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Group Conflict, Prejudice, and the Paradox of Contemporary Racial Attitudes

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INTRODUCTION

The status of black Americans is the longest standing and most glaring exception to the American promise of freedom and equality. For this, as well as other reasons, social psychologists have long sought to shed light on the ways in which racial attitudes, beliefs, and values affect and are affected by patterns of black-white relations. Black-white relations now seem more complex and contradictory than ever before. From basic economic and demographic indicators to indicators of racial attitudes and beliefs, simultaneous patterns of progress, deterioration, and lack of change can be discerned.

I am concerned with the underlying meaning of race to white and black Americans (although, as in most of the literature in this area, disproportionate attention is given to white attitudes). This attempt to impose theoretical coherence on the complexities of racial attitudes and beliefs must begin, however, by recognizing a crucial shift in the character of black-white relations. The basic issues that define significant points of conflict and controversy in black-white relations have changed in many ways. Foremost among these changes has been a shift in focus from eliminating discrimination in access to public schools, facilities, employment, and the like, to a concern with mandatory school desegregation and the use of hiring goals or quotas; a shift from removing formal exclusionary barriers to implementing the measures needed to ensure full inclusion and participation; a shift, that is, from *struggles over acquiring basic civil rights to struggles over actually redistributing educational, economic, political, and social resources*.

For many social psychologists, these changes have signaled a need to modify their traditional conceptions of prejudice in order to understand the changes in attitudes associated with these more global shifts in black-white relations. Others have stressed the increasing importance of group conflict processes because these broader changes have pushed to the forefront of black-white relations explicit and increasing concern about the allocation of scarce resources and values, such as educational and job opportunities. Thus, this chapter is concerned with efforts to apply social-psychological theo-

ries of group conflict and of prejudice to an understanding of the nature and consequences of contemporary racial attitudes.

Many years ago, Gordon Allport (1954) noted that distinguishing the effects of prejudice from those of group conflict on intergroup relations would be a very difficult task. He suggested that "Realistic conflict is like a note on an organ. It sets all prejudices that are attuned to it into simultaneous vibration. The listener can scarcely distinguish the pure note from the surrounding jangle" (p. 233). Thus, it is with some trepidation that this chapter takes up the task of trying to clarify the distinctive social-psychological significance of group conflict and prejudice in the racial attitudes of white and, to a lesser degree, black Americans. Recent theoretical and empirical work has, however, raised this question anew and in the process has improved our conceptual leverage on these issues. As a result, an attempt to distinguish the "pure note" of group conflict from that of prejudice seems warranted.

The approach taken in this chapter is more that of a speculative essay than a traditional literature review. This approach is chosen, precarious though it may be, because there is a need for a discussion of broad theoretical issues raised by the controversy about the relative importance of group conflict and prejudice for contemporary racial attitudes. The departure from traditional literature reviews takes two forms. First, I propose and elaborate on a theoretical framework for understanding the place of group conflict in intergroup belief systems, and I attempt to specify ways of conceptualizing and measuring group conflict motives. Second, I take a quite catholic approach to the material as the research draws not only on the work of social psychologists, but also on that of historians, demographers, political scientists, and sociologists. The final outcome, I hope, is a better sense of the distinctive roles of prejudice and group conflict in racial attitudes as well as a sense of fruitful directions for future research.

Theoretical controversy of the kind examined here has occurred before within social psychology as well as in other disciplines. For example, Clark (1965), although not exclusively concerned with racial attitudes and relations, asserted that social psychology devoted too little attention to questions of power and political conflict. Rose (1956) argued that we shouldn't assume that prejudice underlies discrimination because "patterns of intergroup relations (including mainly discrimination and segregation) are quite distinct from attitudes of prejudice in that each has a separate and distinct history, cause, and process of change" (p. 173). Like Rose, Blumer (1958b) called for greater attention to the organization of society: to competing interests, differences in power, and situational contexts, which he saw as the underlying forces in intergroup relations. Allport (1962) took issue with these and similar assertions that social structure was more important than individual prejudice. He argued that societal factors are "distal causal factors" in intergroup behavior, whereas individual personality is always the "proximal causal factor." Allport suggested an important link between the two, however: conformity to group norms. In a similar vein, Williams (1965), too, noted that social structure and personality are linked but added that we should be careful to distinguish "prejudice" as driven by feelings of competitive threat or the protection of vested interests from "prejudice" as driven by psychological affective or expressive needs.¹

¹In some instances, this controversy took on a polemical character. For example, Rose (1956) asserted that "no study of prejudice, using any definition or any theory, helps us much in understanding what is going on in the desegregation process today. The explanation is apparently to be looked for in terms of legal, economic, political and social structural forces" (p. 176). Similarly, Blumer (1958b) argued that "the preoccupation of students [of race relations] with the study of prejudice has turned their attention away from the actual association of races and led them into a detached and artificial world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the vast body of research findings on studies of racial prejudice has not led or contributed to theoretical knowledge of the behavior of racial groups in their relations with each other" (p. 434).

A similar dialogue over societal versus personality factors in intergroup relations arose among historians with respect to attempts to explain the rise of slavery and racist ideology. In a controversial paper, the Handlins (1950) argued that black indentured servants were regarded and treated much the same as white servants when they first arrived in the American colonies in 1619. Over a period of roughly 40 years, they argued, the status of black servants deteriorated, whereas that of white servants improved. Thus, by around 1660, blacks had been reduced to a cheap, available, and easily exploited pool of servants whose bondage was viewed as lifelong. Importantly, this analysis suggested a gradual, not a rapid, degradation of blacks and transformation of the attitudes toward them. Such a pattern of events was more consistent with the view that antiblack prejudice resulted from the establishment of slavery, than with the claim that a deep psychological antipathy toward blacks preceded slavery. Instead, the rise of a new mode of organizing social life, a slave economy, led to the development of attitudes and beliefs justifying and reinforcing that new social form.

Degler (1959) challenged these claims, pointing to evidence that, from the earliest moment of their arrival, blacks had been treated differently—more harshly—than white servants (see also the exchange of letters of Degler, 1960, and Handlin & Handlin, 1960). In contradistinction to both positions, Jordan (1962) noted that the available information for the years in question, especially 1619–1640, was very sparse and at best inconclusive. He argued for a compromise position, which held that economic, political, and cultural factors conducive to the rise of slavery as an institution worked simultaneously with antiblack prejudice to foster the ultimate subjugation of blacks. The enslavement of blacks and the existence of individual-level prejudice, Jordan (1968) wrote, "may have been equally cause and effect, continuously reacting upon each other, dynamically joining hands to hustle the Negro down the road to complete degradation" (p. 80).

More recently, Fredrickson (1971b) questioned this conclusion and, indeed, the very terms of the debate that assumed that black slavery was a unique departure requiring special explanation. Although accepting Jordan's basic claim that prejudice played a role in the rise of slavery, Fredrickson argued that the real question was why not *all* black indentured servants were regarded as bound for a lifetime of servitude. Many were freed, just as their white counterparts were, when their term of service was completed. In Fredrickson's account, the forces that paved the way for black enslavement were the absence of any deep-seated cultural bias, at that time, against the institution of slavery and several societal factors (e.g., the political vulnerability of African blacks as compared to white European indentured servants, as well as the growing demand for a stable labor supply) that had, by the 1660s, led to the *de facto* (and later *de jure*) enslavement of a large number of blacks (see also Harris, 1964). From this point of view, it is as incorrect to claim that prejudice played no role in the rise of slavery as it is to assign prejudice the same causal weight as other societal factors. In particular, Fredrickson (1971b) argued

that "virulent prejudice," as compared to milder forms of ethnocentrism and stereotyping, followed in the wake of enslavement and probably did not take full possession of the white mind until slavery had become fully established as the basis of the economic and social order. (p. 246)

This argument is lent further support by the fact that a full articulation of theories of the permanent, innate inferiority of blacks followed the rise of the abolitionists' moral challenge to slavery and the Northern industrialists' challenge to economic policies conducive to plantation-based commodities and slave labor (Fredrickson, 1971a).

Several lessons are to be drawn from these earlier examinations of the role of societal versus personality—more loosely, group-conflict versus prejudice—approaches to intergroup relations. First, societal and personality approaches are not mutually exclusive frameworks of analysis. It sometimes seems that these approaches are irreconcilable

because the former tends to assume that intergroup attitudes and behavior are guided by an interest-based, rational calculus, with interests being a function of position in the social structure. Personality or prejudice approaches, in contrast, tend to emphasize individual-level, psychological, and often irrational bases of intergroup relations. The present discussion seeks to avoid this constraining, and misleading, opposition by suggesting that certain types of attitudes and beliefs reflect group-based interests imposed by the social structure; that is, there are aspects of personality that reflect societal level processes and do so in a manner that should not be construed as "prejudice." Second, if this observation is to inform empirical research, then the relevant concepts need to be well defined, and appropriate measurement strategies must be outlined. Third, theory must be informed by an analysis of the sociohistorical context of group relations, as well as by the rules of cognitive functioning. The historically specific and socially relevant content of racial attitudes and beliefs cannot be derived from the psychological attributes of individuals alone. In particular, periods of substantial shift in the character of attitudes, such as the rise of sophisticated proslavery doctrines and, later, the scientific racism that accompanied the rise of Jim Crow, were inextricably linked to, and perhaps primarily driven by, larger economic, political, and cultural forces. Contemporary research on the growing complexity and subtlety of racial attitudes would benefit from a balanced concern with societal and personality factors (Pettigrew, 1985). Furthermore, research on racial attitudes and beliefs must be based on an analysis of the changes and continuities in the sociohistorical context of black-white relations. The relative economic and political status of blacks and whites, patterns of residential and school segregation, and enduring cultural beliefs are all important inputs to prevailing patterns of racial attitudes and beliefs.

The main question, then, is what role, if any, does group conflict play in racial attitudes in the contemporary United States? A full answer to this question requires a conception of group conflict and of group conflict motives, as well as a specification of the ways in which the latter differ from prejudice and other racial attitudes. Before addressing each of these matters, however, it would be instructive to consider why the question arises in the first place.

THE PROBLEM: PROGRESS AND RESISTANCE

The attitudes of white Americans toward black people have undergone sweeping and dramatic change over the past several decades. In 1942, approximately 60% of whites believed that blacks were less intelligent than whites (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1956, p. 35). By 1964, that figure had declined to less than 25% (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1964; see also Schuman, 1971, p. 383). A substantial majority of white Americans in 1942 approved of the blatantly discriminatory proposition that "white people should have the first chance at any kind of job," whereas in 1972 nearly 100% of whites in a national survey rejected that statement. But just as survey research has chronicled such changes for the better, opposition to policies such as school busing (80%-90%; see Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985) and affirmative action (roughly 80%; see Lipset & Schneider, 1978) remain impediments to certain forms of racial change.

Research on racial attitudes thus increasingly presents a paradox: Although there is continuing improvement in whites' beliefs about blacks and support for the general principles of racial equality and integration (Taylor, Sheatsley, & Greeley, 1978), there is pronounced opposition to specific policies aimed at improving the social and economic position of blacks, as well as to participation in social settings where blacks are a substantial majority (Farley, Schuman, Bianchi, Colasanto, & Hatchett, 1978; Smith, 1981). Pet-

tigrew (1979) described this paradox as follows: "White Americans increasingly reject racial injustice in principle, but are reluctant to accept the measures necessary to eliminate the injustice" (p. 119).²

Students of democratic theory have also examined the extent to which abstract democratic principles are applied in more concrete situations (Prothro & Grigg, 1960). Jackman (1978), in particular, stressed this type of approach to the conceptualization of racial attitudes. Others have drawn on the distinction she made between racial principles and applied measures of racial policy preferences. Thus, recent research by Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985) indicates that, across a number of important issues (access to public accommodations, discrimination in jobs, residential integration, and school integration), whites were more positive in attitude toward the principle of racial egalitarianism than toward policies to implement such principles. This disparity applied in terms of both lower absolute levels of support for implementation and less positive trends over time. In sum, this research demonstrated that one major characteristic of American racial attitudes is a gap between "principles and implementation."

The sustained positive movement on questions concerning the abstract goals of equal treatment and integration suggest that a fundamental change in racial norms has taken place (Schuman *et al.*, 1985). This transformation in normative climate, however, has not eliminated race as a concern in American social and political life, nor has it resulted in support for strong efforts to equalize the opportunities afforded to blacks and whites. Research concerned with accounting for these patterns of "progress and resistance" has resulted in five broad approaches and answers.

First, a number of theories point to an underlying residue of prejudice and racism that is currently manifested in less overt ways (Crosby, Bromely, & Saxe, 1980; Donnerstein & Donnerstein, 1976; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1981; Kinder & Sears, 1981; Rogers & Prentice-Dunn, 1981). For example, Gaertner and Dovidio (1981) identified "aversive racists," people who have some degree of negative feelings toward blacks and yet are committed to a nonprejudiced self-image. A series of experiments suggests that the outcome, at least in situations involving ambiguous racial norms, is discriminatory treatment of blacks. Second, others have suggested that many contemporary proposals for racial change involve important value-violations. For instance, Lipset and Schneider (1978) noted that affirmative action programs, especially those involving quotas, are perceived as violating the values of individualism and meritocratic advancement. Others have argued that court orders for school desegregation and busing are viewed as violating the value of majority rule (Stinchcombe & Taylor, 1980) and the general cultural motif of noncoercive, voluntary compliance (Taylor, 1986). Third, some research (McClendon, 1985; McClendon & Pestello, 1982) points to pragmatic objections to racially neutral features of certain policies such as the cost, time, or safety considerations raised by school busing. Fourth, some researchers stress the importance of group-interested ideologies (Jackman & Muha 1984; Jackman & Senter, 1983) and realistic group-conflict motives (Bobo, 1983; Smith, 1981; Wellman, 1977). Finally, a number of researchers have alerted us to different cognitive processes that affect racial attitudes and perceptions. These processes include a tendency toward more extreme reactions, both positive and negative, to out-group members (Linville & Jones, 1980); the observation that ambivalent feelings can lead to "amplified" reactions of positive and negative valence (Katz, 1981); the differential consequences of distinct "modes" (e.g., genetic versus environmental) of

²A similar description of white racial attitudes had been offered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as early as 1967. He argued that the attitudes of most whites fell in between the polar extremes of segregationism and a deep commitment to racial justice. King said that many whites were "uneasy with injustice, yet unwilling to pay a significant price to eradicate it" (p. 13).

explaining racial inequality (Apostle, Glock, Piazza, & Suelzle, 1983); and an examination of the impact of general and racially specific beliefs about social stratification on racial attitudes (Kluegel & Smith, 1982).

Despite critical differences in interpretation and analysis, these five strands of research share, to varying degrees, three assumptions about contemporary race relations. The first of these assumptions pertains to the far-reaching normative change in standards for interracial relations and conduct. In particular, it is assumed that this important transformation in racial norms does not easily extend to support for large-scale racial change or to fully color-blind behavior. Next, although this point is often treated more implicitly than explicitly, it is assumed that the character of the issues themselves has changed. Some have explicitly characterized the shift as being from equal rights or procedural issues to equal opportunity or redistributive issues (Kluegel & Smith, 1982). More generally, it is clear that, after 1965, there were key changes in law and politics pertaining to race, in the form and the articulated ideology of black political activism, in the status of many blacks, and in the questions that social researchers pursued (see Schuman *et al.*, 1985, Chapters 1 and 6). Finally, these two assumptions have resulted in a general concern about understanding the gap between "principles and implementation" or, more broadly, about explaining the apparent limitations on racial progress (Blackwell, 1982; Rothbart, 1976).

For the present purposes, this problem is framed as the need to explain the emergence and character of an ideology of "bounded" racial change. It is argued that there is a nascent view that, although blacks are entitled to full citizenship rights, moving beyond equal rights to ensuring equal opportunities, or to implementing policies that may impose substantial burdens on whites, is an illegitimate goal. In particular, the tendencies to attribute racial inequality to the shortcomings of blacks themselves (Kluegel, 1985; Schuman, 1971) and to view the opportunity structure as fair and open (Kluegel, 1985) are key elements of the ideology of bounded racial change. This emergent understanding of race relations is not adopted in a consistent and uniform fashion by all whites. But to the extent that many accept this view and to the extent that it is perceived as the current trend in opinion, it influences and constrains public dialogue and mass opinion (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1984). This view, then, becomes a cultural force that needs to be understood in its own right (Prager, 1982). Indeed, such a nascent ideology has the potential to crystallize into a politically potent set of attitudes and beliefs.

Although this problem can be addressed by means of different research methods and the ideas advanced by any (or all) of the five approaches outlined above, this chapter focuses on two theories that have grown primarily out of the recent survey research literature and that have a fairly direct concern with the gap between principles and implementation: realistic group conflict and symbolic racism. (This focus restricts concern to the dynamics of public opinion on race, leaving interpersonal attitudes and behavior largely untouched.) The latter theory, based in a prejudice tradition, contends that whites' attitudes have perhaps become more sophisticated but still reflect a basic nonrational antipathy toward blacks. Thus, whites may respond positively to survey questions about general racial principles, but they allow the depth of their antiblack prejudice to emerge when asked about issues such as school busing. The group conflict theory, as developed here, contends that white support for the principle of racial justice is a real but limited commitment. The commitment is limited in that it often fails to be translated into support for concrete policy change insofar as blacks are perceived as significantly competing for the resources that whites possess and value. These types of theories are not mutually exclusive (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1965), nor do they exhaust the possible factors shaping contemporary racial attitudes. For these reasons, this chapter concludes with a brief discussion of integrating the group-conflict-versus-prejudice debate into a

PARADOX OF RACIAL ATTITUDES

more complex framework that recognizes the several approaches outlined above. I now turn to a discussion of group conflict and ideological processes in racial attitudes.

GROUP CONFLICT AND RACIAL IDEOLOGY

DEFINITIONS

Social or group conflict involves—in a paraphrase and modification of Coser (1956)—a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and other scarce resources in which the aims of the conflict groups are not only to gain the desired values, but also to affect change, or injure rivals. The specific tactics employed can range from efforts at influence or persuasion, to the use of positive inducements, to forms of constraint or coercive action (Gamson, 1968). Recent racial conflict in the United States has involved litigation and the pursuit of legal redress, conventional political action (voting and lobbying), an unconventional political action, such as nonviolent protest and mass demonstrations, as well as urban rioting (Himes, 1966, p. 3). All of these tactics have been used, to varying degrees, in the pursuit of (or to prevent) social change; all involve efforts to alter the distribution of power, wealth, and status between social groups (McAdam, 1982, p. 26) or to prevent such change from occurring (Taylor, 1986).

Realistic conflicts derive from incompatible—though not necessarily irreconcilable—group interests. According to Fireman and Gamson (1979), a "group can be assumed to have an objective interest in a collective good to the extent that the good promotes the long-run wealth and power of the group and the viability of its design for living (whether or not these consequences are known to group members)" (p. 24). Or more broadly, group's objective interests involve the "shared advantages or disadvantages likely to accrue to" a group and its members as a result of interaction with other groups (Tilly, 1978, p. 54). Group interests are based in social structural conditions—in particular, long standing patterns of inequality of power, wealth, and status that establish opposing interests (Jackman & Jackman, 1983, p. 6).

Three clarifications need to be made. First, objective group interests do not invariably become subjectively perceived interests, but they do, in the long-run, "exert an important influence on subjective ones" (Fireman & Gamson, 1979, p. 24). This point is especially pertinent to a discussion of intergroup ideologies where a more powerful or dominant group may promote ideas and interpretations that obscure a subordinate group's realization of its interests. Second, it is important to distinguish between personal interests and group interests. Outcomes that benefit (or injure) an individual may not benefit (or injure) a group and its position. But more important, part of what separates theories of social conflict from simple utilitarian logic is a concern with the solidarity ties that exist among people with a shared group identity (Fireman & Gamson, 1979). Third, group interests have consequences for individuals. Insofar as individuals are socialized to identify with particular groups and their values, the group and its social position become part of the individual's social identity. More specifically, group members may develop a sense of investment in, or a felt need to challenge, some pattern of structural inequality on the basis of their group membership (Blumer, 1958a; Bobo, 1983; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wellman, 1977; Wilson, 1973).

In addition, realistic group conflict is distinguished from "nonrealistic" conflict in that it is directed toward achieving some group-interested outcome (Coser, 1956, pp. 48–55). It is goal-oriented, whereas nonrealistic conflict involves a nonspecific release of hostility or aggressive psychological impulses. Where dispute is focused on a delimited issue or set of issues concerned with the distribution of power, wealth, or status between

social groups, and involves clearly defined groups with differing objectives, there is realistic conflict. Disputes lacking these features, especially those lacking a concern with the rival objectives of the conflict groups, are nonrealistic. Although cognitive processes and intergroup affective orientations enter into both types of conflict, nonrealistic conflict is largely reducible to nonrational psychological impulses.

THE CURRENT SOCIAL CONTEXT

Other than the fact of observable differences in skin color and the historically important identities of black and white Americans, the pivotal features of race relations in the United States are extensive residential segregation of the races, economic inequality, and inequality in political power. Although there has been real progress in each domain, most blacks still confront different chances in life than those that await most whites.

With respect to residential segregation, in 1965 the Taeubers documented extensive separation of blacks and whites. They concluded that, regardless of region, city size, economic base, local laws, and the extent of other forms of discrimination, there was "a very high degree of segregation of the residences of whites and Negroes" (Taeuber & Taeuber, 1965, p. 35). Van Valey, Roof, and Wilcox (1977) concluded that, between 1960 and 1970, the level of residential segregation by race had changed very little. Farley (1977) demonstrated that racial segregation was not only more extensive in absolute terms than the segregation of social classes, but that it occurred regardless of social class. For example, his analysis of 1970 Census data indicated that "whites who have more than a college education are more residentially segregated from similarly well educated blacks than they are from whites who have never completed a year of school" (p. 514). Although there is some evidence of increasing black suburbanization (Frey, 1985), a recent analysis of 1980 Census data indicated some, but far from striking, progress in reducing the overall residential segregation of blacks and whites in the nation's larger cities (Taeuber, 1983a,b).

It should be noted that such segregation is inconsistent with the expressed desires of many blacks. As Farley *et al.* (1978) reported in their study of Detroit area residents that most blacks prefer to live in neighborhoods integrated 50-50.³ What is more, most whites have no absolute objection to residential integration (Farley *et al.*, 1978; Schuman *et al.*, 1985). Many whites do, however, express little enthusiasm for neighborhoods with substantial numbers of blacks. Farley and colleagues (1978, p. 335) found that, as the number of blacks mentioned in an integrated neighborhood setting neared one-third, 57% of the whites interviewed said they would feel uncomfortable, 41% said they would probably try to move out of such a neighborhood, and fully 73% said they would not consider moving into such a neighborhood. In addition, Schuman *et al.* (1985) reported that, when questions about possible degrees of neighborhood integration mentioned large numbers of blacks, education ceased to have a positive effect on such attitudes (see also Jackman & Muha, 1984; Smith, 1981). In sum, not only are blacks and whites separated as a matter of fact, but many whites prefer to live in neighborhoods that are clearly white in character.

One major consequence of residential segregation is the segregation of schools. Despite years of litigation, increasingly forceful court mandates, and heated debates, the public schools are still largely segregated. In 1974, more than 40% of black students attended schools with 90% or more minority enrollment (Orfield, 1978, p. 57). Segregation is especially clear-cut in large northern metropolitan areas. In the city of Los Angeles, for example, figures for 1974-1975 revealed that more than 60% of black students attended schools with 99-100% minority enrollment (Orfield, 1978, p. 182). Although the

mandate of the *Brown* decision has been considerably fulfilled in rural southern areas (Farley, 1984; Rodgers, 1975), the decision has had much less impact on the nation's larger cities. The level of school segregation may, in fact, be worsening because of white enrollment losses, court rulings disallowing "metropolitan plans" that consolidate city and suburban school districts, and the apparent effective end of pressure under the Reagan administration to use busing as a remedy for school segregation. Indeed, one recent investigation concluded that, after noteworthy progress in reducing isolation in the schools between 1968 and 1976, "Overall, segregation slightly increased between 1976 and 1980" (Hochschild, 1984, p. 31).⁴

Blacks also lag behind whites economically. Even though substantial progress has been made, blacks still have lower levels of earnings, yearly income, and occupational attainment than whites (Farley, 1984). The level of unemployment among black adult males is roughly twice that among comparable whites and has been so for more than 30 years (Bonacich, 1976; Farley, 1984). Moreover, the percentage of blacks who have dropped out of the labor force entirely has risen to 13%, more than two and one-half times the rate (5%) among whites (Farley, 1984). Blacks are three times more likely than whites to have incomes below the poverty level (Farley, 1984), and roughly half of all black children can expect to spend some time below the poverty level (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). There are indicators of vulnerable progress in other areas as well. Some reports suggest that the percentage of blacks entering college (*Wall Street Journal*, May 29 1985, pp. 1, 24) and going on to graduate and professional schools (Berry, 1983) has begun to decline.

Even in the absence of direct personal experience with these problems, there is evidence suggesting that many whites have some awareness of black disadvantage. Survey data indicate that many whites acknowledge at least some degree of racial inequality and acknowledge the effects of past discrimination on blacks (Apostle *et al.*, 1983; Kluegel & Smith, 1982; Lipset & Schneider, 1978). Because inequality may be explained in many different ways (Apostle *et al.*, 1983), because the extent of the inequality may be misjudged (Robinson, 1983), and because the extent of ameliorative efforts may be exaggerated (Kluegel & Smith, 1982), white awareness of inequality and discrimination does not directly result in support for efforts to achieve equality.

Segregation and economic inequality notwithstanding, the basic rights of blacks as citizens have been given greater strength and efficacy by court rulings, by the actions of several presidents and the administrative agencies under their control, and by congressional enactment. As Wilson (1980) has pointed out, "Instead of reinforcing racial barriers created during the pre-industrial and industrial periods, the political system in recent years has tended to promote racial equality" (p. 17). In addition, organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights act as vigorous watchdogs. Such groups regularly press for the full implementation of civil rights policies and actively respond to efforts to weaken or reverse such policies. Two indicators of the continuing influence of these and similar organizations can be found in the recent strengthening and

⁴As in the case of residential integration, black preference for integrated schools is very high (near 100%) and quite stable over time (Schuman *et al.*, 1985). Blacks, however, are split nearly evenly on the question of school busing and, like whites, have shown decreasing support for federal intervention to bring about school integration. It is not clear whether the change among blacks is mainly capitulation to white resistance or some more genuine rejection of the forceful implementation of school desegregation. Schuman *et al.* (1985) did present evidence that blacks and whites frequently—though not uniformly—offer different explanations for opposing busing, and Bobo (1984) presented evidence suggesting that whites may have become more negative toward implementing school integration before the change among blacks.

³Blacks did, however, express reluctance to become the first or lone black family in a white neighborhood (Farley, Bianchi, & Colasanto, 1979).

25-year extension of the Voting Rights Act and, at a more symbolic level, in the establishment of a national holiday honoring the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Blacks remain, however, a numerical minority in a democratic political system. According to figures compiled by the Joint Center for Political Studies, blacks still hold less than 2% of all elective offices (*Washington Post*, June 9, 1985, p. A5). Thus, the ballot box and conventional politics generally have not always been the most effective means for blacks to achieve their political ends. Political gains have frequently required protest or "insurgent politics" (Eisinger, 1974; Lipsky, 1968; McAdam, 1983; Morris, 1984). Indeed, civil rights came to be viewed as the nation's most important problem during the height of nonviolent black protest and mass demonstration, roughly 1963-1965 (Smith, 1980), and for the entire decade from 1960 to 1970 concern about race issues ranked second in public concern and media coverage, following concern about the war in Vietnam (Funkhouser, 1973). Moreover, the passage of key legislation (the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965) was closely linked to major protest efforts and the sense of crisis and urgency they created (Brauer, 1977; Burstein, 1979; Garrow, 1978; Lawson, 1976; McAdam, 1983; Zashin, 1978). In sum, many of the crucial gains that blacks have made came through the establishment of effective political networks and organizations of their own (Morris, 1984) and through protest politics. The historical record of black recourse to insurgent politics is underscored by blacks' tendency to feel alienated from white society (Schuman & Hatchett, 1974; Turner & Wilson, 1976), to express fairly high levels of power discontent and group consciousness (Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980; Pitts, 1974; Shingles, 1980), and to endorse protest and demonstration as legitimate political tools (Bobo, 1985; Eisinger, 1974; Isaac, Mutran, & Stryker, 1980; Robinson, 1970).

One of the important changes that laid the cultural groundwork for the civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s was the discrediting of theories of biological racism. A general shift away from notions of distinct "races" and theories of "social Darwinism" began in the 1920s (Gossett, 1963, Chapter 16; Sitkoff, 1978, Chapter 8). This trend accelerated in the 1930s and 1940s in response to Nazi Germany's racism. These changes in ideas were readily applied to the "Negro problem" in the United States (Sitkoff, 1978, p. 190). One of the clearest examples of the ultimate impact of this changing cultural attitude toward "prejudice" is the often hotly debated Footnote 11 to the *Brown* decision which cites the Clarks' doll selection studies (1947) and Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (1944) as substantiation of the fact that discrimination and prejudice had damaged black children (Wilkinson, 1979).

Not only did academe turn against notions of biological racism, but much of the propaganda in the United States during World War II portrayed racism as inherently antidemocratic. As Woodward (1974) noted, "American war propaganda stressed above all else the abhorrence of the West for Hitler's brand of racism and its utter incompatibility with the democratic faith for which we fought" (p. 131). This ideological struggle bore clear relevance to the place of blacks at that time and became an important basis for appeals to end segregation (Woodward, 1974, pp. 130-134).

Any complete explanation of racial attitudes must attend to this backdrop of real social inequalities between the races, the presence of black political organization and activism, the existence of protective legislation, the disrepute accorded notions of biological racism, and the rhetoric of American democracy. The first of these considerations means that whites, on average, have a real stake in maintaining race relations as they are and no benefits to gain by implementing equal opportunity policies. Therefore, they remain ahead by resisting further change. The four latter considerations set limitations on the ways in which inequality can be culturally justified or defended. A belief system that tends to espouse only constrained or "bounded" racial change has resulted. In addition to racial prejudice, it is argued here that this set of beliefs reflects the operation of several

specific group-conflict motives as well as a larger ideological process. In general, it is the expectation of group conflict theory that whites, as members of a dominant group, will tend to develop and adopt attitudes and beliefs that defend their privileged, hegemonic social position. Such an ideology, however, emerges and functions within the limitations set by the current social structure and cultural milieu.

GROUP CONFLICT MOTIVES AND RACIAL ATTITUDES

Group conflict is not an inevitable outcome of structural inequality. For this reason, study of the social-psychological processes through which conflict emerges is needed. In particular, empirical study of the role of group conflict in racial attitudes and ideology requires a specification of the attitudinal forms that group conflict motives assume.

Previous research has taken a variety of approaches. Sherif (1966) examined the effects of a competitive situation on perceptual processes and in-group cohesion and explored the effects of superordinate goals on the reduction of intergroup tensions. More recently, Tajfel and Turner (1979) provided an empirically grounded theoretical statement on the role of group identity and social comparison processes in group conflict. Yet, Blumer's observation (1958a) that racial attitudes involve a sense of group position provides the most direct starting point for the present argument. Blumer suggested that racial attitudes consist of a feeling of in-group superiority, a sense of a proprietary claim to certain resources, and a sense that the out-group poses a threat to the position of the in-group. Each of these attitudes is a social product, and taken together, they constitute a sense of group position.

A handful of empirical work has sought to document the effects of the sense of group position on racial attitudes. Drawing on in-depth interviews with several prototypical respondents from a survey of San Francisco Bay area residents, Wellman (1977) found that whites frequently objected to large-scale racial change. These objections, he concluded, were not grounded in a form of prejudice but appeared to serve as a defense of group privilege. Smith's analysis (1981) of national survey data for the period 1954-1978 showed that whites' willingness to send their children to integrated schools varied substantially with the number of blacks involved. He found that "whites of all regional, cohort, and educational attainment groups share a common self-interest in their unwillingness to accept minority dominance" (p. 569). Bobo's reanalysis (1983) of data used in two papers on symbolic racism showed that attitudes toward the black political movement were important determinants of whites' position on school busing. These effects were interpreted as evidence of group conflict because attitudes toward black activists involved a sense of political threat. Relatedly, Giles and Evans (1984) also treated attitudes toward the black political movement as a form of perceived racial threat. They cautioned, however, that such questions do not bear a simple relation to objective status characteristics. Other research points to an increasing element of status threat in white racial attitudes, especially among otherwise liberal whites (Caditz, 1976). There is also research indicating that economically vulnerable whites respond more negatively to black protest (Ransford, 1972), as well as to other racial attitude questions (Cummings, 1980), than do whites of higher economic status.

These investigations have not, however, aimed to provide a general definition of group conflict attitudes or to elaborate on the various forms that such attitudes may take. Toward this end, it is suggested that group conflict motives are attitudes directly concerned with the competitive aspects of group relations and attempts to alter those relations. They concern the distribution of scarce values and resources between social groups, as well as attempts to affect the process and pattern of their distribution. More specifically, three types of attitudes reflect group conflict motives: perceptions of incom-

patible group interests, perceptions and evaluations of relative group standing (fraternal deprivation), and perceived threats or challenges to group interests. Each type of attitude invokes a sense of in-group position vis-à-vis an out-group, and yet, these attitudes are not primarily expressions of intergroup affective orientations or trait beliefs about an out-group (stereotypes).

To elaborate, perceptions of incompatible group interests concern the extent to which groups are perceived as having conflicting interests and objectives. In addition, they concern beliefs about the group benefits (and consequences) of proposals for change. Very general questions of this type might take the following form: "As blacks move ahead economically, more and more whites fall behind." Kluegel and Smith (1983) provided evidence that a question concerning the zero-sum structure of economic opportunities is related to white attitudes toward affirmative action. More specific questions could concern the differing political objectives of blacks and whites, or beliefs about who is helped or hurt by policies like school busing or affirmative action.⁵

Fraternal deprivation involves a sense that one's membership group is at a disadvantage with respect to a particular out-group (Runciman, 1966; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972; Williams, 1975). As treated here and elsewhere (Sears & Kinder 1985), this type of attitude involves a direct expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the position of the in-group along some dimension (power, wealth, or status) relative to an out-group. This sort of attitudinal expression has also been termed a *group grievance* (Isaac *et al.*, 1980; Useem, 1980, 1981) and a *form of power discontent* (Aberbach, 1977; Gurin *et al.*, 1980). Considerable evidence suggests that such group-level discontents played an important role in the black urban unrest of the late 1960s (Abeles, 1976; Caplan & Paige, 1972), as well as in reactions to other social movements (Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983), and in white voting for black candidates for political office (Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972).

Perceptions of incompatible group interests and fraternal deprivation are attitudes focused on the structure of group relations; that is, they concern the conditions and characteristic features of group relations. Perceived threat, in contrast, concerns reactions to the primary sources or agents of pressure for social change. Attempts to alter the structural relations between groups may come from the actions of specific individuals or groups, or from broad and diverse social movements. To the degree that a social movement commands widespread, sustained media coverage, elite attention, and public salience, the response of the mass public becomes an indicator of perceived threat.

For example, blacks or Jews could be asked about their reactions to groups like the Ku Klux Klan or neo-Nazi organizations. Or to take a less extreme case, respondents could be asked to evaluate groups like ROAR or BUSTOP (antibusing groups that formed in Boston and Los Angeles, respectively). Importantly, there should be a group basis to such evaluations. As some have suggested, "The experience of threat is not entirely an individual matter. The self-conception is made up of group memberships, and the individual is threatened whenever an important membership group seems to be the object of threat" (Turner, 1969, p. 821). Groups or social movements seeking social change can be

⁵In the context of U.S. race relations, both whites and blacks have reason to minimize concern about conflicting group interests. As Jackman and Muha (1984) argued, it is to a dominant group's advantage to avoid the introduction of explicitly hostile or competitive perceptions, as doing so would damage the potential for amicable, paternalistic relations. Similarly, a subordinate group, especially one that is a numerical minority, can more readily base an appeal for change in the language of common values and fairness, than in the language of redistributing resources like wealth and power. Insofar as both dominant and subordinate group members have reason to minimize their conflicting interests, questions concerning incompatible group interests may not result in strong racial polarization in response, and such questions may have weaker relations than the other group conflict motives to racial policy attitudes.

attitude objects. Indeed, social protest has been conceptualized as a communicative process that aims, among other things, not only to affect specific targets but to address and influence the larger bystander public (Lipsky, 1968; Turner, 1969). Insofar as the groups are real and seek concrete objectives, for some they may represent a voice for desired ends, whereas for others they constitute a threat to important values and interests. The extent to which reactions to such movements are realistic then becomes an empirical question.

Research on political tolerance has addressed this point. Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1982) found that blacks and Jews (and other liberal whites) tended to feel threatened by right-wing extremist groups such as the KKK, whereas more conservative whites tended to feel threatened by left-wing groups. Interestingly, Sullivan *et al.* found little differences between the correlates of perceived threat among blacks and Jews as compared to other whites, even though the two former groups presumably confronted more real-world external threats. The data do not rule out a purely psychological basis for feelings of threat; indeed, some of the open-ended comments reflect simple prejudice (Sullivan *et al.*, 1982, pp. 165-175), but it appears that, on the whole, people are capable of realistically assessing threats to what they take as their values and interests. Shamir and Sullivan (1983) provided cross-national data (for the United States and Israel) that also indicate that expressions of perceived threat are based more in real-world politics than in psychological insecurity or projection.

Research by Bobo (1985) is more directly concerned with threat in the racial context. Using national survey data, he examined changes between 1964 and 1980 in the attitudes of blacks and whites toward the black political movement and the correlates of such attitudes. The trend analysis indicated significant differences between blacks and whites in patterns of change over time. Although both groups appeared to respond to the ebb and flow of actual black-protest activity, the trajectory of change suggested important group-interested differences. White attitudes moved from a clear rejection of black activism during the tumultuous 1960s to a more moderate stance by the late 1970s. For example, 51% of whites in 1980 said that blacks were pushing for change at "about the right speed," an increase of 26% from 1968. Fully 63% of blacks interviewed in 1964 felt civil rights leaders were pushing "at about the right speed." That figure had dropped to 49% by 1980, as more and more blacks expressed the feeling that things were moving "too slowly." In addition, the degree of racial polarization on this item was quite striking. For example, in 1964, 74% of whites said blacks were moving "too fast," compared to only 9% of blacks, a difference of 65 percentage points. The trend analysis was supplemented with data on the correlates of a measure of perceived threat. Bobo found that general (nonracial) beliefs about social protest, along with indicators of the perceived incompatibility of group interests and fraternal deprivation, were strong predictors of the level of perceived threat. Indeed, these effects were substantially independent of intergroup affective orientations, political conservatism, and other background-control variables. The full set of results suggests that, to a considerable degree, attitudes toward the black political movement index concern with a real-world social-protest movement that attempted to affect the distribution of rights and resources between blacks and whites.

There is an implicit structure to the group conflict motives described above. This structure is depicted in Figure 1. As the model indicates, perceptions of the general structure of group relations (perceptions of incompatible group interests) precede a sense of fraternal deprivation. The latter, in turn, is related to the level of perceived threat. Perceived threat, among the group conflict motives, should be the most direct determinant of racial policy attitudes (attitudes toward policies like affirmative action or school busing). Indeed, Bobo (1985) found that, among the three types of group conflict motives, only perceived threat had a direct effect on attitudes toward government intervention on

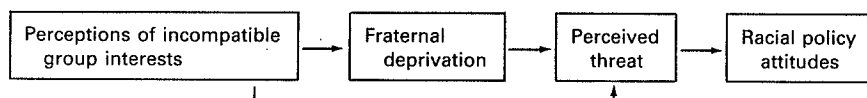


FIGURE 1. Heuristic model of the structure of group conflict attitudes and their relation to racial policy attitudes.

behalf of black interests. There should, however, be important feedback dynamics. Insofar as increased external threat serves to increase perceived threat, the latter should enhance feelings of fraternal deprivation, which, in turn, should exacerbate the perception that groups have incompatible group interests. This is not to argue that conflict invariably breeds greater conflict. Open dispute can activate a number of processes that facilitate negotiation and compromise (Williams, 1965, 1977).

CONFLICT AND POSITIVE CHANGE

Open conflict and dispute can effectively dramatize a groups' grievances (see Morris, 1984, pp. 268–269, for a striking example.) Himes (1966) argued that racial conflict can lead to greater recognition and more meaningful consideration of racial problems. Indeed, as Turner (1969) argued, without some form of protest or threat to the status quo, the grievances of a minority group might go unnoticed. Challenge and conflict can also create a bargaining atmosphere and can foster greater mutual respect among antagonists (Killian & Grigg, 1971).

With respect to attitudes and attitude change, Riley and Pettigrew (1976) found that dramatic political events led to a positive change in racial attitudes. They reported data on the attitudes of white Texans before and after Eisenhower's decision to send troops into Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. They also had data collected shortly before and after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Despite some countervailing movement among those with initially negative attitudes, both occurrences produced overall positive shifts on pertinent racial attitudes. In the case of the attitudinal impact of the assassination of Dr. King, Riley and Pettigrew were able to rule out the possibility of simply having captured a preexisting trend by comparing two preoccurrence surveys, separated by several months, that showed no change. Crain and Mahard (1982) found that open dispute and conflict preceding the implementation of school desegregation not only fostered more positive attitudes among black students, but generally improved the school racial climate. In terms of national survey data, Schuman *et al.* (1985) reported that change in the attitudes of individuals (as opposed to change resulting from cohort replacement) toward greater support of racial principles was more characteristic of the turbulent 1960s than of the quiescent 1970s.⁶

⁶It is instructive to consider the possible positive effects of open conflict through an analogy to interpersonal relations. Within any ongoing dyadic relationship, there may be unacknowledged matters of strain or tension. Sometimes, these unacknowledged problems (e.g., an inequitable division of household chores or child-care duties between husband and wife) lead to serious feelings of grievance and exploitation on the part of the person shouldering the greater burden. The point at which the problem is directly confronted (e.g., the wife tells her husband that she is performing an unfair share of the household chores) may be highly emotional and unpleasant. One person's claim to being a good and fair person is being challenged. As a result, both individuals may dislike and avoid the "unmasking" encounter itself (Scanzoni, 1972, pp. 61–102; Spiegel 1968). However, the problem situation will continue if it is not openly addressed. In short, an unwanted and potentially unpleasant encounter may be needed to compel recognition of a problem. With respect to racial issues and conflict, many whites may disapprove of the system-challenging actions and demands of black activists, but dialogue and progress are less likely without them.

IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY AND RACIAL ATTITUDES

The ideas and research summarized above not only suggest ways in which group conflict enters into racial attitudes but also suggest that racial attitudes may serve ideological purposes. Recent sociological theories of ideology have made use of Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony (Gitlin, 1980; Gramsci, 1971; Williams, 1973). Ideological hegemony is said to exist when the ideas of one group dominate or exert a predominant influence on the major cultural and social institutions (Femia, 1975, p. 29; Williams, 1960, p. 587). These ideas explain social reality—in particular, inequalities between social groups—in a manner that defends and justifies such inequalities. A dominant group is truly hegemonic when people of all stations in life, dominant and subordinate, accept the vision of society as espoused by the dominant group. In this respect, Gramsci's notion of hegemony corresponds to Marx's dictum (1964) that "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas" (p. 78). Gramsci, however, added an element of exchange and indeterminacy that elevates the role played by human subjectivity. For Gramsci, the economic base of society creates rough boundaries on ideas but does not predetermine or directly create ideological belief systems (the "superstructure").

In fact, Gramsci held that there may exist contradictory elements within an ideological belief system and that such contradictions often reflect the differing interests of social groups (Femia, 1975, p. 37). Similarly, Jackman and Senter's work (1983) on group images in the race, gender, and class contexts emphasized that social groups are engaged in a process of exchanging ideas and interpretations. They are involved in efforts, within the existing social and cultural institutions, to influence and control one another.

On the basis of these observations, the present argument maintains that dominant group attitudes and beliefs involve a strain toward, or a pursuit of, hegemony. A dominant group seeks to articulate a set of beliefs that persuades themselves, as well as others, that their privileged status is for the general good. Within the context of racial relations, this tendency is aptly characterized as the pursuit of racial hegemony.

This ideological process is the product of the confluence of social structural conditions (inequality and segregation) and the effects of long-standing group identities; that is, the ideological element in racial attitudes is a product of the interaction of inequality and ethnocentrism. As used here, the term *ethnocentrism* refers to a sense of positive in-group distinctiveness and commitment (Van den Berghe, 1967; Williams, Dean, & Schuman, 1964) not emotional hostility toward an out-group. Together, these factors establish a set of group interests and motivate a particular direction for attitudes, beliefs, and interpretations.

Although dominant groups do attempt to propagate ideas that secure and advance their interests, such ideas seldom reign without some challenge from subordinates, difficulties introduced by unanticipated political or economic exigencies, or the influence of other internalized attitudes and values that might weaken or contradict the ideological commitment of dominant group members. As concerns an analysis of changing racial belief systems in the United States, blacks mounted a strong political challenge to their subordination in the 1950s and 1960s based on a direct appeal to the general values—what Myrdal (1944) termed the "democratic creed"—of the dominant group. They were facilitated in this effort by a number of changing conditions. A massive migration of blacks from the rural South to the North (Farley, 1968) enhanced their political influence (Lawson, 1976; Myrdal, 1944; Sitkoff, 1971, 1978) and increased their economic and social freedom. Also, by this time, many of the ideas used to justify black subordination were clearly on the defensive in academe and in the rhetoric of many prominent political figures. A unanimous U.S. Supreme Court authoritatively repudiated racial segregation. For a period of time, especially during the middle through the late 1960s, an era that some

have characterized as a Second Reconstruction, the courts, Congress, and the executive branch appeared to be engaged in a coordinated effort to secure and protect the rights of blacks (Brauer, 1977). The high degree of unanimity at the level of national leadership provided legitimation for many of the changes blacks were demanding. As a practical political matter, moreover, many of the changes initially demanded by blacks had their focus on *de jure* segregation and discrimination in the South (Woodward, 1974; Zashin, 1978). The combination of these occurrences resulted in considerable external pressure, both political and cultural, and internal value-based pressure to support the ideals of racial equality and integration (see Katz, 1967, for a similar point).

At the same time, there was initially little reason for northern whites to believe that adherence to these principles would require any changes in their own position in society or that of their children. But as the issues shifted from largely southern problems of state-imposed segregation and voting hindrances, to economic and other redistributive issues of national scope (e.g., school busing, affirmative action, and the economic decline of urban areas), many whites no doubt came to sense a greater threat to their position in life. This sense of threat was probably amplified by the use of political slogans like Black Power (Aberbach & Walker, 1970) and the urban unrest of the late 1960s (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1976). Group conflict and ideological processes have thus contributed to the gap between support for racial principles and support for full implementation of such principles, that is, to the development of an ideology of bounded racial change.⁷

The general process is summarized in Figure 2. To recapitulate, conditions of inequality and ethnocentrism establish conflicting group interests, which, in turn, translate into interpretive tendencies on the part of dominant and subordinate group members. These interpretive tendencies favor group interests. But as Figure 2 makes clear, the final outcome, the prevailing state of intergroup attitudes and beliefs, is influenced by exchanges between dominant and subordinate groups, by relevant cultural values and beliefs (e.g., equality and fairness), and by other aspects of the patterning of group relations (e.g., the extent and type of the contact between the group members, the past history of competition and conflict, and the clarity of group boundaries).

PROGRESS AND RESISTANCE REVISITED

At many points in U.S. racial history, those advocating more progressive racial attitudes did not necessarily express an overarching commitment to full racial equality (Turner & Singleton, 1978). For instance, many early opponents of slavery opposed it as a moral evil. All the same, they shared with their slave-owning contemporaries a belief that blacks and whites could not exist as equals in the same society. These people tended to become active participants in colonization movements (i.e., efforts to find a new homeland for blacks; see Fredrickson, 1971a). Similarly, there were liberal as well as conservative politicians in the South after the fall of Reconstruction who were not rabid "Negrophobes," but who nonetheless were committed to preserving white hegemony (Woodward, 1974). Only the radical populists proposed anything near coequal part-

⁷The process described here can be understood in terms of Katz's functional theory of attitudes (1960). In particular, the substantial and growing support for the racial principles of integration and equality may occur because these attitudes increasingly serve a value-expressive function for the respondents. Such questions speak in more abstract terms to important cultural values, such as individualism and equality. Questions on implementation, however, speak to more concrete social and policy change. As a result, the low levels of support for implementation imply a larger utilitarian element in such attitudes. Questions regarding principles and implementation evidently address different motivational needs of respondents. The former tap into general values, whereas the latter tap a concern about group position.

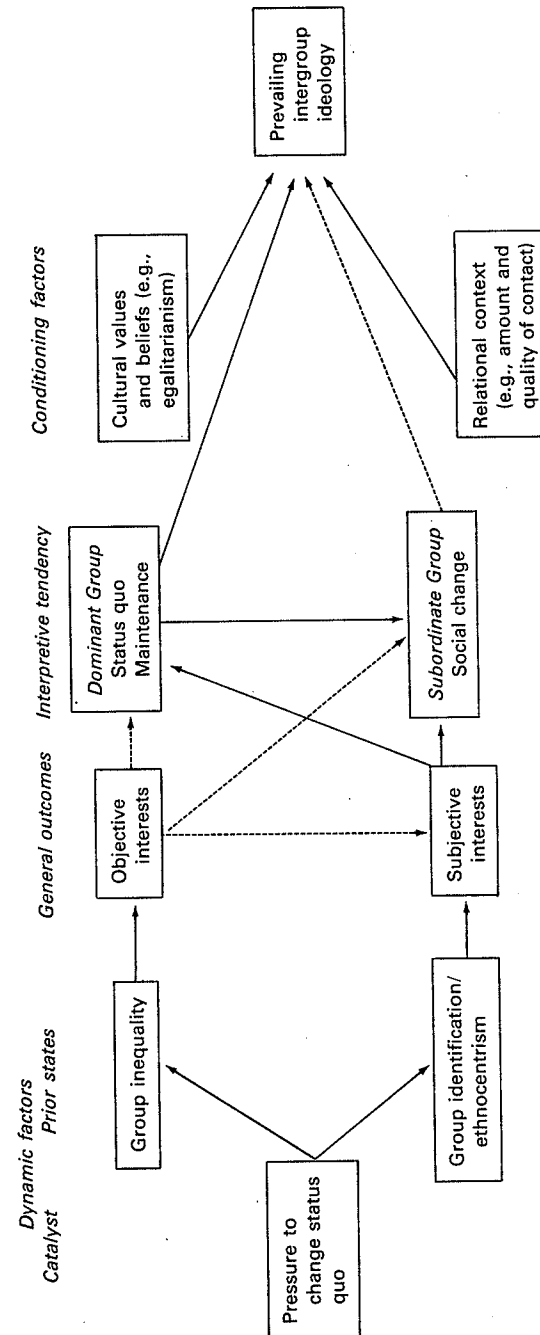


FIGURE 2. Schematic representation of the ideological hegemony process. — = Influences; - - - = strong influences.

nership with blacks as part of their efforts to coalesce the poor masses. Indeed, as Woodward (1974) suggested, the threat posed to economically and politically powerful whites by this potential coalition was a critical factor in the rise of Jim Crow laws and practices.

Two historically important examples of the admixture of positive and negative racial beliefs are to be found in the beliefs of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. Jefferson's writings indicate that he believed black enslavement to be at odds with the U.S. Constitution; yet, he personally owned many slaves. In a letter to a friend, Jefferson spoke about his own attitudes toward slavery: "You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition not only of the [African slave] trade but of the condition of slavery; and certainly nobody will be more willing to encounter every sacrifice for that object" (Takaki, 1979, p. 43). Although recognizing the contradiction and agonizing over it, Jefferson kept most of his slaves. In addition, there is evidence suggesting that he treated his slaves brutally (Takaki, 1979, p. 44), and Jefferson was perhaps the first American to venture the speculation that blacks were inherently less intelligent than whites (Jefferson, 1972; see also Takaki, 1979, pp. 47-50). As Fredrickson (1975) noted, Lincoln also held complex, contradictory views on race. He had been one of the strong advocates of colonization as a way to solve the race problem; in general, he felt that whites and blacks could not exist as civil equals in the same country. The motives of both men appear to have come from a combination of prejudice—in particular, a distaste for the mixing of black and white races—and an ideological commitment to the white control of major social and political institutions (Fredrickson, 1975; Takaki, 1979).

The acceptance of some progressive racial ideals—in the above examples, an objection to black slavery—did not guarantee a deep commitment to a racially equal and fully integrated society. In the past, such disjunctures or contradictions in belief have involved both prejudice and group-interested ideology. It seems likely that the inchoate ideology of bounded racial change evident in contemporary racial attitudes also involves such a combination of motives.

PREJUDICE AND RACIAL ATTITUDES

DEFINITIONS

Prejudice is a term that is often used synonymously with simple "bias" (see the discussion in Ehrlich, 1973). But it is also invoked as a motive force in explaining such occurrences as the rise of black slavery in the United States (Degler, 1959; Jordan, 1968). In its more formal social-psychological use, prejudice has generally been "thought of as irrationally based, negative attitudes against certain ethnic groups and their members" (Pettigrew, 1982, p. 28). Or as others have put it, prejudice is "an emotional, rigid attitude . . . toward a group of people" (Simpson & Yinger, 1972, p. 24). Prejudice, then, is an emotional antipathy based on an inaccurate and rigidly held stereotype (see Allport, 1954, pp. 6-10).

Recent research has treated stereotyping as a cognitive process separable from affective orientations toward an out-group (see Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Miller, 1982). There is considerable evidence suggesting not only that stereotypes, or some simplified cognitive structure that aids information processing, are necessary, but that stereotypes can be fruitfully studied without a concern with prejudice (see essays in Hamilton, 1981). Yet, an affective orientation toward a group is to be regarded as a prejudice only to the degree that it is based on an underlying inaccurate stereotype that resists modification (Allport, 1954; Seeman, 1981). There may, in fact, be real differences between groups that inform the images people hold of one another and the evaluations

they make (Campbell, 1967). For that reason, affective hostility alone, in the absence of an exaggerated or *faulty* stereotype, may not be a form of prejudice.

SYMBOLIC RACISM

A theory of prejudice labeled *symbolic racism* has been applied to the gap between principles and implementation. The theory and concept have been defined and elaborated upon on several occasions, and some important differences have emerged among its various advocates (compare Kinder & Sears, 1981, to McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981). One central definition was provided by Kinder and Sears (1981), who argued that symbolic racism involves

a blend of antiblack affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic. Symbolic racism represents a form of resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline. (p. 416)

It is argued that socialization to negative feelings toward blacks merges with other basic values to form psychological resistance to contemporary proposals beneficial to blacks as a group. Thus, the gap between principles and implementation is evidence of, or an aspect of, the emergence of a new form of prejudice. Older forms of antiblack sentiment (segregationist attitudes and beliefs) are being replaced by a new symbolic racism (opposition to school busing). The symbolic racism researchers assert that the amalgam of antiblack affect and traditional values is a new form of prejudice best understood from the perspective of a new "sociocultural theory" of prejudice. There are several reasons to question this account of the gap between principles and implementation and, more specifically, to note that, in a number of critical features, symbolic racism does not depart from more traditional conceptions of prejudice.

First, symbolic racism is a theory of prejudice (see also Brewer & Kramer, 1985). The proponents of the concept do not venture to explicitly differentiate the concept and/or theory of symbolic racism from the notion of prejudice as traditionally defined. Instead, it is argued that symbolic racism cannot be indexed by "old-fashioned" or *passé* racial beliefs (Kinder & Sears 1981; McConahay *et al.*, 1981). The main point of differentiation from prejudice, then, is at the level of measurement, not at the level of theoretical development. In addition, the symbolic racism researchers also make frequent use of the terms *prejudice* and *intolerance*. Kinder and Sears (1981, p. 416) explicitly argued that symbolic racism is a variant of prejudice. McConahay *et al.* (1981, p. 577) contended that their "modern" or symbolic racism scale definitely measured an aspect of prejudice.

The main interpretive frame of the symbolic racism researchers also emphasizes the nonrational origins of opposition to implementing racial change. This is a distinctive feature of theories of prejudice (see Wellman, 1977, pp. 14-15). The main tests of symbolic racism have the aim of demonstrating two things: (a) that rational self-interest and group conflict do not influence attitudes toward school busing (McConahay, 1982; Sears, Hensler, & Speer, 1979; Sears, Lau, Tyler, & Allen, 1980) or voting against a black candidate for political office (Kinder & Sears, 1981); and (b) that some measure of racial attitudes and political conservatism does predict such attitudes.

As a result, it might be expected that the concept of symbolic racism would be operationalized with questions concerning clearly emotional and stereotyped orientations toward blacks. The general strategy, however, has been to rely on questions concerning a number of contemporary racial problems and disputes, especially attitudes toward black political activism and influence. From the present perspective, when at-

titude questions concerned with black protest and political influence are used to index symbolic racism, a theory of prejudice has incorporated elements of group conflict and group conflict motives (Bobo, 1983). Questions that explicitly invoke concern about real-world political actors and events, and that arguably tap a dominant groups' sense of political threat from a contentious subordinate group, are being treated as indicators of prejudice.

Second, and more broadly, a strong case can be made that white racial attitudes have long involved some degree of less positive affect toward blacks than toward whites and a belief that blacks lack certain positively valued traits to be found in whites (e.g., industriousness, a capacity for hard work, and most of the qualities associated with the Protestant Ethic). Johnson (1949) pointed out that, after the Civil War, an ideology of laissez-faire individualism developed in the South as a way of justifying black subordination without the institution of slavery. These beliefs had clear origins in earlier proslavery doctrines. In particular, southern whites emphasized that blacks "would not work without compulsion" (Johnson, 1949, p. 130). This central claim had three subsidiary points:

- (1) The Negro needs the direction of the white man in order to be industrious and actually prefers it to supervision of another Negro; (2) without this supervision and compulsion the Negro degenerates; and (3) the Negro is inherently *lazy, shiftless, and licentious*. (Johnson, 1949, p. 131; italics added)

Takaki (1970) noted that, during the nineteenth century, whites in the North and the South regarded blacks as lacking the Protestant qualities of hard work, obedience, and restraint that they (the whites) possessed. Whites in the nineteenth century viewed blacks, he argued, as a peculiar mixture of children, who needed paternal protection and guidance, and savages, who required constant monitoring because they might engage in violence, crime, or sexual debauchery. All in all, Takaki (1970) concluded:

The image of the Negro served a need shared by whites, North and South; it performed an identity function for white Americans during a period when they were groping for self-definition. It is significant to note the way whites imagined the Negro in relation to themselves: the Negro was mentally inferior, naturally lazy, childlike, unwholesome, and given to vice. He was the antithesis of themselves and of what they valued: industriousness, intelligence, and moral restraint. (p. 42)

Takaki (1979) broadened and refined this point in his later work. There, he began with Gramsci's notion of hegemony and argued that whites have, since the American Revolution, striven to differentiate themselves from others. This differentiation has served to provide a source of identity and, crucially, played a part in the pursuit of various self- and group-interested ends (i.e., the taking of Indian lands, the enslavement of blacks, discrimination against Oriental laborers, and so on).

More concretely, the attitudes and beliefs of Thomas Jefferson provide a vivid example of how certain values became linked to a justification of white privilege. Jefferson argued that the United States should be a fundamentally new nation based on republican values. This ideology of republicanism held that the character and fate of a nation rest not so much on wealth and power, as was the case in Europe, as on the degree of value consensus and the public virtue of its citizenry. Virtue was a product of reason, self-reliance, industriousness, and moral restraint. These qualities, of course, were viewed as more characteristic of whites than of blacks (Takaki, 1979, p. 64). Although slavery, with the enormous power it gave one person over the life of another, introduced temptations that might weaken adherence to these values, the gravest threat to republicanism came from the same forces that threatened the institution of slavery. For Jefferson, the increasing industrialization and commercialization of the North, along with the attendant pressures for a stronger federal government that would further facilitate these developments,

would only undermine the southern way of life and republican values. The pastoral character of the farm and the plantation were, in his view, most conducive to the maintenance of virtue. Thus, despite Jefferson's moral discomfort with slavery, many of his letters, speeches, and other writings would become a basis for certain secessionist, states' rights, and proslavery positions. Indeed, like many other southern whites, according to historian Robert Shalhope (1976), "Jefferson clung to an ideology—to a way of life with identity and meaning in a changing world—which rested on slavery. The exploitation of the black was legitimized in terms of preserving higher values—a republican society" (p. 556).

Historians are not the only researchers to have pointed to whites' sense of themselves as a group endowed with valued traits that were absent or underdeveloped in blacks. A classic work in the empirical prejudice-stereotyping tradition (Katz & Braly, 1933) found laziness to be one of the primary traits attributed to blacks.⁸ Campbell (1967) noted that salient differences between groups, especially in highly valued traits (i.e., industriousness and moral restraint), are likely to be a central focus of group stereotypes. Additionally, concern with such perceived trait differences between groups continues to inform more contemporary research on group images (Jackman & Senter, 1983).

It is possible, however, that the distinguishing feature of contemporary prejudice, and hence of symbolic racism, is the concern with black "pushiness" expressed in white attitudes. This concern about the illegitimacy of blacks' demands may be what sets current prejudice apart from older manifestations of prejudice. Although the expressions of concern about black demands and their legitimacy are more widespread—perhaps for concrete historical reasons, namely, a nationally oriented civil rights movement covered by national news media—this type of racial attitude is by no means an entirely new occurrence (see Rudwick, 1967; Wilson, 1980). For example, Rudwick (1964) explained that, in the Chicago riot of 1919, the Detroit riot of 1943, and especially the East St. Louis riot of 1917,

unskilled whites manifested tension after they considered their jobs threatened by Negroes. There was also concern because [recent black] migrants had overburdened the housing and transportation facilities. Everywhere, efforts of Negroes to improve their status were defined as arrogant assaults, and whites insisted on retaining competitive advantages enjoyed before the Negro migration. (p. 218)

The connection between the white public sentiment in these riot-torn cities of the early twentieth century and today's prevailing racial attitudes is the presence of some pressure or demand for change presented by blacks. The concern with black "pushiness," then, could plausibly be viewed as part of a dominant group's attempt to interpret subordinate group challenges as illegitimate, and yet to do so in a manner that offers an ostensibly principled defense of a privileged group position (Jackman & Muha, 1984).

The upshot of this is twofold. First, racial attitudes in the United States, at least for the past 150 years, have involved a blend of antiblack affect and traditional moral values. Indeed, theories of prejudice have been routinely concerned with intergroup affect and stereotyping, that is, with feelings and beliefs about the traits of group members. Second, the perception of some trait difference between blacks and whites can and has been used

⁸In addition, symbolic racism is in some respects similar to the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). Both Sears and colleagues and Adorno *et al.* have suggested that intergroup attitudes must be measured in subtle ways because blunt or coarse outgroup derogation is culturally unacceptable. Both have also argued that intergroup attitudes involve a considerable element of reverence for traditional values and political conservatism. In particular, Adorno *et al.*'s ethnocentrism scale and political economic conservatism scale and symbolic racism are motivated by quite similar ideas.

to rationalize a group advantage. As Jackman and Senter (1983) argued, perceived trait differences can serve the ideological needs of dominant groups.

Still, there remains the possibility that a substantial shift in the character of prejudice has taken place, thus creating a need for new measures of prejudice. The above comments suggest a different approach to explaining the changing content of racial attitudes. The major change between present-day attitudes and those characteristic of whites in the nineteenth century is that trait differences between blacks and whites are less likely to be viewed as inherent or of biological origin. As Schuman (1971) noted, "a considerable portion of the white urban population believes that the source of Negro hardships lie within Negroes themselves, but denies that this source is inborn and unchangeable" (p. 386; see also Apostle *et al.*, 1983). That is, the predominant interpretation holds that the problem is blacks' level of motivation and effort, not their genetic endowment.

Jackman and Senter (1983) added, on the basis of an analysis of national survey data on group images concerning the traits of intelligence, dependability, and laziness, that most whites do not posit the existence of large, categorical differences between themselves and blacks. Instead, they tend to express only small, qualified distinctions in those traits that favor whites. These small and qualified differences, however, are given a strong negative evaluation. This evaluative overlay is sufficient to justify a dominant group advantage. Jackman and Senter explained that "the perception of small but derogatory differences represents a hardening line of defense against challenge" (p. 332).

These sorts of changes—though certainly, in part, the result of prejudice, as the symbolic racism researchers have effectively argued—are also driven by alterations in the economic, political, and social context. The image of blacks as permanently and categorically inferior to whites has been shorn of its economic, political, and social underpinnings. Blacks are no longer enslaved. Slave labor is not crucial to any aspect of the economy, and slavery is reviled throughout the world. Blacks are no longer segregated and discriminated against under the majesty of law as was the case during the reign of Jim Crow; nor do they engage in the symbolically humbling behaviors (e.g., passivity and accommodation) required under Jim Crow. On the contrary, their legal right to full citizenship has been codified through legislation, legal interpretation, and the actions of administrative agencies. Moreover, blacks have more effective political power than they had in earlier periods. In view of these facts and the discrediting of notions of biological racism, it is understandably less common to find that the predominant mode of accounting for racial inequality involves genetic thinking and blatantly segregationist sentiments.

Insofar as important inequalities remain, it should be expected that new attitudes and beliefs, amenable to the current context, will begin to arise to explain and defend those inequalities. These new attitudes and beliefs emerge naturally from one group's "side" of social experience as they attempt to provide meaning and order in their lives. The bent of these emerging views will be such as to support a privileged group's hegemonic position. A key psychological basis for this tendency is the sense of group position. It has been suggested that the most persuasive argument for resistance to large-scale racial change in the present social context is an appeal to the value of individualism (Jackman & Muha, 1984). Policies that are premised on the recognition of group characteristics are resisted, ostensibly, because they violate the ideal of individualism.

At minimum, it seems unlikely that theories of prejudice alone can provide a full explanation of the contemporary paradox of racial attitudes. Indeed, the gap between principles and implementation suggests that racial attitudes have both positive and negative currents, a set of characteristics that on its face poses difficulties for a prejudice interpretation. The symbolic racism researchers have taken two slightly different positions on this problem. Kinder and Sears (1981) noted that "since the explicitly segrega-

tionist, white supremacist view has all but disappeared, it can no longer be a major political force" (p. 416). They asserted, however, that prejudice must still be operating, although in some new fashion. The task, then, is to conceptualize and measure the new manifestations of prejudice—hence, the notion of symbolic racism. As Kinder and Sears (1981) argued, "What has replaced [segregationist, white supremacist views], we suggest, is a new variant that might be called symbolic racism" (p. 416). From this point of view, support for racial principles is of little contemporary political consequence. McConahay *et al.* (1981) pressed this point further. They argued that whites can perceive the racist content of survey questions on racial principles and thus give the socially desirable response. New, modern racism items do not suffer from this contamination, McConahay *et al.* claimed, because people do not perceive the racist content of believing, for example, that blacks have too much political influence. In either treatment, the point is that prejudice has grown more sophisticated.

Although accurately describing an important change in the character of racial attitudes, both accounts are problematic. No sustained analysis of why this shift in attitudes has occurred is provided. If the root of the problem is a form of prejudice, then it is difficult to understand why there would be any pressure to change from segregationist attitudes to some newer, more relevant form of voicing an irrational hostility toward blacks. Furthermore, it is not entirely accurate to view segregationist beliefs and attitudes as merely a simpler, older form of prejudice (though many analysts have done so). The rise of white supremacist practices and ideology, especially the rise of segregation, although partially the result of prejudice, can also be traced to a combination of political exigencies (e.g., increased black voting and the Populist movement), cultural trends (e.g., social Darwinism), and the active protection of group interests (Cell, 1982; Fredrickson, 1971b; Woodward, 1974). According to Cell (1982), "Segregation is at the same time an interlocking system of economic institutions, social practices and customs, political power, law, and ideology, all of which function both as means and ends in one group's efforts to keep another (or others) in their place within a society that is actually becoming unified" (p. 14). Any new set of attitudes said to be derivative of segregationist attitudes may also reflect a group-interested ideology tailored to new circumstances. I suggest that a major contributor to the greater complexity of racial attitudes is the natural process of a dominant group's interpreting social events and proposals for change in a manner that allows the maintenance of its hegemony under very different structural (economic and political) and cultural conditions.

American historical experience and culture do make available, however, an unflattering image of blacks as lazy and dependent slaves, carefree minstrels, and potentially dangerous vagabonds. This image may even involve a deeply ingrained color complex that permeates Western society (Jordan, 1968). It must also be noted that this cultural baggage, though not as prominent or ubiquitous as it once was, is still dimly implicated in the racial attitudes of black and white Americans (Prager, 1982). In this more limited sense, the theory of symbolic racism rightly cautions us that prejudice has not vanished. Yet, the theory may exaggerate the importance of prejudice as such, especially insofar as attitudes toward black political activism are viewed as indicators of this concept.

If there had been no civil rights movement or urban riots, or if these events had gone without media coverage and sustained elite attention, then attitudes toward black activists and activism might well amount to an abstracted racial resentment. None of these conditions obtain. On the contrary, the mass media provided intensive coverage of black protest (Funkhouser, 1973; Garrow, 1978), the mass public developed fairly clear assessments of the aims of civil rights leaders (Sheatsley, 1966), and political leaders and institutions helped focus public attention on black grievances. Indeed, some have ar-

gued—and have provided data from national surveys that suggest—that the presidential elections of 1964 and 1968 served to make race one of the key features of conventional partisan political alignments and political thinking among the mass public (Carmines & Stimson, 1982). The recent designation of Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday has also served to embed more deeply in American culture an awareness of black protest as a vehicle for social change.

EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENTS

The empirical research on symbolic racism has resulted in several consistent findings and contributions to our understanding of racial attitudes. First, indicators of objective, tangible personal threats from blacks (e.g., living in an area where a busing plan is being implemented) do not predict related racial-policy attitudes (Bobo, 1983; Sears, Hensler, & Speer, 1979, 1980) or a willingness to vote for black candidates for political office. Second, other types of racial attitudes, in particular those concerning contemporary race problems (e.g., welfare dependency and crime) and black political activism, are the strongest predictors of opposition to policies and candidates likely to improve the status of blacks relative to that of whites. In addition, neither the contemporary race problem nor the black political activism attitudes appear to be related to measures of tangible personal threat. Third, measures of political ideology (self-identification as a liberal or a conservative) are also important predictors of racial policy attitudes and a willingness to support black political candidates. Fourth, and more broadly, this line of speech has helped to focus attention on some real changes in the character of white racial attitudes.

These clear-cut findings and contributions do not, however, firmly substantiate the main theory. Early research on symbolic racism treated prejudice as a single unitary dimension (Sears, Hensler, & Speer, 1979, 1980). Subsequent research has shown that racial attitudes have several reasonably distinct but correlated dimensions (Bobo, 1983). The most important of these dimensions for predicting school busing opposition is attitude toward black political activism.

This latter finding is congenial to a group conflict interpretation of racial attitudes once the conception of "interests" is broadened to include a sense of collective or group interest, with the latter indexed by measures of perceived threat. The symbolic racism researchers have typically conceptualized self-interest as a tangible personal risk. Yet, as others have noted (Bobo, 1983; Kluegel & Smith, 1983; Pettigrew, 1985), there are other viable conceptualizations of "interests" in an issue or outcome. The narrow definition preferred by the symbolic racism researchers is depoliticized and tends to overlook the potential for subjectively meaningful links between perceived collective and personal interests. Thus, the relationship between attitudes toward black political activism (perceived threat) and specific racial policy attitudes is plausibly interpreted as a manifestation of a group conflict. Indeed, research reviewed earlier—which showed substantial black-white polarization in attitudes toward the black political movement, racial differences in trends over time on such attitudes, and a clear relationship to other group-conflict and social-protest attitudes—argues in favor of group conflict approach (Bobo, 1985).

Still, prejudice plays a role. In particular, there is evidence suggesting that "old-fashioned" prejudice retains contemporary political relevance. McClendon (1985) reported a connection between support for school busing and traditional segregationist attitudes net of the effect of modern racism. Jacobson (1985) found similar results for affirmative action attitudes. It is not the case, in sum, that prejudice needs new avenues of expression.

CONCLUSIONS

Recent research has rekindled a focused controversy over the relative importance of group conflict and prejudice in racial attitudes and relations. The case for either interpretation should not be pressed too far. Racial attitudes are complex, involving affective orientations, stereotypes, modes of explanation, group conflict motives, and several other types of attitudes, values, and concerns. This chapter has had the goal of clarifying the distinctive contribution of group conflict and group conflict motives while stressing that prejudice and group conflict approaches are not mutually exclusive. As others have noted, one process can readily feed into the other (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1965). For the present, if there is a general conclusion to be reached, it is that, alongside our traditional concern with individual prejudice, we should recognize the importance of group conflict. In short, racial attitudes can simultaneously involve group-interested ideology and irrational hostilities.

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that a core problem touched on in a broad range of social-psychologically oriented research on race is the problem of resistance to more profound forms of racial change. A loosely coherent set of attitudes and beliefs that, among other things, attributes continuing patterns of black-white inequality to the dispositional shortcomings of blacks themselves and the otherwise fair operation of the economic and political system has developed and now characterizes much of the white population. I labeled this nascent set of beliefs an ideology of bounded racial change because although it involves support for the extension of basic citizenship rights to blacks the ideology also involves vigorous opposition to change that might impose substantial burdens on whites.

The growing complexity and subtlety of racial attitudes and beliefs, which the ideology of bounded racial change clearly reflects, derives from a social context still characterized by considerable black-white economic inequality, limited black political empowerment, extensive residential segregation by race, other historical trends and the influence of enduring cultural values and beliefs. At the individual level, a number of social-psychological factors contribute to adherence to this ideology, especially a concern with group position that enters public opinion as perceptions of incompatible group interests, feelings of fraternal deprivation, and perceived threats posed by the black political actors who have pressured for social and political change.

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II

RACISM TOWARD BLACKS: HOW GENERALIZABLE?