppiness and one-sidedness or for relying on unsystematically gathered data to make broad generalizations. Hence, I support my arguments with systematic interview data and reference where my data or analysis differs from that of mainstream analysts so that readers can find alternative interpretations to mine.

Let me now say a word on the matter of interpretation. It is true that "the spoken word has always the residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and how carefully we report or code the answers."[76] Hence, it is possible for others to read the data differently. To satisfy the intellectual concerns of those who doubt my interpretation, whenever possible I present cases that do not nicely fit my interpretation (particularly in chapter 8). Nevertheless, I do not eschew the dangerous but necessary role of the analyst. I will make a strong case for the view that most whites endorse the ideology of color blindness and that this ideology is central to the maintenance of white privilege. The alternatives to this interpretive role of analysts, which I see as more problematic, are timid descriptions usually accompanied by a forest of caveats in which actors' self-reports of events become the ultimate goal of the research itself. Although I do not deny that "people's accounts count,"[77] my goals are interpretive (what do people's accounts mean?) and political (what do people's accounts help accomplish in society). Description and data presentation without interpretation, without analysis, is like going to a beach without a swimsuit.

Does this mean that my interpretation is infallible because I have some degree of authority, which somehow confers me a special gaze? In truth, given the situational and partial character of all knowledge,[78] neither I, nor my potential critics hold the monopoly over the right way of interpreting data. All of us try our best to construct robust explanations of events and hope that in the tilted market of ideas (tilted toward the interpretations of the powerful) the most plausible ones achieve legitimacy.

But if research is political by nature and my interpretation of the data is guided by my theoretical and political orientation, how can readers ascertain if my interpretation is better than those of other analysts? That is, how can we avoid the trap of relativism,[79] of the idea that "all thinking is merely the expression of interest or power or group membership?" My answer to these questions is that my explanations—as well as those of other analysts—ought to be judged like maps. Judge my cartographic effort of drawing the boundaries of contemporary white racial ideology in terms of its usefulness (Does it help to better understand whites' views?), accuracy (Does it accurately depict whites' arguments about racial matters?), details (Does it highlight elements of whites' collective representations not discussed by others?), and clarity (Does it ultimately help you move from here to there?).[80]

One Important Caveat

The purpose of this book is not to demonize whites or label them "racist." Hunting for "racists" is the sport of choice of those who practice the "clinical

approach" to race relations—the careful separation of good and bad, tolerant and intolerant Americans. Because this book is anchored in a structural understanding of race relations,[81] my goal is to uncover the collective practices (in this book, the ideological ones) that help reinforce the contemporary racial order. Historically, many good people supported slavery and Jim Crow. Similarly, most color-blind whites who oppose (or have serious reservations about) affirmative action, believe that blacks' problems are mostly their own doing, and do not see anything wrong with their own white lifestyle are good people, too. The analytical issue, then, is examining how many whites subscribe to an ideology that ultimately helps preserve racial inequality rather than assessing how many hate or love blacks and other minorities.

Even with this caveat, some readers may still feel discomfort while reading this book. Since color-blind racism is the dominant racial ideology, its tentacles have touched us all and thus most readers will subscribe to some—if not most—of its tenets, use its style, and believe many of its racial stories. Unfortunately, there is little I can do to ease the pain of these readers, since when one writes and exposes an ideology that is at play, its supporters "get burned," so to speak. For readers in this situation (good people who may subscribe to many of the frames of color blindness), I urge a personal and political movement away from claiming to be "nonracist" to becoming "antiracist."[82] Being an antiracist begins with understanding the institutional nature of racial matters and accepting that all actors in a racialized society are affected *materially* (receive benefits or disadvantages) and *ideologically* by the racial structure. This stand implies taking responsibility for your unwilling participation in these practices and beginning a new life committed to the goal of achieving real racial equality. The ride will be rough, but after your eyes have been opened, there is no point in standing still.

The Plan of the Book

Color-blind racism emerged as a new racial ideology in the late 1960s, concomitantly with the crystallization of the "new racism" as America's new racial structure. In chapter 2, I describe how this new racial regime emerged and outline its central practices and mechanisms in the social, economic, political, and social control areas.

Because the social practices and mechanisms to reproduce racial privilege acquired a new, subtle, and apparently nonracial character, new rationalizations emerged to justify the new racial order. The new dominant themes or frameworks of color-blind racism are the subject of chapter 3.

All ideologies develop a set of stylistic parameters; a certain way of conveying its ideas to audiences. Color-blind racism is no exception. In chapter 4, I document the main stylistic components of this ideology. In chapter 5, I delve into the story lines ("The past is the past" or "I didn't get a job or promotion—or was not admitted to a certain college—because a black man got it") and personal stories that have emerged in the post–civil rights era to provide color-blind racism's gut-level emotionality.

If we take seriously whites' self-profession to color blindness, one would expect significantly high levels of racial interaction with minorities in general and blacks in particular. Using the data from these two projects, in chapter 6, I examine whites' patterns of interracial interactions and conclude that they tend to navigate in what I label as a "white habitus" or a set of primary networks and associations with other whites that reinforces the racial order by fostering racial solidarity among whites and negative affect toward racial "others."

In chapter 7, I address "race traitors,"[83] or whites who do not endorse the ideology of color blindness. After profiling college students and DAS respondents who fit the racial progressive mold, I suggest white women from working-class origins are the most likely candidates to commit racial treason in the United States. Nevertheless, I also show that color-blind racism has affected even these progressive whites. If color-blind racism has affected racial progressives, has it affected blacks, too? Attempting to answer this question is the focus of chapter 8. Using DAS data, I contend that although blacks have developed an oppositional ideology, color-blind racism has affected blacks in a mostly indirect fashion. Rather than totally controlling blacks' field of ideas and cognitions, color-blind racism has confused some issues, restricted the possibility of discussing others, and, overall, blunted the utopian character of blacks' oppositional views. In chapter 9, I challenge the assertions that the United States is still organized along a biracial divide and posit that the United States is slowly moving toward a triracial or "plural" order similar to that found in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. In chapter 10, I examine the Obama phenomenon and suggest it is not emblematic of post-racialism but part of the color-blind drama I examine in this book. In chapter 11, I conclude by assessing the implications of color-blind racism, of the Latin Americanization of racial stratification, and of *Obamerica* for the struggle for racial and social justice in this country.

2

The New Racism

The U.S. Racial Structure since the 1960s

Introduction

The white commonsense view on racial matters is that racists are few and far between, that discrimination[1] has all but disappeared since the 1960s, and that most whites are color-blind. This view, which emerged in the 1970s, has gone viral with the election of Barack Obama as president in 2008. Whites seem to be collectively shouting, "We have a black president, so we are finally beyond race!" (see chapter 10 for a discussion on Obama, the new racism, and color blindness). This new common sense is not totally without foundation (e.g., traditional racial practices and exclusion as well as Jim Crow–based racist beliefs have decreased in significance), but it is ultimately false. What has happened is that white supremacy in the United States (i.e., the racial structure of America) has changed. Today "new racism" practices have emerged that are more sophisticated and subtle than those typical of the Jim Crow era. Yet, as I will argue, these practices are as effective as the old ones in maintaining the racial status quo. In this chapter, I trace the evolution of these new structures of racial domination to show how racial inequality is perpetuated in a color-blind world. I begin this chapter with a brief description of how this new racial structure (the new racism) came about. Against this backdrop, I survey the evidence of how black-white racial inequality is produced and reproduced in the United States in four areas: social, political, social control, and economic. The evidence is perused from 1960 until the present with the goal of examining the mechanisms and practices that keep minorities "in their

place." I conclude the chapter with a discussion of some of the social, political, and legal repercussions of the new racial structure of America.

The argument that race and racism have "decreased in significance" in contemporary America was made prominent in the late 1970s by black sociologist William Julius Wilson.[2] This view is consistent with survey data on white attitudes since the early 1960s[3] as well as with many demographic and economic studies comparing the status of whites and blacks in terms of income, occupations, health, and education that suggest that a remarkable reduction in racial inequality has occurred in America.[4]

A smaller number of social scientists, on the other hand, believe that race continues to play a role similar to the one it played in the past.[5] For these authors, little has changed in America in terms of racism and there is a general pessimism in the prospects of changing the racial status of minorities. Although this is a minority viewpoint in academia, it represents the perception of many members of minority communities, especially of the black community.

These opinions about the changing import of race and racism in the United States are based on a narrowly defined notion of racism. For these analysts, racism is fundamentally an ideological or attitudinal phenomenon. In contrast, as I stated in the previous chapter, I regard racism as a *structure*, that is, as a network of social relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shapes the life chances of the various races. What social scientists define as racism is conceptualized in this framework as racial ideology. Racism (racial ideology) helps to glue and, at the same time, organize the nature and character of race relations in a society. From this vantage point, rather than arguing about whether the significance of race has declined, increased, or not changed at all, the issue at hand is assessing if a transformation has occurred in the *racial structure* of the United States. It is my contention that despite the profound changes that occurred in the 1960s, a new racial structure—the new racism for short—is operating, which accounts for the persistence of racial inequality. The elements that comprise this new racial structure are the increasingly *covert* nature of racial discourse and racial practices; the avoidance of racial terminology and the ever-growing claim by whites that they experience "reverse racism"; the elaboration of a racial agenda over political matters that eschews direct racial references; the invisibility of most mechanisms to reproduce racial inequality; and, finally, the rearticulation of some racial practices characteristic of the Jim Crow period of race relations.

I begin this chapter with a brief description of how this new racial structure (new racism) came about. Against this backdrop, I survey the evidence of how black-white racial inequality is produced and reproduced in the United States in several areas: social, political, economic, and ideological. The evidence is perused from 1960 until the present with the goal of examining the mecha-

nisms and practices that keep minorities "in their place." I conclude the chapter with a discussion of some of the social, political, and legal repercussions of the new racial structure of America.

Before I move forward, I must state one important caveat. Although I hold that the dominant form of racism now practiced is a subtle one, this does not mean I am blind to the vulgar explicit racism now in vogue among the "Tea Party" and others on the right. Racial regimes may change, but that transformation is never complete and remnants of the old-fashioned Jim Crow racism are clearly resurgent. This resurgence is important and clearly influences the life chances of people of color; however, I contend that it is not the core of the system and the practices responsible for reproducing racial domination today. The Trump moment is reminiscent of the Reagan moment (1980–1988), where racial affairs got temporarily hotter (see chapter 10).

The Emergence of a New Racial Structure in the 1960s

Blacks were kept in a subordinate position during the Jim Crow period of race relations through a variety of bluntly racist practices. At the economic level, blacks were restricted to menial jobs by the joint effort of planters, corporations, and unions. Hence, it is not surprising that in 1890, 87 percent of blacks worked as either agricultural workers or domestics or in personal service (see table 2.1 below). In the South, they were mostly tenant farmers and this was accomplished through vagrancy and apprenticeship laws, restrictions on the right of blacks to buy land and to work in certain occupations, debt imprisonment, and the convict lease system.[6] In the North, the exclusionary practices of managers and unions kept them in unskilled occupations with very little chance for occupational mobility.[7] Thus, rather than a split labor market, "most blacks in the South between 1865 and 1900 were not yet in a position to compete directly with whites for the same occupations."[8] As tenant workers,

TABLE 2.1
Distribution of Blacks by Occupations, 1890

Industry	*Number*	*Percent*
Agriculture	1,728,325	56.2
Domestic and Personal Service	956,754	31.1
Manufacturing	208,374	6.8
Trade and Transportation	145,717	4.8
Professionals	33,994	1.1

Source: Lorenzo J. Greene and Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Negro Wage Earner* (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1930), p. 37, table 10.

they were "reduced to the status of a serf" and cheated by white landlords in a variety of ways. As industrial workers in the North, they were located at the bottom of the well with little chance for occupational mobility.

The economic position of blacks did not change much until well into the twentieth century. It was not until after WWI, which created a labor shortage in the industrial North, that many blacks migrated from the South and joined the ranks of the working class.[9] Yet this transition from agricultural to industrial jobs did not break the Jim Crow pattern of employment. Spero and Harris contend that although there was no wage discrimination between blacks and whites in the North, blacks earned less than whites because they were concentrated in low-skill jobs: The jobs into which the Negroes went were usually those that native Americans and Americanized foreign-born white labor did not want. This largely accounts for the almost-spectacular increase in the proportion of Negroes in the iron and steel foundries, where the work is dirty, hot, and unpleasant.[10]

At the social level, the rules of the new racial order emerged slowly given that the War and the Reconstruction (1865–1877) shook the rules of racial engagement and challenged the place of blacks in society. The transition from slavery to Jim Crow was characterized by inconsistency and no generally accepted code of racial mores. Slavery did not require either a very sophisticated and specific set of rules to preserve "social distance" or an elaborate racial ideology (racism) because of the thorough differences of status among the races. But as blacks became free, they posed a threat to white supremacy. Slowly but surely segregationist laws and practices emerged after 1865 and were solidified by the 1880s with the enactment of Jim Crow laws all over the South. These laws involved the disenfranchisement of blacks, racial separation in public accommodations, segregation in housing, schools, the workplace, and in other areas to ensure white supremacy. C. Vann Woodward describes the extent of these laws in the following manner:

> The extremes to which caste penalties and separation were carried in parts of the South could hardly find a counterpart short of the latitudes of India and South Africa. . . . Curfew . . . separate phone booths . . . separate books and storage of books in public schools . . . South Carolina separated the mulatto caste of prostitutes, and even "Ray Stannard Baker found Jim Crow Bibles for Negro witnesses in Atlanta and Jim Crow elevators for Negro passengers in Atlanta buildings."[11]

Politically, blacks were virtually disenfranchised in the South and were almost totally dependent on white politicians in the North. In the South, poll taxes, literacy tests, and outright coercive strategies restrained their political options. In the North, black politicians were subordinate to white ethnic political machineries and did not represent much for their own communities.[12]

In terms of social control, blacks in the South were regulated by the actions of individual whites, violent racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, mob violence in the form of lynching, and the lack of enforcement of the laws of the land by state agencies. In the North, blacks suffered less from these practices largely because they were extremely residentially segregated and, thus, did not pose a "threat" to whites. However, whenever blacks "crossed the line," whites erupted in violence, such as during the race riots of the late 1910s.[13]

Finally, in consonance with the above practices, racial ideology during the Jim Crow period of race relations was explicitly racist. Without question, most whites believed that minorities were intellectually and morally inferior, that they should be kept apart, and that whites should not mix with any of them.[14]

The apartheid that blacks[15] experienced in the United States was predicated on (1) keeping them in rural areas, mostly in the South, (2) maintaining them as agricultural workers, and (3) excluding them from the political process. However, as blacks successfully challenged their socioeconomic position by migrating initially from rural areas to urban areas in the South and later to the North and West, by pushing themselves by whatever means necessary into nonagricultural occupations, and by developing political organizations and movements like Garveyism, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Urban League, the Southern Regional Council, and the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC), the infrastructure of racial apartheid began to crumble.[16] Among the other factors leading to the abolition of the segregationist order, the most significant were the participation of blacks in World War I and World War II, which patently underscored the contradiction between fighting for freedom abroad and lacking it at home; the Cold War, which made it a necessity to eliminate overt discrimination at home in order to sell the United States as the champion of democracy; and a number of judicial decisions, legislative acts, and presidential decrees that transpired since the 1940s.[17]

The aforementioned political, social, and economic processes occurred in a fast-changing U.S. political economy. From 1920 until 1940, the North expanded its industrialization process at a furious pace. After WWII the South industrialized at an even more dramatic pace. Many Northern industries moved South in search of lower production costs and have continued doing so.[18] Hence today over 70 percent of the Southern labor force is engaged in nonagricultural pursuits. This industrialization process provided the pull factor for blacks to move from the rural South, which, coupled with the push factor of escaping the violence of Jim Crow and the demise in agricultural jobs, created the optimal conditions for the "great migration."[19] Although the 1.8 million blacks who migrated between 1910 and 1940 from the South to the North and West faced severe racial practices and economic constraints from

white workers, labor unions, and whites in general, the North provided them expanded opportunities in all realms of life. This great migration continued between 1940 and 1970 as 4.4 million more blacks left the South.[20]

The impact of this migration was enormous on the overall condition of blacks. By 1970 blacks were geographically diffused throughout the United States; 80 percent were urban dwellers and had achieved a higher rate of urbanization than whites; they had increased their education and developed a small but thriving middle class; social and political organizations flourished and became training grounds for many black leaders; by virtue of their new geographic dispersion, blacks increasingly became a national group; and they were able to develop a new consciousness, new attitudes, and a new view on how to deal with racial discrimination, characterized by Gunnar Myrdal as the "protest motive."[21]

Even in the South, the social, political, and cultural condition of blacks improved somewhat with the early process of industrialization. And, after the 1960s, even their economic condition changed as the top business elite abandoned all-out discrimination because of the adverse economic effects created by violence and protest demonstrations. According to Melvin M. Lehman, this pattern was reinforced by northern industrial capital that had penetrated the South, making the "southern system of brutality, social discrimination, and legalized (or extra-legalized) persecution . . . more and more economically and politically dysfunctional."[22]

To be clear, neither urbanization nor industrialization were nonracial "rational" progressive forces in themselves. Both northern and southern capitalists accommodated racial practices in their hiring, company policies, and daily activities. In the case of southern capitalists, industrialization became a necessity with the progressive decline of its agricultural economy. Although southern capitalists were able to maintain Jim Crow and industrialization for over fifty years (1890s to 1950s), by the mid-1950s it became clear that they could not coexist peacefully. Blacks in the North had acquired enough political muscle to push the federal government to do something about their civil rights. After the *Brown* decision of 1954 and its rejection by most of the South, instability and protests spread all over the South. Such instability was anathema for attracting capital. Therefore, the business elite, reluctantly and gradually, developed an accommodation with the new policies. In the North, the accommodation began much earlier in the 1920s, 1930s, and particularly after WWII, and involved the subordinate incorporation of blacks in industry. This accommodation, although progressive, maintained the view that blacks were inferior workers and kept them in the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. The views of northern managers were typified by a "progressive" manager who in the 1950s commented that "Negroes, basically and as a group, with only rare exceptions, are not as well trained for higher skills and jobs as

whites. They appear to be excellent for work, usually unskilled, that requires stamina and brawn—and little else. They are unreliable and cannot adjust to the demands of the factory."[23] Views like this continue to plague American capitalists in the post-1960 period.[24] What industrialization and urbanization did for blacks was to provide a new context for struggle that made the southern Jim Crow system impossible to maintain in the face of black opposition. (Interested parties should see the similarities between this case in the United States and the collapse of Apartheid in South Africa. There the enlightened segment of the business elite decided to meet with leaders of the ANC in the late 1980s to discuss a possible solution to the sociopolitical crisis. They did so because of the pressure of international economic sanctions, anti-divestment campaigns, and boycotts to South African products.[25] Hence, for the elite, that matter was not black and white but green!)

These demographic, social, political, and economic factors and the actions of blacks made change almost inevitable. But ripe conditions are not enough to change any structural order. Hence, the racial order had to be *directly* challenged if it was going to be effectively transformed. That was the role fulfilled by the civil rights movement and the other forms of mass protest by blacks (so-called race riots) that took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Organized and spontaneous challenges were the catalysts that brought down overt segregation.

Yet the demise of Jim Crow did not mean the end of racism in America. Many analysts noted that "racism" (as usually defined) and race relations acquired instead a new character since the 1960s. They point to the increasingly covert nature of racial discourse and racial practices; the avoidance of racial terminology in racial conflicts by whites; and the elaboration of a racial agenda over political matters (e.g., state intervention, individual rights, responsibility, etc.) that eschews direct racial references.[26] In the following sections I describe the typical discriminatory practices of the post–civil rights era.

Interracial Social Interaction during the New Racism Period

In all areas of social life blacks and whites remain mostly separate and disturbingly unequal. A close examination of research in the areas of housing, education, and everyday social interaction reveals startlingly little progress since the 1960s.

Residential Segregation

U.S. Census 2010 data indicate that residential segregation has declined for the fourth straight decade. During the 1990s, segregation declined in 272

metropolitan statistical areas and increased in 19 areas; however, black-white segregation remained high in the older Rust-Belt metropolitan areas and increased during the 1990s in the suburbs. Furthermore, blacks are still more segregated than any other racial or ethnic group—segregation that they have experienced longer than any other group—and are segregated at every income level.[27] The black poor, in particular, suffer the greatest degree of "hypersegregation" from the rest of America, and this pattern of extreme isolation has remained the same through the last one-third century. In their book, *American Apartheid*, Massey and Denton measure the block-level indices of residential segregation of thirty metropolitan areas from 1940 to 1980. The index of residential segregation for the North is around 80 and for the South around 70 (an index of 100 indicates total segregation and one of 0, no segregation at all). Even with a steady decline in most of the metropolitan areas included, levels are still extremely high, especially in the northern cities. In 2010, national black isolation was about 55 percent and remained 70 percent or higher in cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago.[28]

Although many segregation indices are used as if they were sophisticated measures, the reality is otherwise, as these indices essentially rely on "simple numerical and percentage comparisons of the numbers and proportions of persons in each race/ethnicity group in a population."[29] Scholars have pointed to the problem of unmeasured segregation because of the scale of census tracts. More fundamentally, however, I suggest that "racial contacts" *do not* mean substantive integration, since there are significant forms of racism compatible with "physical closeness." Indeed, studies show that the apparent "integration" is mostly a result of the restructuring of urban space, including more black people moving to the suburbs and increasing gentrification.[30] In turn, gentrification comes with its own set of problems, including decreased black participation and black displacement, at least partially through the destruction of public housing.[31]

The costs to blacks of residential segregation are high; they are likely to pay more for housing in a limited market, likely to have lower-quality housing, less likely to own their housing, likely to live in areas where employment is difficult to find, and likely to have to contend with prematurely depreciated housing.[32] Segregation makes it unlikely that poor blacks will be able to escape poverty. For instance, 72 percent of black Americans born into the lowest economic quartile of neighborhoods reside in poor areas as adults, compared with only 40 percent of whites.[33] Furthermore, race is also the most salient predictor of intergenerational downward residential mobility, with "the odds of downward mobility 3.6 times as large as the odds for whites."[34] The big difference is in how segregation is accomplished today. In the Jim Crow era, the housing industry used overtly discriminatory practices such as real estate

agents employing outright refusal or subterfuge to avoid renting or selling to black customers, federal government redlining policies, overtly discriminatory insurance and lending practices, and racially restrictive covenants on housing deeds in order to maintain segregated communities. In contrast, in the post–civil rights era, covert behaviors have replaced these practices and maintained the same outcome—separate communities.

Many studies have detailed the obstacles that minorities face from government agencies, real estate agents, money lenders, and white residents that continue to limit their housing options.[35] Housing audits done in many locations reveal that blacks and Latinos are denied available housing from 35 to 75 percent of the time depending on the city in question.[36] Turner, Struyk, and Yinger, in reporting the results of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's *Housing Discrimination Study*, found that blacks and Latinos experienced discrimination in approximately *half* of their efforts to rent or buy housing. Yinger, in a separate article, reported that the average incidence of discrimination for audit studies is 47 percent. These housing studies have shown that when paired with similar white counterparts, blacks are likely to be shown fewer apartments, be quoted higher rents, or offered worse conditions, and be steered to specific neighborhoods. Using a similar procedure in a 2012 audit of housing racial practices in twenty-three U.S. metropolitan areas, Turner and colleagues report that although there was improvement since the 1989 audit, whites continued to be given more information about potential rentals and were shown more available housing units in both the rental and sales markets. The study also showed a significant increase in geographic steering that perpetuated segregation, predominantly through real estate agent editorializing.[37]

In one study of lending practices done by the Kentucky Human Rights Commission, black and white testers with equal characteristics requested conventional mortgages for the same housing from ten of the top lending institutions in Louisville, and while there were cases in which discrimination was apparent (blacks having trouble getting appointments, etc.), in the eighty-five visits made to inquire about loans, none of the black testers (with one exception) knew they were being discriminated against, though *all* of them were. Blacks were given less information, less encouragement to return and apply for the loan, fewer helpful hints as to how to successfully obtain a loan, and differential treatment in prequalifying—sometimes being told they would not qualify when whites of the same profile were told they would. Similar studies done in Chicago and New York revealed discrimination in seven out of ten lending institutions in Chicago and in the one institution studied in New York City.[38] National data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act show that black applicants are denied mortgages at least twice as frequently as whites

of the same income and gender. Finally, a study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston found that after controlling for a number of variables, blacks on average are denied loans 60 percent more times than whites.[39] In an overview of mortgage loan practices during the 1990s, Turner and Skidmore report that blacks received less information from loan officers, were quoted higher interest rates, and suffered higher loan denial rates. Much of the gain in home ownership among African Americans in the 1990s was achieved through subprime lenders who offer usurious rates, due in large part to the continued practice of redlining of black neighborhoods by mainstream lenders. It is these same subprime mortgages that have caused the recent mortgage crisis to impact minorities more severely than whites.[40]

The racial practices of banks did not proceed in color-blind fashion as black neighborhoods were actively targeted for higher-interest loans. For instance, Wells Fargo settled a lawsuit with the NAACP for $175 million. The suit alleged that customers were steered toward higher-interest subprime loans—called "ghetto loans" for "mud people" within the organization. Although Wells Fargo has been a high-profile fall guy for this racist practice, the evidence suggests that banks routinely engage in discriminatory lending. Further, this lending is not based upon blacks having worse economic profiles, as higher-income blacks were more likely to be steered toward subprime loans.[41]

Education

The history of black-white education in this country is one of substantive inequities maintained through public institutions. While today many of the traditional barriers to black advancement have been outlawed, the situation is by no means one of equity. Although scholars have documented the narrowing of the gap in the *quantity* of education attained by blacks and whites, little has been said about the persisting gap in the *quality* of education received.[42] Still remaining (and in some cases worsening) high levels of de facto segregation are at least partly to blame for the gap in quality. However, tracking, differential assignment to special education, and other informal school practices are important factors too.

Despite some progress during the period immediately after 1964, the level of school segregation for black students remains relatively high in all regions and has deteriorated in the Northeast and Midwest regions. According to a report by The Civil Rights Project in 2011, the average black student attended a school that was about 50 percent black and about 28 percent white. Conversely, the average white student attended a school that was over 70 percent white and about 8 percent black. Moreover, they report a trend beginning in 1986 toward resegregation of U.S. schools. As a consequence of resegregation

during the decade of the 1990s, U.S. schools were more segregated in the 2000–2001 school year than in 1970. The relevance of this fact is that, as Gary Orfield has noted, "Segregated schools are still profoundly unequal." Inner-city minority schools, in sharp contrast to white suburban schools, lack decent buildings, are overcrowded, have outdated equipment—if they have equipment at all—do not have enough textbooks for their students, lack library resources, are technologically behind, and pay their teaching and administrative staff less, which produces, despite exceptions, a low level of morale. According to Jonathan Kozol, these "savage inequalities" have been directly related to lower reading achievement and learning attained by black students and their limited computer skills.[43]

In integrated schools, blacks still have to contend with discriminatory practices. Oakes and her coauthors have found clear evidence of discriminatory practices in tracking within schools. Whites (and Asians) are considerably (and statistically significantly) more likely to be placed in the academic track than comparably achieving African American and Latino students.[44] Another study found that of the 1985 students who took the SAT, 65.1 percent of blacks compared to 81.2 percent of whites were enrolled in an academic track. No wonder black students tend to score lower on the SAT than white students. According to Amanda E. Lewis and John B. Diamond, disproportionate placement in lower academic tracks means that black students receive a less rigorous curriculum, less experienced teachers, and miss the benefits of a weighted grading scale. Moreover, black students are punished more often and more severely, a statistic that has been corroborated by numerous other studies.[45]

Other Areas of Social Life

A brief survey of research in other areas of social life reveals persistent discrimination, unequal treatment, and, in some cases, exclusion. This is one of the few areas where whites still openly express reservations in surveys.[46] In 1993, only 0.4 percent of all new marriages were black-white unions.[47] Furthermore, a 2010 report from the PRC reveals that 15.1 percent of all new marriages in the United States were between spouses of a different race or ethnicity.[48] Not only are over 90 percent of whites marrying other whites, but also additional research shows that intermarriage rates among Latinos and Asians has actually decreased since 1980.[49] In addition to whites' negative attitudes toward interracial relationships, the high level of residential segregation and the limited friendships between blacks and whites contribute to this low rate of intermarriage. Research by Jackman and Crane showed that only 9.4 percent of whites could name one good black friend. This led them to conclude that very few whites "could rightly claim that 'some of their best friends' are black."[50]

In the realm of everyday life, several recent works have attempted to examine the daily experiences blacks have with racism. Through interviews with black professional men, Adia Harvey Wingfield describes the daily mistreatment of middle-class black men at work. Her respondents report a pernicious tokenism that results in undue scrutiny and disapproval.[51] Duke psychiatrist Damon Tweedy builds on these ideas in his memoir, describing an incident as an undergraduate when he was mistaken for the handyman upon entering a classroom. These incidents continued as he progressed professionally, with some patients openly expressing their dislike of black doctors.[52] (In an older study, Ellis Cose also finds similar phenomena among middle-class black people who have supposedly "made it.")[53] Feagin and McKinney point out that the chronic stress and "justified rage" resulting from these mistreatments cost African Americans psychologically, create loss of personal energy, and affect their physical health.[54]

Joe R. Feagin and Melvin P. Sikes also document the dense network of discriminatory practices confronted by middle-class blacks in everyday life. Although they correctly point out that blacks face discriminatory practices that range from overt and violent to covert and gentle, the latter seem to be prevalent. In public spaces the discriminatory behavior described by black interviewees included poor service, special requirements applied only to them, surveillance in stores, being ignored at retail stores selling expensive commodities, receiving the worst accommodations in restaurants or hotels, being confused constantly with menial workers, along with the usual but seemingly less frequent epithets and overtly racist behavior.

In 1981 Howard Schuman and his coauthors replicated a 1950 study of restaurants in New York's Upper East Side and found a substantial amount of subtle discrimination remained. Black patrons were refused use of the coatroom, seated in either isolated or undesirable places like near the kitchen, orders were reversed, and service workers were flustered. A recent review of the literature on discrimination in the service industry shows that these practices continue. People of color are referred to using code words such as "Canadian," "cousins," "moolies," "black tops," and even "white people" to signal among servers that they are undesirable patrons. The problem doesn't end at nasty names, however, with servers unwilling to serve black patrons, extended waiting periods when tables are open, and instructions from managers to treat blacks poorly.[55] Importantly, much of the evidence of this type of behavior comes from reports from waiters, and people of color subjected to these racial practices are left to wonder if this behavior is indeed race-based. Lawrence Otis Graham reports in his book *Member of the Club* that in ten of New York's best restaurants he and his friends visited, they were stared at, mistaken for restaurant workers, seated in terrible spots, and buffered so as

to avoid proximity to whites. Actually, Graham reports that they were treated reasonably well in only two of the ten restaurants, one Russian and the other French. The suits recently filed against Denny's, Shoney's, and the International House of Pancakes seem to suggest that restaurants' racial practices discriminate against blacks of all class backgrounds.[56]

More recently, a body of work on racial "microaggressions" chronicles how minorities can be subtly put down in many cross-race interactions. These may be a prototypical example of the way the new racism operates, as microaggressions can be crimes of omission (i.e., an environment only displays symbols such as photos or reading material relevant to the dominant white culture) or of commission, as when one implies that a minority is unqualified for a job or admission to school and is only present because of affirmative action. Importantly, the content of these messages is almost always devoid of overt racial appeals, allowing the perpetrator to maintain that they are neutral. This makes it very difficult for people of color to respond to this type of aggression. These microaggressions can have a serious effect on the lives of people of color, as this kind of hostility has been tied to a number of negative health outcomes.[57]

The Political Structure of the New Racial Order

Almost all commentators on black politics recognize that blacks became serious participants in "legitimate" politics very recently.[58] But since 1965, as blacks were able to register and vote, their representation in local and national political structures has increased dramatically. The data on this point are fairly clear. Whereas in 1970 there were only 1,460 black elected officials at all levels of the U.S. political system, by 1989 the total had increased to 7,226, and in the early 1990s their number reached 8,000, and stands at over 10,000 today.[59] Moreover, by 1990 "blacks held elective positions in every state except Idaho, Montana, and North Dakota."[60] In Congress there has been an increase in the number of African American elected officials from ten, or 1.9 percent of the members of Congress in 1970, to twenty-six, or 5.8 percent of the total in 1991, to forty-nine in 2016. However, the Senate has a total of ten people of color, leaving the Senate an overwhelmingly white body.[61] Nevertheless, several are anti-minority minorities such as Florida's Marco Rubio, South Carolina's Tim Scott, and Texas's Ted Cruz. As is the case with conservatives such as Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, these politicians are out of touch with the views, goals, and aspirations of most people of color.

Overall, the changes in this area give the impression of substantial progress and the beginning of a truly pluralist America.[62] The new political space that

blacks have gained has without question provided them with some benefits. Today blacks have some direct—although small—influence in policies, have sensitized white politicians about the needs of blacks not only through their policy suggestions but also simply by their presence, and have established a direct link between government and citizenship. In terms of the cities where blacks have been elected as mayors, some commentators have pointed out that "African American–owned businesses expand, the rate of small business failure declines, and there are significant increases in both the number and proportions of African Americans employed in city government."[63] But despite these accomplishments, blacks remain a subordinate group in the political system. What follows is a discussion of the current limitations that blacks face in the political system.

Structural Barriers to the Election of Black Politicians

Racial gerrymandering, multimember legislative districts, election runoffs, annexation of predominantly white areas, at-large district elections, and anti-single-shot devices (disallowing concentrating votes in one or two candidates in cities using at-large elections) have become standard practices to disenfranchise blacks since 1965. All of these tactics attempt to either minimize the number of majority-black election districts or neutralize their electoral impact by diluting the black vote.[64] Except for gerrymandering (drawing districts so that minority coalitions waste their votes), the mechanisms have the facade of expanding democracy and being race-neutral. For instance, at-large districts were initially developed to weaken political machines by diluting the ethnic vote, but in recent times have become a way of diluting the black vote in cities.[65] All these procedures are effective because black representation is still dependent upon the existence of black districts. In the 2000 elections, unfair voting practices that turned away many black voters were reported in over a dozen U.S. states, and similar voting irregularities in the 2004 elections disenfranchised voters in predominantly black communities. Similarly, in the 2012 elections right-wing groups attacked the voting rights of blacks through voter ID laws in a number of states. Since 2003, thirty-four states have implemented voter ID laws[66] that are similar to the poll taxes and literacy requirements under Jim Crow. Though appeals courts have begun to strike down some of these laws, at the time of writing we are unsure of their ultimate fate in the Supreme Court. Nonetheless, proponents of these laws claim they are race-neutral, but research from the University of Delaware showed that racial animus was the best predictor of support for the law, regardless of political party. Some of the legislatures, such as those in Florida and Pennsylvania, implemented these laws despite openly claiming that

voter fraud was not a problem, but they hoped that their implementation would suppress black turnout, giving the election to Romney.[67]

Underrepresentation among Elected and Appointed Officials

The best proof that there are still structural barriers to the election of blacks is the fact that despite their burgeoning rate of voter registration and participation since 1965, black elected officials are only about 8.5 percent of state legislatures and about 3 percent of local elected officials.[68] Even more significant, blacks are substantially underrepresented even in places where they comprise 30 percent or more of the entire population.[69] The majority of cities with a population of fifty thousand or greater with black mayors in 2004 had more than a 40 percent black population.[70] New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Dallas, which had black mayors in the 1990s, no longer do. Black appointees tend to be concentrated in the civil rights and social welfare bureaucracies and, in many of the remaining cases, are "sanitized" blacks like Justice Thomas or General Colin Powell.

Why are blacks so underrepresented? Because of the historical tendency of whites of only voting for or appointing white candidates. Thus, the election and appointment of blacks seem to be circumscribed to locales in which blacks constitute a substantial segment of the population (40 percent or more) or to black candidates who "mainstream" or show "moderation."[71]

Although many whites would argue that this trend has ended with President Obama, the evidence suggests that Obama's ascendency to the presidency is in line with the historical trajectory of black politicians. See chapter 10 for an extended discussion of the Obama phenomenon.

The Limited Possibilities of Elected and Appointed Officials

What is the overall impact of black elected officials and appointees for the black community at large? In Congress, because of their relatively small numbers, blacks have a very limited role in creating policy. At best, they can shape aspects of legislation to soften the impact on poor minority communities and, so far, they have been able to curtail anti–civil rights legislation. The record of black appointees, who have been historically few, suggests that they tend to have an even more limited role in shaping policy. In addition, there is a disturbing trend of appointing antiblack blacks (a trend begun by President Carter), which fits well into our new racism argument.[72] By appointing conservative blacks to certain positions, the political system is *symbolically* integrated while maintaining policies and politics that keep blacks "in their place."

The Limited Impact of Elected Black Mayors

Elected black mayors are in a political quandary because of the decline of political machines. This decline reduces significantly the "power" of the mayoral position since political machines allowed mayors in the past to dispense resources to their constituencies. Given that these political machines have been replaced by nonpartisan bureaucratic political structures, the likelihood of a black mayor being able to use his or her position for distributing resources has been seriously eroded.[73] Moreover, the financial crisis of cities limits drastically the projects that mayors can carry out, as well as their overall independence from the dominant. Furthermore, since cities are controlled by the interests of white business elites, elected black mayors are increasingly captive to pro-growth policies based on making cities conducive to business investments. These policies usually imply neglecting the most pressing needs of racial minorities and the poor.[74] Moreover, despite the progressive impact that many have noted in the black community (appointment of blacks to various city positions, increase in the rate of black municipal employees, higher responsiveness to the needs of the poor, etc.), most of the benefits have not accrued to the black masses. More importantly, the election of black mayors, unlike those from white ethnic groups in the past, has not led to the institutionalization of "black control in the realms of public and private decision making."[75] Thus black mayors become "political managers" of cities in which the present economic, social, and political arrangements still benefit whites at large, and the elite in particular.

Electoral Participation as Entrapment

The subordinate incorporation of blacks into electoral politics has reduced their options to effect meaningful social change. Historically, blacks have advanced in this country through overt protest politics.[76] Hence, the extension of universal suffrage to blacks has been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is one of the most enduring victories of the civil rights movement, but on the other hand, it is progressively becoming an obstacle for further black progress. Because the number of blacks in significant decision-making bodies (House, Senate, etc.) is minuscule, because whites still vote largely for white candidates, and because blacks do not have enough economic and social resources to utilize formal political rights as effectively as whites, electoral politics are *restricting* the political options of blacks in the United States.

An example of how electoral politics restrict the options of blacks is the current political impasse experienced by blacks. They cannot vote Republican since that party has become increasingly a pro-white party; they cannot fully trust the Democratic Party since it has shown in recent times a tre-

mendous degree of ambivalence in its commitment to blacks as evidenced in the racialized discourse of many leaders on welfare, crime, government spending, and affirmative action; and the third-party option, advocated by many progressives, is still a far-fetched idea with a very limited impact among black urban voters. The way out of this impasse seems to be through a return to mass protest but it is precisely that type of political activity that is incompatible with electoral politics. Hence what blacks need is what electoral participation limits.

Obama's election is the best example of this type of entrapment; for more info see chapter 10.

"Keeping Them in Their Place": The Social Control of Blacks since the 1960s

All domination is ultimately maintained through social-control strategies. For example, during slavery, whites used the whip, overseers, night patrols, and other highly repressive practices, along with a number of paternalistic ones, to keep blacks in their place. After slavery was abolished, whites felt threatened by free blacks; hence, very strict written and unwritten rules of racial contact (the Jim Crow laws) were developed to specify "the place" of blacks in the new environment of "freedom." And, as insurance, lynching and other terroristic forms of social control were used to guarantee white supremacy. In contrast, as the Jim Crow practices have subsided, the control of blacks has been chiefly attained through state agencies (police, criminal court system, FBI). Marable describes the new system of control as follows:

> The informal, vigilante-inspired techniques to suppress Blacks were no longer practical. Therefore, beginning with the Great Depression, and especially after 1945, white racists began to rely almost exclusively on the state apparatus to carry out the battle for white supremacy. Blacks charged with crimes would receive longer sentences than whites convicted of similar crimes. The police forces of municipal and metropolitan areas received a *carte blanche* in their daily acts of brutality against Blacks. The Federal and state government carefully monitored Blacks who advocated any kind of social change. Most important, capital punishment was used as a weapon against Blacks charged and convicted of major crimes. The criminal justice system, in short, became a modern instrument to perpetuate white hegemony. Extra-legal lynchings were replaced by "legal lynchings" and capital punishment.[77]

In the following sections of this chapter, I review the available data to see how well they fit Marable's interpretation of the contemporary system of control.

The State as Enforcer of Racial Order

The United States has the highest per capita incarcerated population in the world.[78] The incarceration rate has risen 600 percent in the past thirty years,[79] and race influences nearly every aspect of incarceration, including arrest rates, conviction rates, the probability of post-incarceration employment, educational opportunities, and marriage outcomes. One in three black males born today can expect to spend some portion of his life behind bars, and Latinos have seen a 43 percent rise in their incarceration rates since 1990.[80] Data on arrest rates show that the contrast between black and white arrest rates since 1950 has been striking. The black arrest rate increased throughout this period, reaching almost one hundred per one thousand by 1978 compared to thirty-five per one thousand for whites.[81] The 1989 data suggest that the arrest rate for blacks has stabilized at around eighty to ninety per one thousand.[82] The implications for the black community are astounding. Eight to nine percent of all blacks are arrested every year. This means that a substantial number of black families experience the "services" of the criminal justice system every year, directly (arrested or incarcerated) as well as indirectly (visit to jails, stops by police, etc.).

In terms of how many blacks are incarcerated, we find a pattern similar to their arrest rates. Although blacks have always been overrepresented in the inmate population, as can be seen in table 2.2, this overrepresentation has skyrocketed since 1960. By 1980, the incarceration rate of blacks was six times that of whites.

The statistics for black youth are even more depressing. Black youth aged ten to seventeen, who constitute 15 percent of American youth, account for 25 percent of arrests. Race differences exist at almost every stage of the juvenile justice process: black youth suffer racial profiling by police and higher rates of arrest, detention, and court referral; are charged with more serious offenses; and are more likely to be placed in larger public correctional facilities in contrast to small private group homes, foster homes, and drug and alcohol treatment centers.[83] "Almost one in four Black men aged twenty to thirty are under the supervision of the criminal justice system any given day."[84] The rate of incarceration of blacks for criminal offenses is over eight times greater than that of whites, with 1 in 20 black men, in contrast to 1 in 180 white men, in prison.[85] Hence, given these statistics, it is not surprising that today there are more blacks aged twenty to twenty-nine under the supervision of the criminal justice system (incarcerated, on parole, or on probation) than in college.

This dramatic increase in black incarceration has been attributed to legislative changes in the penal codes and the "get tough" attitude in law enforcement fueled by white fear of black crime. Furthermore, the fact that blacks are disproportionately convicted and receive longer sentences than whites for similar crimes contributes to their overrepresentation among the penal

TABLE 2.2
Percentage of U.S. Residents and Men in Prison or Jail, by Age, Race, and Education, 1980, 2000

All U.S. Residents, Men Aged 18–65	*1980*	*2000*
All U.S. Residents	0.2%	0.7%
Men Aged 18–65		
All	0.7	2.1
White	0.4	1.0
Hispanic	1.6	3.3
Black	3.0	7.9
Men Aged 20–40		
White	0.6	1.6
Hispanic	2.1	4.6
Black	4.8	11.5
Non-College Men Aged 20–40		
White	0.9	3.2
Hispanic	2.6	5.5
Black	6.0	17.0
High-School-Dropout Men Aged 20–40		
White	2.1	6.7
Hispanic	3.2	6.0
Black	10.7	32.4

Source: Bruce Western, "The Prison Boom and the Decline of American Citizenship," *Society* 44, no. 5 (2007): 30–36.

population. For example, "according to the Federal Judicial Center, in 1990 the average sentences for blacks on weapons and drug charges were 49 percent longer than those for whites who had committed and been convicted of the same crimes—and that disparity has been rising over time."[86] Self-report data suggest about 14 percent of U.S. illegal drug users are black; however, blacks constitute 35 percent of those arrested, 55 percent of those convicted, and 74 percent of those incarcerated for drug possession.[87]

Official State Brutality against Blacks

Police departments grew exponentially after the 1960s, particularly in large metropolitan areas with large concentrations of blacks.[88] This growth has been related by various studies to black urban mobilization and rebellion in the 1960s.[89] Another way of measuring the impact of police departments on the life of blacks is surveying how blacks and whites rate police performance. Rosentraub and Harlow, in an article reviewing surveys on the attitudes of blacks and whites toward the police from 1960 through 1981, found that blacks consistently view the police in a much more negative light than do

whites despite attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to reduce the friction between black communities and police departments by hiring more black police officers and, in some cases, even hiring black chiefs of police. Blacks are also more inclined to believe that police misconduct occurs frequently and is common in their city and neighborhood.[90]

The level of police force used with blacks has always been excessive. However, since the police have become the more direct enforcer of the social control of blacks since the 1960s, their level of violence against blacks has skyrocketed. For example, in 1975 *46 percent of all the people killed by the police in official action were black*.[91] That situation has not changed much since. Robert Smith reported recently that of the people killed by the police, over half are black; the police usually claim that when they killed blacks it was "accidental" because they thought that the victim was armed, although in fact the victims were unarmed in 75 percent of the cases; there was an increase in the 1980s in the use of deadly force by the police and the only ameliorating factor was the election of a sensitive mayor in a city; and in the aftermath of the King verdict, 87 percent of civilian victims of police brutality reported in the newspapers of fifteen American major cities were black, and 93 percent of the officers involved were white. Moreover, a record number of black people were killed by law enforcement in 2015, more than the deadliest year of lynching in the United States. But extrajudicial murders of black people in America are not limited to law enforcement, as demonstrated by the Trayvon Martin incident. In February 2012, as Martin walked from the store to his home, he was fatally shot by George Zimmerman, who claimed to be a part of the local neighborhood watch. Zimmerman pursued Martin despite explicit instructions to stand down by a police dispatcher. After a brief altercation, Zimmerman shot Martin in the chest. Due to Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, Zimmerman was not initially charged. After a groundswell of national pressure, including marches, protests, and rallies, Zimmerman was eventually charged, tried, and acquitted. This incident shows how the power to punish suspected black "criminals" may extend even further than formal law enforcement officials. Unfortunately, an ever-lengthening list of names join Martin as this behavior becomes increasingly normalized.[92]

A more mundane form of police brutality in the form of "stop and frisk" laws in New York City daily terrorize young people of color. Ostensibly aimed at finding weapons and drugs, nearly 90 percent of the stops are black and brown youth. This is despite the fact that, according to antiracist activist Tim Wise,[93] who is white,

> White high school students are seven times more likely than blacks to have used cocaine; eight times more likely to have smoked crack; ten times more likely to have used LSD and seven times more likely to have used heroin. . . . What's more,

> white youth ages 12–17 are more likely to sell drugs: 34 percent more likely, in fact, than their black counterparts. And it is white youth who are twice as likely to binge drink, and nearly twice as likely as blacks to drive drunk. And white males are twice as likely to bring a weapon to school as are black males.

The state-sanctioned abuse of blacks under the cover of enforcing drug laws is clearly not aimed at stopping drug distribution. Rather, it is a manifestation of how supposedly race-neutral laws can be applied at the discretion of officers and departments to control the black population.

Since the late 1990s, a new form of state-sanctioned social control has been written into law in numerous states. Promoted by the right-wing American Legislative Exchange Council, these so-called stand your ground or castle doctrine laws institutionalize racist vigilantism. Twenty states have adopted these laws since 2000, and murder rates in these states, counter to the expectations of advocates for these laws, have increased by 8 percent.[94] And, as one would expect in a racialized society, these laws have not been applied in a racially neutral manner:

> Whites who kill blacks in Stand Your Ground states are far more likely to be found justified in their killings. In non–Stand Your Ground states, whites are 250 percent more likely to be found justified in killing a black person than a white person who kills another white person; in Stand Your Ground states, that number jumps to 354 percent.[95]

Moreover, in response to the "Black Lives Matter" movement, a number of states have enacted "Blue Lives Matter" laws, which allow killing law enforcement officers to be classified as hate crimes.[96]

Capital Punishment as a Modern Form of Lynching

The raw statistics on capital punishment seem to indicate racial bias *prima facie*: Of 3,984 people lawfully executed since 1930 (until 1980), 2,113 were black, over half of the total, almost five times the proportion of blacks in the population as a whole.[97] Blacks, who have made up about 13 percent of the population, have accounted for 52 percent of people executed in state or federal jurisdictions since 1930.[98] However, social scientific research on racial sentencing has produced mixed results. A number of authors have found a bias in sentencing,[99] but some have claimed that, as legal factors are taken into account, the bias disappears.[100] Yet recent research has suggested that "discrimination has not declined or disappeared but simply has become more subtle and difficult to detect."[101] Despite claims that discrimination has declined in significance, research shows that it may have simply gone underground. Others have

pointed out that the discrimination experienced by blacks may occur at earlier stages. For instance, research by Radelet and Pierce suggests that homicides with white victims and black suspects are more likely to be upgraded to a more aggravated description by prosecutors. Hence, additive and linear models will tend to miss the effect of race.[102]

There is a substantial body of research showing that blacks charged of murdering whites are more likely to be sentenced to death than any other victim-offender dyad. Similarly, blacks charged of raping white women also receive the death sentence at a much higher rate. The two tendencies were confirmed by Spohn in a 1994 article using data for Detroit in 1977 and 1978: "Blacks who sexually assaulted whites faced a greater risk of incarceration than either blacks or whites who sexually assaulted blacks or whites who sexually assaulted whites; similarly, blacks who murdered whites received longer sentences than did offenders in the other two categories."[103] Data from 1976 to 1981, after the *Furman* statues were implemented, for the states of Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Virginia on people charged with homicide indicate that cases involving white victims are more likely to warrant the death penalty than cases involving black victims. Although the authors find a black suspect–white victim effect in Florida, Georgia, and Illinois, they claim that it disappears when they control for severity of the crime.[104] However, the most respected study on this matter carried out by Professor David C. Baldus to support the claim of Warren McCleskey, a black man convicted of murdering a white police officer in 1978, found that there was a huge disparity in the imposition of the death penalty in Georgia.[105] The study found that in cases involving white victims and black defendants, the death penalty was imposed 22 percent of the time, whereas in the white-black dyad, the death penalty was imposed in only 1 percent of the cases. *Even after controlling for a number of variables, blacks were 4.3 times as likely as whites to receive a death sentence*.[106]

It should not surprise anyone that in a racist society, court decisions on cases involving the death penalty exhibit a race effect. Research on juries suggests that they tend to be older, more affluent, more educated, more conviction-prone, and more white than the average in the community.[107] Moreover, research on the process of selecting jurors for death-penalty cases suggests that the *voir dire* process (questions to select the jury) produces juries that are pro–death penalty.[108] This particular bias has been found to have a racial effect. Gregory D. Russell, in his *The Death Penalty and Racial Bias: Overturning Supreme Court Assumptions*, found indirect data (exhibited via surrogate measures) of racial bias among death-qualified jurors. This finding adds to our understanding of why there is a differential conviction rate for blacks and whites in cases involving the death penalty. As Russell explains,