



KIRWAN INSTITUTE  
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

# TALKING ABOUT RACE

Toward a Transformative Agenda



## Resource Notebook

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*...This failure to be explicit about race strengthens the racially hierarchical patterns that are reflected in structures and inhabit our implicit mind. Our willful blindness leaves us in the grip of a false naturalness that robs us of hope and possibility.*

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### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

There is little doubt for even the casual observer that we have made substantial progress in addressing issues related to race in our society and that racial disparities continue to be a vexing problem. There is less agreement about how to make sense of our racial landscape or the continuing importance of race. The simple question of how important are race and racism in our society quickly becomes nuanced and complicated. Part of this complexity is that the meaning and practice associated with our early national consciousness of racial justice do not map well with the current dynamics of race and racial meaning in our society. Gone are the white only signs, the Jim Crow laws and the explicit embracing of “white only.”

We have become a much more racially and ethnically diverse society: many of our national heroes are not white; we see interracial couples on television; in 2008 we elected the first black president in the U.S. And yet blacks and latinos populate our prisons at increasingly high rates, and more than fifty years after *Brown* our school and housing patterns not only remain segregated but are increasingly becoming re-segregated. How are we to understand this? Many suggest that we approach these issues by considering class, but not race; others insist that we stop talking about race altogether. Confusion develops when we try to use the old paradigm of individual prejudice and Jim Crow to understand racialization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If there is no explicit racial prejudice, how can there be racism? Much of the work of the last two decades has begun to answer this and other important questions. This research tells us that we are unconsciously—implicitly—thinking about race even when we are not talking about it and that our implicit racial attitudes are likely to be more biased and negative than our explicit positions.

Since race may be constantly present in our “implicit mind,” research suggests that, if we can do it right, it is better to talk about race than to avoid it. However, our highly racialized American history and the systems of domination and exclusion that have been perpetuated in our society have rendered us virtually incapable of talking about or thinking about race in a transformative way. Typically, the conversation about race is divisive and polarizing. Because we have been relatively unskilled in successfully challenging the nature of this discourse, and because we do not fully understand the consequences of our failure to do so, we either avoid the conversation altogether, opting for a “colorblind” approach, find conceptual proxies for race—most notably class—or minimize the significance of race in understanding the racialized and unbalanced distribution of opportunity in the United States.

It is important to note here that the process of racialization is not just an internal psychological phenomenon that is revealed in the real world. Much of the work that is done to impact racial arrangements in our society is done through institutional design that may not be related to individual actions or prejudices. Consider the impact of housing on school funding and the sorting of students. Institutional arrangements impact what we think and which of our internal frames—our stories about race, fairness and the world—become most active.

### **Why Is It Necessary To Talk About Race?**

We need to talk about race because we are often thinking about race in ways that profoundly impact our decisions and understandings. Race has also been an important factor in the way that institutions are designed and the work that they do. It has been a principal force in building, sustaining, and shifting the social and political structures and organizational arrangements that control the distribution of opportunity and resources across all populations. Race also plays a significant role—either explicitly or implicitly—in many of the most important decisions that we make in our personal, professional, and social lives: where we live, who our children's friends are, who our friends are, which political candidates we vote for, what social programs we support, etc. For most Americans, all of these issues include some consideration of race and while these considerations are often very subtle, they have the power to shape and control individual attitudes, values, and behaviors. It is not possible to talk coherently or truthfully about the history of our democracy or the future well-being of the American people without talking about race. The process of racialization continues to depress our aspirations as a nation as well as our economic and civic well-being, and while this process impacts racially marginalized and non-marginalized groups differently, it impacts us all.

Traditionally, our understanding of race has been incomplete and distorted. This distorted view supports an isolated mass society and makes progressive collective action very difficult. The fear that is closely associated with race causes us to look for public solutions in isolated private individuals. For example, many Americans believe that all U.S. citizens, regardless of race, have equal opportunity to achieve the “American dream.” Research suggests that this incomplete view is based, in part, on a lack of information about the causes and consequences of race-based inequality. Much of the opposition to affirmative action in the U.S. is motivated by this incomplete view.

A transformative dialogue on race can be beneficial on many levels: it can explicate the structural dynamics of social, economic, and political disparities, and it can assist us in dismantling racial hierarchy and deconstructing racialized “symbolic attitudes” that energize and perpetuate this hierarchy. It can help us to invigorate a strong inclusive democracy that invests both in its infrastructure and its people.

### **What Are The Consequences If We Fail To Engage In A Transformative Dialogue About Race?**

If we continue to avoid a transformative dialogue about race, we run the risk of energizing “colorblind racism,” trivializing social and economic inequality that is fueled by race, and reinforcing prevailing notions of group privilege and social hierarchy. The current dialogue on race is constrained and distorted by fear and a host of misperceptions, incomplete understandings, and negative attitudes. While many of these attitudes are subconscious, they have the power to direct conscious thought and behavior.

Because we live in a nation that is still divided along racial lines, it is difficult for many Americans to understand how our collective fates are linked and how the entire nation is harmed by the consequences of structural racism and racial hierarchy. If we do not engage in a transformative dialogue on race, the conversation on issues like affirmative action and school integration will continue to have polarizing—rather than unifying—outcomes, and our democracy will suffer.

**THINKING TRANSFORMATIVELY**

Traditional View	Transformative View
Affirmative action is not needed, and it leads to “reverse discrimination.”	Affirmative action continues to be a vital—if imperfect—tool for removing discriminatory obstacles that confront women and people of color. The goal of affirmative action is to give ALL PEOPLE equal access to opportunities in education and employment.
Talking about race is divisive and polarizing; colorblindness is the answer.	There are unifying transformative ways to talk about race. Even when race is not talked about, people see race and make racialized decisions and policies. Not talking about race masks racial disparities and inhibits movement toward social justice.
The real issue is class, not race.	Race and class are intertwined. A strictly class-based movement will ultimately fragment because of race.
We get what we deserve in life. If some racial groups aren’t doing as well as others, people just need to work harder.	While individual effort matters, our well-being is also powerfully shaped by institutional conditions/arrangements and opportunity structures.
People like Tiger Woods, George Lopez, and Oprah Winfrey are proof that anyone can be successful in America.	Cumulative structural inequality has its greatest impact on groups, not individuals. There have always been exceptionally successful people from all races and ethnicities.
Racism is about blatant, intentional bigotry.	The consequences of structural/institutional racism are significantly greater than those of personal racial animus.
The kind of overt racial bias and discrimination that we saw in the past does not exist today.	While research indicates that implicit (subconscious) racial bias is more pervasive than explicit bias, overt discrimination in sectors like housing and lending tells us that racial prejudice is still alive.
Segregation exists because African Americans and other people of color prefer to live among “their own.”	Segregated “racialized” space is created by structural racism and discrimination. Our choices are informed by structures, institutional arrangements and our sense of what is possible. People do not choose to live in low-opportunity communities.
What happens outside my family and friendship circles doesn’t have much to do with me.	We share a “linked fate.” The consequences of structural racism impact the entire society—not just people of color—and threaten our democracy.

### TALKING POINTS

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- Discussions about race-based disparities without accompanying examples and dialogue about the dynamics that enable people to overcome the barriers that create these disparities, do not resonate well with non-progressive audiences.
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- Discussions about injustice and social inequality do not resonate positively if the impacted group(s) is not regarded favorably by the audience.
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- Seemingly conscious positions on issues related to opportunity, diversity, affirmative action, and other race-sensitive social justice topics are often driven by subtle unconscious “symbolic” attitudes that may be more powerful than the decision maker’s own self-interest. Racial bias is often one of these subconscious attitudes.
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- Many Americans have an inadequate understanding of the consequences of structural racialization and cumulative race-based inequality; they believe that the playing field is “level.” This misperception colors the way that audiences react to messages about inequality in health, education, employment, housing, and other opportunity domains, and more generally, about social justice. For example, many Americans believe that housing in metropolitan areas is segregated because people of color choose to isolate themselves in depressed neighborhoods void of opportunity.
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- The degree to which a message about race resonates with the audience and the way that it resonates depends on the “frame” that is employed to contextualize the message. If audiences reject the frame, they will most likely reject the message. “Framing” messages to appeal to conscious information processing is the flip side of “priming” to influence subconscious attitudes and behaviors.
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- Concepts like opportunity, diversity and racial justice are fundamental to American Democracy. Racial and ethnic division weakens Democracy and creates challenges for all Americans.
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- Acknowledging that racial, gender, class and other hierarchies exist is not the same as condoning them.
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- A country is only as strong as its people are strong. As long as persistent race-based inequality exists, America cannot reach its full potential and remain competitive in the global marketplace.
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- We have created geographic and ideological boundaries around American citizens based on their race and ethnicity. The reality is that “they are us; we are all Americans and our fates are linked...”
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- The opportunity playing field has both improved and worsened, depending on the indicators used to make this assessment. For example, the number of non-whites in business and in higher education is increasing, but there are more African Americans and latinos in prison and stuck in poor inner-city neighborhoods than at any other time in our history.
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- Class and race are profoundly connected; they cannot be easily separated or reduced to each other. The formation of the working class was a racialized phenomenon that still impacts all of us. However, class is not a proxy for race. While many Americans from all socioeconomic groups are struggling to achieve the American dream, research shows that even when income and education levels are similar, African American and latino families face greater challenges than white families in education, health care, criminal justice, and other opportunity domains.
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## **FRAMING**

Framing is a critical element of public discourse; it can entrench, uproot, or reconceptualize policy preferences and attitudes. An individual's frames are defined by society and culture. We all have multiple and, at times, contradictory frames. In the dialogue about racial justice, for example, framing can create either a colorblind lens that filters out explicit references to race or a race-sensitive lens that gives salience to race. Colorblind frames, often used by the political right, emphasize "individual merit," while race-sensitive frames, emphasizing race-based disparities and accomplishments, are often employed by political progressives to win broad support for social justice programs and strategies. Understanding how frames operate can empower social justice activists and scholars to talk more effectively about racial justice and garner support for critical issues like affirmative action.

What we know about framing:

- Frames are most simply understood as a mental "default understanding" or world view of reality. They set the terms of a discussion and affect how new information will be encountered and incorporated into a debate, thus serving as "mental shortcuts that allow people to make sense of their world"(1). Research in social psychology suggests that the human mind requires these shortcuts to navigate the flow of information; new or contradictory information may be rejected rather than compelling the individual to reject or alter his or her prevailing mental frame (2).
- Frames are constructed by identifying and naming a set of core values—or principles—that are central to an individual's ability to evaluate and understand the world. In this context, widely and strongly held frames have the power to set the terms of debate (1). For example, the classic conservative frame of "individual responsibility" uses simple causality and merit located in the atomized individual as central to the analysis of any social justice issue so that all new information related to this theme will be synthesized based on these central elements.
- In the social justice arena, an effective frame does not stand alone; it is built upon values and principles derived from social justice goals and the policy strategies needed to achieve them. "Our words, therefore, are always dependent on the actual change we want to see in the world, and how we think that change will occur" (3). This means that while framing is a secondary tactic, it is critical in gathering public support in the later stages of policy struggles.
- Often, effective framing of social justice issues requires the reconceptualization of an issue, altering the way in which it is commonly understood. However, without values leading to a larger social justice goal, it is easy for a communication strategy to devolve into a search for the frame that best "sells" to the public, limiting the long-term

- effectiveness of racial justice organizing. While this might win a short-term policy change, it is not likely to aid in achieving long-term success toward social justice. Progress can also be facilitated by the use of “meta-messaging,” or the coordination of message-framing across different campaigns (3). Progressives can promote particular policy objectives while reinforcing the campaigns of allies by articulating a common worldview or set of core values like “fairness” and “inclusion,” so that future campaigns launched in the same vein will resonate with people already attuned to these frames (3).
- Framing strategies are limited by identity and how identities are influenced by the local environment (4). Social psychology has long recognized the human propensity to perceive in-groups and out-groups and to act on these perceptions. People tend to gravitate toward penetrable high-status groups, or they promote the superiority of their own group when group boundaries are perceived to be rigid, as in the case of racial identity. This behavior results in a host of problematic tendencies when assessing those in the out-group including discrimination, assumptions of homogeneity, and the application of stricter moral standards to members of the outgroup than to members of one’s own group (5).

It is important to note that a message by itself is not a frame. The “frame” is both the way that the message is “colored” and tailored to stimulate implicit and explicit references in the audience’s mind and the lens through which the message is perceived by the audience. Framing messages to appeal to implicit attitudes is often called “priming.” Political messages about race and social justice are framed by the use of explicit language or subtle coded language that appeals to common understandings, stereotypes, and attitudes. The degree to which a message about race resonates with the audience and the way that it resonates depends on the audience’s connection to the frame that is being contextualized and the degree to which the frame stimulates the desired set of understandings, stereotypes, and attitudes. If information does not “fit” the frame, i.e., does not mesh with any of the audience’s common understandings, stereotypes, or attitudes, then the message is likely to be rejected.

Consider a message like “In the U.S., African American students do not perform as well as white students on standardized academic achievement tests.” This core message is based on numerous empirical studies and is therefore neutral on its surface. However, by incorporating into the message explicit words or “code” words that connect to the “scientific race” theory, for example, this message can be framed as support for the notion that African American students are inherently less intelligent than white students. This frame is most likely to appeal to audiences who already buy into the scientific race theory, but it may also appeal to those who are skeptical, but open, to this theory.

This same core message will resonate differently if it is framed through a “structural racism” lens that incorporates language about under-resourced urban schools, lack of educational opportunity, historic racial inequality, and the cumulative consequences of racial injustice in the

U.S. This frame is likely to appeal to progressive audiences who have been exposed to information about race-based disparities and who are committed on some level to removing racial barriers to opportunity. An audience that is entrenched in the belief that African American students are inherently less intelligent than white students will most likely reject the structural racism frame.

Research suggests that both conscious and subconscious processes are employed to interpret messages and to activate frames. Some research suggests that when we are exposed to messages about race, affirmative action, and other social/political issues, subconscious processing may dominate. In his new book, *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, Drew Westen tells us that “Irrespective of what we may feel and believe consciously, most white Americans—including many who hold consciously progressive values and attitudes—harbor negative associations toward people of color”(6). Sears, Lau, Tyler and Harris (1980) suggest that political choices may be driven more by “symbolic attitudes” than by an individual’s own self interest:

*“...people acquire stable affective preferences through conditioning in their pre-adult years, with little calculation of the future costs and benefits of these attitudes. The most important of these are presumably some rather general predispositions, such as party identification, liberal or conservative ideology, nationalism, or racial prejudice. When confronted with new policy issues later in life, people respond to these new attitudes on the basis of cognitive consistency. The critical variable would be the similarity of symbols posed by the policy issue to those of long-standing predispositions. Political attitudes, therefore, are formed mainly in congruence with long-standing values about society and the policy, rather than short-term instrumentalities for satisfaction of one’s private needs (7).*

Stephan and Stephan (2000) suggest that “The hostility of whites in the U.S. toward African Americans is a response to the belief that African Americans violate traditional values shared by most whites”(8). In this context, “symbolic racism” is defined as “a form of resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline”(9). Powell suggests that the development of racialized identity in America coincided with the historic development of the American psyche (10).

A growing body of research suggests that our implicit frames operate even when we are not conscious of them. Westen makes the point that our implicit frames on race are less egalitarian than our explicit frames. When we fail to talk about race, our implicit frames often operate without the social discipline of our explicit frames. Westen also suggests that when we are confronted with multiple conclusions, we “twirl the cognitive kaleidoscope” until we get the conclusion we want, the one that eliminates negative emotional states and activates positive ones (11).

The “implicit association test” (12) measures unconscious levels of prejudice about age, gender,

race, and other variables. Results of testing conducted with this instrument by researchers at Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington clearly indicate that many people harbor implicit negative associations with race and that these associations can impact our behavior. This research tells us that even when we are not consciously considering race, it is active in our “implicit mind” and capable of actively impacting our actions and judgments. It is important to note that many of our frames are social and cultural in nature and that because we have both explicit and implicit frames, one set of frames can be stimulated to the exclusion of the others. It is also important to note that since implicit and explicit social and cultural frames may be a response to an individual’s long-term life experiences, similar information may be framed differently by different people. We can look at the Louisville/Seattle (*Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*) and *Bakke* Supreme Court cases as examples of this variation. In the Louisville/Seattle cases the Justices responded to different frames and these frames impacted the way they approached the cases. Thomas describes the issue facing Seattle and Louisville as racial imbalance caused by natural circumstances; this frame led to the assertion that the state should do nothing. Kennedy describes the problems through a racial isolation frame and asserts that the state has a compelling interest in addressing this isolation. Breyer described the problem as resegregation that undermines *Brown* and our democracy; accordingly, he insists that the need for the state to take action is paramount.

In *Bakke*, Justice Powell talked about the problem of affirmative action in the context of hurting innocent whites. This is more than just a call for fairness; the reference to innocence has a religious connotation suggesting perhaps that other groups are not innocent or deserving. In the 80s Reagan framed the issue of drugs as a war. This was a time when polls indicated that most Americans did not think drugs were a serious problem. By framing the issue in this way, Reagan sought to stimulate specific heightened attitudes in the American people. He could have framed the drug problem as a health issue as many other countries do.

If we accept the premise that messages about race and social justice are processed more powerfully in the subconscious (the “implicit mind”) and that these messages appeal as much to deep-seated symbolic attitudes and values as they do to individual self interest, then how can this understanding guide progressives in winning support for social justice policies and electing socially progressive candidates? On one level, this understanding tells us that critical messages must be framed around core attitudes and values that resonate positively with a majority of the American people. These might include fairness, equality, justice, democracy, and equal opportunity. When appealing to the “explicit mind,” strategic messages might be framed around the notion of “linked fate,” based on the premise that the consequences of structural racism and racial inequality have a negative impact on all Americans, not just people of color.

The failure to talk about race may leave our implicit racial bias undisturbed and unchallenged. Saying that it is important to talk about race and to understand how frames work is just the beginning. It is also important to explore how to constructively talk about race. Too often the

conversation about race stimulates a “them versus us” frame which severely limits the possibility of productive, constructive, and creative dialogue. One of the underlying assumptions about a transformative approach to race is that change is possible even among individuals and groups who fervently embrace symbolic attitudes and frames that energize racial hierarchy and structural inequality. As we move to build a transformative agenda around race, we must include these individuals and groups.

## STRATEGIC ELEMENTS OF A TRANSFORMATIVE DIALOGUE ON RACE

- **Understand the importance of message “framing”**

Framing is both the way that a message is “colored” and tailored to stimulate implicit and explicit references in the audience’s mind and the lens through which the message is perceived and interpreted by the audience. Frames appeal to both conscious and “unconscious” attitudes. If information does not fit an individual’s internal frame, it will probably be rejected. Labels are important; for example:

“Affirmative Action”	⇨	Often perceived as special privilege & reverse discrimination
“Equal Opportunity”	⇨	Fundamental American Values

- **Challenge conventional meanings of merit**

Merit is traditionally used to award opportunity and resources to privileged populations. In this context, merit reinforces feelings of entitlement and social hierarchy. Traditionally, merit measures what individuals have done, not what they might do. For example, in college admissions, merit is typically measured on the basis of past academic achievement and performance on standardized tests. This practice leads to an unbalanced distribution of opportunity and a lack of substantive diversity in the academy. Redefining the meaning of merit can assist in expanding opportunity and enhancing diversity.

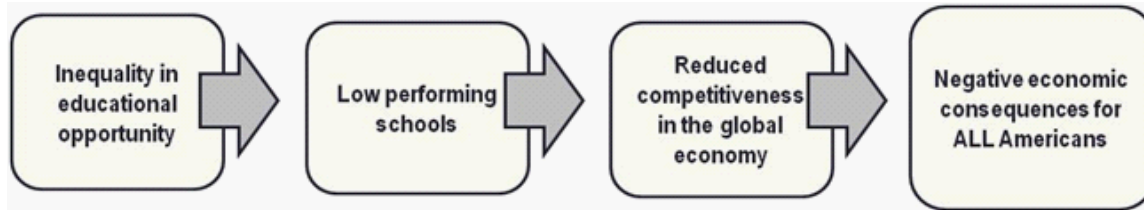
- **Promote “Targeted Universalism”**

Too often, universal policies that are race-neutral do not address the multiple opportunity barriers that impact populations of color. Targeted universalism is a strategy that addresses the needs of marginalized groups while also addressing the needs of the larger population. Targeted universalism recognizes that different groups are situated differently relative to the institutions, opportunities, and resources available in the society. Targeted universalism requires policies that proactively connect all people in a geographic region to jobs, stable housing, and good schools while recognizing the unique spatial “situatedness” of African American, latino, and other marginalized communities.

- **Expose our “linked fate”**

Too often, we envision race as a system that separates groups from each other with durable boundaries around each group. This view supports the notion that inequalities impacting one group have no impact on other groups. Talking about race in a transformative way creates an opportunity to expose and illuminate the “linked fate” that is shared by all Americans—how

inequality for some groups impacts the entire society. For example:



- **Bring everyone to the table**

Too often, issues that touch on race and social justice are perceived as “black issues” or “white issues.” In the U.S., issues about racial equality, opportunity, and social justice are fundamentally issues about Democracy. Everyone has a stake in guaranteeing that Democratic principles are fully implemented in the society. So, everyone is a stakeholder in the transformative dialogue on race.

- **Reject false dichotomies**

Too often, we “polarize” what we believe to be true: honest or dishonest; hard working or lazy; liberal or conservative; Republican or Democrat... These false dichotomies distort our view of the world, obscure a more nuanced assessment of reality (some conservatives have liberal ideas, for example), and create barriers to a transformative dialogue on race.



- **Understand the work that race does**

Although race is an abstract social construct, it continues to be a dominant force in American society. Investigating and understanding the “work” that race does in the society can assist in bringing about a true Democracy where opportunity is not limited by race, ethnicity or class, democratic ideals inform social policy, and all people recognize and embrace the universal responsibility that each person has for the welfare of every other person. The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is deeply engaged in this investigation.

**STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING IN EFFECTIVE  
INTERRACIAL DIALOGUE ABOUT RACE**

What to do/not to do	Why
Don't hold individuals or specific groups accountable for institutional racism and structural racialization	"Finger pointing" stimulates anger, guilt, and resentment and prevents constructive dialogue
Reject false dichotomies	The world is not simply black or white
Don't make assumptions about the racial attitudes or political ideology of others	Focusing on individual attitudes obscures an understanding of the structural nature of racial inequality
Look for commonality across groups	Our common humanity transcends political ideology
Stress the importance of understanding the structural nature of racial inequality	Racialized outcomes don't require racist actors
Consider how racial inequality impacts everyone, not just people of color	People care more about issues when they can see how they are affected
When discussing race-based inequality, focus on desired outcomes (equal opportunity or improvements in education for example) not just on current disparities	Research shows that audiences respond sympathetically to information about racial disparities only if the impacted group is respected by the audience
Avoid "exceptionalism"	There have always been some highly successful people in every group; that fact does not mitigate racial inequality and barriers to opportunity that confront marginalized groups
Recognize and challenge "implicit bias"	Left unchallenged, unconscious negative attitudes about race can become more powerful
Avoid stereotypes	Stereotypes constrain rational thought
Avoid framing arguments around "fairness" exclusively	The concept of fairness has different meaning to different people
Acknowledge that we are not living in a "post racial" world	Despite the fact the we have elected an African American president, race still impacts access to opportunity for all Americans
Use narratives and numbers	Personal narratives can have a greater impact on attitudes than hard data
In group discussions, set guidelines that ensure mutual respect and civility	Even the most contentious conversations can be civil



## **SYSTEMS THINKING – A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION**

As we struggle to make sense of changes to our environment, as health care workers try to anticipate the possible spread of infectious diseases across the globe, or resistance to treatments within the human body, as politicians and policymakers grapple with the impacts of globalization, including the foreclosure crisis and its sweep through the global economy, we are recognizing that the conventional ways of thinking about these problems are inadequate. The behavior of complex systems is not comprehensible by searching for single causes or by trying to reduce problems into their separate components for individual analysis and resolution. This realization has led to a new approach to obtaining knowledge and understanding causality that is becoming increasingly popular in many fields, from organizational management to cybernetics. This new approach is called systems theory. A system is defined as an interdependent group of agents working together as a whole. A system can be small scale – like a circulatory system – or large, as in a system of government.

This section of the Resource Guide sets out five basic principles of systems theory that inform our understanding of contemporary racial conditions. We employ systems theory as a framework with which we can better understand the production of racial inequality today.

By using systems as the unit of analysis we can both visualize and understand the degree to which, and means by which, the organization of agents within a system shapes very important results. Systems thinking is not intended to be a panacea for entrenched problems, but is instead a perspective from which we can better understand how to design solutions and craft effective interventions to challenge these problems. This analysis assists in illuminating the often invisible connections between seemingly disparate “structures” in our society that create and perpetuate racial inequality.

### **The Structure of a System is as Important as its Parts**

All systems have a structure, and those structures matter. It is the organization and relationships between a system’s parts as much as the components themselves that shape outcomes and behaviors. This idea is called emergence. For example, what we would call workplace discrimination is not just a product of the actions of the employer and the employee, it is the relationships between those two people, the history of segregation, slavery, uneven and unequal rights, and a host of other factors that all work together and in different ways in a way that results in discriminatory behavior.

The internal characteristics of the parts of a system may matter less than their placement and influence within the system. In a system, the patterns of behavior that emerge are often very different from the intentions or the behavior of the individual parts. In complex systems, outcomes do not follow from intentions. An individual’s intentions may be thwarted through

the interaction of that individual's decisions with the behavior of others. We must never lose sight of the role of a system as a whole in shaping outcomes, and must always account for systemic effects as well as the effects of the parts of a system. System outcomes are reflective not only of the constituent parts that compose the system, but of the myriad networks of interactions that define the systems structure, and just as importantly, the ways in which those interactions – whether by synergy or otherwise – constrain and influence the path of other parts and the shape of their interactions within the system.

### **Multiple and Mutual Causality**

A systems thinking approach yields new insights and brings into view a very different understanding of causality. The traditional view of causality is linear, with an emphasis on identifying and isolating causes close in time and place for any given effect. A systems approach recognizes that each effect has multiple causes, and each cause has multiple effects. Outcomes are a product of mutual, multiple, and reciprocal interactions within the system.

The linear model of causation is so deeply ingrained that it manifests itself in a series of implicit assumptions about how the world works. Conceptual models such as a food chain or economic development are linear, moving from point A to B to C and so on. Even complexity is commonly understood as reducible to a series of linear relationships, and in time ideas such as a food chain gave way to the food web. Complexity was understood as merely the sum of, and reducible to, a set of linear relationships. Systems thinking represents a paradigm shift in response to the pervasiveness of linear thinking. Thus, the model of the food web, even with the additional insights it provided, was incomplete and gave way to a systems model of an ecosystem. In systems theory, 'cause' and 'effect' are not so easily isolated. An input does not 'cause,' in a proximate or ultimate sense, an outcome in a system; it only modifies existing processes which produce those outcomes.

### **Cumulative Causation**

Multiple causation is the recognition that there are no ultimate causes for any given system outcome. Rather, outcomes are the product of many causes interacting over time. Mutual causation is the recognition that outcomes are often the result of causes acting in concert to produce an effect. Reciprocal causation is a type of mutual causation that models how causes directly interact with each other. The traditional model of causation is not only linear, it is also reductionist. By trying to identify a particular cause for a given outcome, the search narrows to a particular moment in time or place. A systems perspective helps us see how this analysis may be quite limited and misleading. The typical cues to causality, such as proximity of cause to effect in time and space, lead to great difficulty in complex systems.

In systems, causation is multiple, effects are multiple and nonlinear, there are many interconnections, and delayed and distant consequences. When a penthouse tenant prepares a

bath, he adjusts water temperature with the hot and cold spigots. The temperature of the water initially emptying into a bathtub does not reflect the act of turning the hot water spigot until sufficient time has passed for the hot water to travel up from the basement water heater. This sort of delayed effect is common in systems, as inputs work their way through the system pathways.

The insight that inputs follow pathways within a system leads to another insight regarding how causes might accumulate within the system. Cumulative causation is a form of multiple causation in which a cause within one domain may influence other causes within that domain over time, or in other domains, so that the initial causes produce much larger systemic effects. The attempt to isolate causation to a single domain at a single point in time, a hallmark of linear analysis, overlooks this insight. Although racial advantages and disadvantages may be products of various interactions in different domains, from a systems view, they are not summative. In other words, the total level of racial disadvantage is not simply the sum of discrete instances of discrimination suffered. It is often much larger. A systems perspective shows us that discrimination or disadvantage experienced in one domain tends to accumulate across domains and over time because of the relationships and interactions that exist between those domains and events within those domains.

### **Systems Resist Change (Negative Feedback)**

Complex systems, whether biological, institutional, social or otherwise, have feedback loops. In feedback, the output of the system, or part of the system, is a new input into the system. In this way, feedback loops can help the system adapt to changing conditions and thwart change, as frustrated Mayors, superintendents, and CEOs can attest. This does not mean that one cannot fundamentally transform a system, but instead describes the properties of autopoiesis and homeostasis; the self-organizing and correcting nature of complex systems. The specific mechanism by which systems maintains the status quo is negative feedback. This is a self-regulating type of feedback, which works much like the way a thermostat clicks on when the temperature drops too low. Negative feedback (the thermometer) is the engine that drives the system's autopoiesis (the thermostat) to achieve homeostasis (room temperature).

### **Leverage Points (Positive Feedback)**

When a system fails to adapt to new inputs or its feedback mechanisms can be impeded, a system can be transformed. This transformation can be accomplished through a positive feedback loop. Whereas a negative feedback loop is self-correcting, a positive feedback loop is self-reinforcing; the more it works, the more it will continue to work. An example is the working of a savings account. The more money one has in the account, the more interest one will earn, and the more interest one earns will increase the amount of money (and interest) in the account. Because of the possibility of triggering a positive feedback loop, small events can give rise to large outcomes. Smaller problems in one domain can cause larger problems in

another domain because of their interrelationship.

Drastic changes to a system are the result of introducing input at leverage points. Leverage points are the places within a complex system where a small shift can produce a large change throughout the system. The systems thinker, however, recognizes that leverage points are not so intuitive. Systems theory reminds us that the key to finding leverage points is to not look at the problem in isolation, but to look at the entire system; the parameters, positive and negative feedback loops and what drives them, time delays, rules of the system, goals of the system, structure of the system, and the information delays. This holistic view of the intervention process takes us out of the linear causation paradigm and allows us to incorporate the history, dynamics, and structure of a given problem in order to craft more effective and lasting solutions.

Positive feedback loops are important leverage points. Finding and weakening or enforcing positive feedback loops can change or create relationships that change or create system behaviors. This stands in opposition to using negative loops to regulate positive ones. Because effects are multiple, unpredictable, interconnected, and delayed in time, it is important to take care when acting to reduce the harmful effects of one's actions. Just as a problem in one domain may create problems in another domain, solving a problem in one domain may alleviate problems in another domain. This is the promise of a properly aimed transformative intervention. However, a successful intervention will require attentiveness to system feedback loops and the means by which the system will resist change.

### **Conclusion**

Systems thinking does not mean that we cannot act, but that we should perceive the way we act differently. It requires that we are attentive to relationships within the system and to the response from the system to our interventions, including those responses which are immediate and those which will unfold over time. There are a number of immediate and important implications for using systems thinking over a linear, reductionist approach.

Consider our approach to education and schools. We have approached schools largely as a separate institution without clearly looking at the relationship between school policy and housing policy. We have national educational policies such as No Child Left Behind that, among other things, try to rescue children from failing schools, which are overwhelming racially and economically isolated. However, the largest federal affordable housing programs that build housing for these families locate much of this housing in racially and economically distressed and isolated communities.

A systems approach accounts for the relationships between housing, schools and fiscal policies. If an intervention is made, this analysis considers how the system adapts and undermines the intervention to maintain the status quo. The use of Newtonian logic and the focus on intentionality suggests that the courts and policymakers are ambivalent about looking at

interrelationships. Global leaders recognize that the response to the recent financial crisis cannot be met by one nation alone. The crisis is global, with systemic causes and effects. One nation's efforts would prove insufficient to the task of addressing the crisis. Systems thinking can greatly inform our understanding of structures as well as some recent developments in cognitive science. But systems are not simply abstract notions. We not only live within them, we are part of them. As part of the system, it turns out that we cannot change systems without changing ourselves.

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Framing

**Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-639.**

(<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611?cookieSet=1>)

"The recent proliferation of scholarship on collective action frames and framing processes in relation to social movements indicates that framing processes have come to be regarded, alongside resource mobilization and political opportunity processes, as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements. This review examines the analytic utility of the framing literature for understanding social movement dynamics. We first review how collective action frames have been conceptualized, including their characteristic and variable features. We then examine the literature related to framing dynamics and processes. Next we review the literature regarding various contextual factors that constrain and facilitate framing processes. We conclude with an elaboration of the consequences of framing processes for other movement processes and outcomes. We seek throughout to provide clarification of the linkages between framing concepts/processes and other conceptual and theoretical formulations relevant to social movements, such as schemas and ideology." (Abstract by authors)

**Brewer, Paul R. "Value Words and Lizard Brains: Do Citizens Deliberate about Appeals to Their Core Values?" *Political Psychology* 22 (2001): 45-64.**

(<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/0162-895X.00225?cookieSet=1>)

"Political elites often present citizens with frames that define issues in terms of core values. This study tests two competing accounts of how citizens might process such frames. According to the 'passive receiver' thesis, citizens process elite frames automatically, without engaging in critical thought. In contrast, the 'thoughtful receiver' thesis holds that the impact of frames may depend on how favorably or unfavorably citizens respond to them. An experiment in value framing produced evidence more consistent with the thoughtful receiver thesis: The message that welfare reform is 'tough love' influenced opinion only among those it did not anger, whereas the message that welfare reform is 'cruel and inhumane' produced an effect only among those who judged it to be strong. More generally, these findings suggest that active processing of frames may limit the power of elite framing." (Abstract by author)

**Druckman, James N. "The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence." *Political Behavior* 23 (2001): 225-256.**

"Social scientists have documented framing effects in a wide range of contexts, including surveys, experiments, and actual political campaigns. Many view work on framing effects as evidence of citizen incompetence—that is, evidence that citizens base their preferences on arbitrary information and/or are subject to extensive elite manipulation. Yet, we continue to lack a consensus on what a framing effect is as well as an understanding of how and when framing effects occur. In this article, I examine (1) the different ways that scholars have employed the concepts of framing and framing effects, (2) how framing effects may violate some basic criteria of citizen competence, and (3) what we know about how and when framing effects work. I conclude that while the evidence to date suggests some isolated cases of incompetence, the more general message is that citizens use frames in a competent and well-reasoned manner." (Abstract by author)

**Gamliel, Eyal. "To Accept or Reject: The Effect of Framing on Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 37 (2007): 683-702.**

"Two experiments examined the effect of framing on attitudes toward an affirmative action program of preferential treatment. Participants' attitudes were consistently more favorable toward the affirmative-action program presented in a positive frame—preferring a target group's applicant over a majority group's applicant—than when the very same program was presented in a negative frame—rejecting the majority group's applicant in favor of the target group's applicant. Similar effects were evident for 3 target groups in the context of higher education selection and personnel selection. Two theoretical explanations for the effect of framing on attitudes toward affirmative-action programs are suggested. The implications of this effect are discussed, and the challenges facing future research of this phenomenon are outlined." (Abstract by author)

**Goffman, Erving. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.**

Goffman's classic text attempts to "isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject." (p.11)

**Haley, Hillary and Jim Sidanius. "The Positive and Negative Framing of Affirmative Action: A Group Dominance Perspective." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 32 (2006): 656-668.**

(<http://psp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/32/5/656>)

"Using a sample of 328 white, latino, and black Los Angeles County adults, the authors examined the tendency to employ various affirmative action "frames" (e.g., affirmative action as a 'tie-breaking' device or as a quota-based policy). All three groups agreed about which frames cast affirmative action in a positive light and which cast it in a negative light. Although minorities had a tendency to frame affirmative action in terms that most people find morally acceptable, whites had a tendency to frame affirmative action in terms most people find unacceptable. In addition, compared to minorities, whites were less supportive of affirmative action regardless of how it was framed. LISREL modeling also was employed to test two competing models regarding predictors of the tendency to use frames that one personally finds to be relatively negative versus positive. Consistent with the expectations of social dominance theory and a motivated cognition perspective, the authors found that social dominance orientation (SDO) had significant net direct and indirect effects on one's framing of affirmative action." (Abstract by authors)

**Harvey Wingfield, Adia, and Joe Feagin. *Yes We Can?: White Racial Framing and the 2008 Presidential Campaign*. New York: Routledge, 2010.**

"This book offers one of the first sociological analyses of Barack Obama's historic 2008 campaign for the presidency of the United States. Elaborating on the concept of the white racial frame, Harvey Wingfield and Feagin assess the ways racial framing was deployed by principal characters in the 2008 election. This book counters many common sense assumptions about race, politics, and society, particularly the idea that Obama's election ushered in a post-racial era. Readers will find this book uniquely valuable because it relies on sound sociological analysis to assess numerous events and aspects of this historic campaign." (Publisher's summary)

**Nelson, Thomas E. and Zoe M. Oxley. "Issue Framing Effects on Belief Importance and Opinion." *The Journal of Politics* 61 (1999): 1040-1067.**

"Students of public opinion have increasingly recognized issue framing as an important influence on political attitudes, but the precise means by which frames affect attitudes is not well understood. We argue that one distinctive way in which frames affect attitudes is by influencing the importance individuals attach to issue-relevant beliefs. We contrast this mechanism with the more familiar means of persuasion via change in belief content. Data come from two laboratory experiments. In each, a controversial issue was framed in one of two ways. We measured framing's influence on belief content, belief importance, and issue opinion.



In both experiments, framing significantly affected issue opinion. Causal analysis shows that framing independently affected belief content and belief importance, and that each contributed to issue opinion.” (Abstract by authors.)

**Nelson, Thomas E., Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson. “Towards a Psychology of Framing Effects.” *Political Behavior* 19 (1997): 221-246.**

“Framing is the process by which a communication source constructs and defines a social or political issue for its audience. While many observers of political communication and the mass media have discussed framing, few have explicitly described how framing affects public opinion. In this paper we offer a theory of framing effects, with a specific focus on the psychological mechanisms by which framing influences political attitudes. We discuss important conceptual differences between framing and traditional theories of persuasion that focus on belief change. We outline a set of hypotheses about the interaction between framing and audience sophistication, and test these in an experiment. The results support our argument that framing is not merely persuasion, as it is traditionally conceived. We close by reflecting on the various routes by which political communications can influence attitudes.” (Abstract by authors.)

**“Thinking Change: Race, Framing and the Public Conversation on Diversity – What Social Science Tells Advocates About Winning Support for Racial Justice Policies.” Prepared by the Center for Social Inclusion for the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University. August 2005.**

(<http://www.diversityadvancementproject.org/media/ThinkingChange.pdf>)

This report examines the debate around pro-diversity campaign strategy, scrutinizes the tools we have typically used to advance these strategies and analyzes the pertinent social science research that could support and advance these strategies. The findings of this investigation include the following:

- The concept of framing, or the ways that ideas are shaped and presented to the public, is very powerful; if data and research do not fit the “frame,” people tend to reject the data and the research, not the frame.
- Group identity shapes racial attitudes and behavior. Facts and self-interest are not as important as values and identity in influencing behavior.
- Advocates may need to develop proactive strategies, like ballot initiatives, to contest anti-diversity initiatives.

**White, Ismail K. "When Race Matters and When It Doesn't: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues." *American Political Science Review* 101 (2007): 339-354.**

(<http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/APSRMay07White.pdf>)

"Building on previous research on the effects of racial priming on the opinions of White Americans, this paper engages the question of how exposure to racial cues in political messages shapes the opinions of African Americans. I argue that explanations of racial priming that focus exclusively on White Americans are insufficient to explain how racial cues influence the opinions of Black Americans, as they fail to account for the activation of in-group attitudes and mis-specify the role of explicit racial cues. In two separate laboratory experiments, I test the effects of explicitly racial, implicitly racial, and nonracial verbal cues on both black and White Americans' assessments of an ostensibly nonracial issue. The results point to important racial differences in the effectiveness of explicit and implicit racial verbal cues in activating racial thinking about an issue. Only frames that provide oblique references to race successfully activated racial out-group resentment for whites. Among blacks, explicit references to race most reliably elicited racial thinking by activating racial in-group identification, whereas the effect of implicit cues was moderated by the activation of negative representations of the in-group. These findings not only demonstrate that racial attitude activation works differently for African Americans than for whites but also challenge conventional wisdom that African Americans see all political issues through a racial lens." (Abstract by author)

**Wilson, William Julius. "Framing Race and Poverty." *Contexts* 8(2009): 84.**

"One thing I know is that it's extremely important to discuss how race and poverty are framed in public policy discussions. How we situate social issues in the larger context of society says a lot about our commitment to change." (Author's introductory paragraph)

**Winter, Nicholas J. G. *Dangerous Frames: How Ideas about Race and Gender Shape Public Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.**

"In addition to their obvious roles in American politics, race and gender also work in hidden ways to profoundly influence the way we think—and vote—about a vast array of issues that don't seem related to either category. As Nicholas Winter reveals in *Dangerous Frames*, politicians and leaders often frame these seemingly unrelated issues in ways that prime audiences to respond not to the policy at hand but instead to the way its presentation resonates with their deeply held beliefs about race and gender. Winter shows, for example, how official rhetoric about welfare and Social Security has tapped into white Americans' racial biases to shape their opinions on both issues for the past two decades. Similarly, the way politicians presented health care reform in the 1990s divided Americans along the lines of their attitudes toward gender. Combining cognitive and political psychology with innovative empirical research, *Dangerous*

Frames ultimately illuminates the emotional underpinnings of American politics.” (Publisher’s summary)

### **Framing In The Media**

**Abraham, Linus and Osei Appiah. “Framing News Stories: The Role of Visual Imagery in Priming Racial Stereotypes.” *Howard Journal of Communications* 17 (2006): 183-203.**

“Two thematic news reports on the three-strikes law and school vouchers were differentially illustrated with photographs. Online news stories were either illustrated with no images, with 2 photographs of blacks, with 2 photographs of whites, or with 2 photographs, 1 of a black and the other of a white person (mixed condition). In none of the four conditions did the text make any reference to the ethnic/racial identity of the subjects in the photographs juxtaposed with the text. White respondents assessed the extent to which each ethnic/racial group was affected by the social problem or issue discussed in the news stories. Differential pictorial illustration of ethnic groups fostered differentiation association of ethnic groups with the social problem. Implicit racial images of blacks helped prime racial stereotypes about blacks and led to stronger association of blacks with social problems addressed in the stories. The concept of implicit visual propositioning is discussed as a discursive form through which racial stereotypes of blacks are subtly activated and maintained in society.” (Abstract by authors)

**Caliendo, Stephen M. and Charlton D. McIlwain. “Minority Candidates, Media Framing, and Racial Cues in the 2004 Election.” *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 11 (2006): 45-69.**

(<http://hij.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/11/4/45>)

“Rooted in political communication models of framing and priming and a rather unique theory of appeals to racial authenticity, the authors examine minority candidates in both majority-minority and majority-white districts during the 2004 election cycle. They explore and analyze potential framing and priming effects based on variations of candidates’ media coverage in a number of campaign scenarios. Results suggest that racial references are commonplace in biracial election contests (and are more likely to occur there than in all-white contests). Furthermore, newspaper coverage of biracial and all-black elections is more likely to contain a racial frame than stories about all-white races. The authors conclude with a discussion of the normative implications of these findings, as well as suggestions for further examination and testing.” (Abstract by authors)

**Clawson, Rosalee A., Harry C. “Neil” Strine IV, and Eric N. Waltenburg. “Framing Supreme Court Decisions: The Mainstream versus the Black Press.” *Journal of Black Studies* 33 (2003): 784-800.**

“The Supreme Court regularly makes decisions with profound policy implications, but it largely leaves it to others to shape public opinion regarding those policies. The media play an important role in framing the Court’s decisions, yet few studies have examined media coverage of the Court. It is quite possible that not all media frame the Court’s decisions in the same way. We analyze the black and mainstream presses’ coverage of the Court’s 1995 *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Federico Pena, Secretary of Transportation, et al.* decision on affirmative action and find systematic differences between the two types of newspapers.” (Abstract by authors)

**Deo, Meera E., Jenny J. Lee, Christina B. Chin, Noriko Milman, and Nancy Wang Yuen. “Missing In Action: ‘Framing’ Race on Prime-Time Television.” *Social Justice* 35(2008): 145-162.**

“Racism in the Post-Civil Rights United States is reproduced through subtle and naturalized ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Feagin, 2000; Omi and Winant, 1994). Consequently, efforts to document and combat racism need to match this shift into the ideological realm. This study analyzes the racial ideologies surrounding Asian/Pacific Islander Americans (APIAs) in prime-time television. By examining one of the most widely consumed media of popular culture, this article empirically demonstrates how APIAs continue to be marginalized and stereotyped in prime-time television through particular frames. It also identifies specific instances in which this medium pushes the racial envelope, challenging existing stereotypes through counter-ideologies.” (Abstract by authors)

**Domke, David. “Racial Cues and Political Ideology: An Examination of Associative Priming.” *Communication Research* 28 (2001): 772-801.**

“This research theorizes that the presence or absence in political conversation of racial cues—that is, references by elites and news media to images commonly understood as tied to particular racial or ethnic groups—may substantially influence whether citizens’ racial cognitions contribute to their political judgments. In particular, such symbolic cues in discourse may activate an important linkage between an individual’s racial perceptions and political ideology, which some scholars suggest have become closely intertwined in the U.S. political environment. With this in mind, an experiment was conducted in which the news discourse about crime was systematically altered—as including racial cues or not—within controlled political information environments to examine how individuals process, interpret, and use issue information in forming political judgments. The findings suggest that racial cues not only trigger the association between racial perceptions and political ideology but in turn may prompt individuals to become more ideologically distinct in their political evaluations.” (Abstract by author.)

**Gandy Jr., Oscar H., Katharina Kopp, Tanya Hands, Karen Frazer, and David Phillips. "Race and Risk: Factors Affecting the Framing of Stories of Inequality, Discrimination, and Just Plain Bad Luck." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 61 (1997): 158-182.**

The authors consider how the media shapes perceptions that people have of the presence and distribution of hardships and inequalities. They argue that framing affects both how readers perceive public policies and how readers understand the risks that they and other groups face. In this article, the authors look at the type of framing used by the press when comparing risks that blacks and whites confront. For example, when the media uses direct comparisons between blacks and whites to discuss inequalities, details such as which group is addressed first in the comparison can alter how the story is perceived. The authors gathered and coded 1,245 newspaper articles containing comparisons (i.e., more likely/less likely; gains/loses) between blacks and whites, with most stories published from 1989-1993. In analyzing headlines and lead paragraphs, they find that blacks appear first in comparisons of risk experiences more frequently; conversely, stories that mention whites first are considerably more likely to address white gains. Overall, the authors assert that the story's subject influences how the story is framed. Structural influences, such as the potential readership, community size, or the racial composition of the media employees, are not strong predictors of how stories are framed.

**Haider-Markel, Donald P., William Delehanty, and Matthew Beverlin. "Media Framing and Racial Attitudes in the Aftermath of Katrina." *Policy Studies Journal* 35(2007): 587-605.**

"In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many African Americans held fairly negative attitudes about effective and speedy government response to the storm. We employ framing theory to examine the role of race in shaping attitudes following Katrina. We hypothesize that a dominant media frame of black storm victims led African Americans to develop a stronger empathy with storm victims, and thus, more negative views about government response. We test this hypothesis using a unique national poll of adults conducted in September 2005 that over sampled African Americans. Our results support the hypothesis that race strongly shaped attitudes following the storm." (Abstract by authors)

**Kellstedt, Paul M. "Media Framing and the Dynamics of Racial Policy Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2000): 245-260.**

"Why are there liberal and conservative eras in Americans' policy preferences about race? In answering this question, I first develop a time-series measure of aggregate racial policy preferences by compiling multiple indicators of racial policy preferences into a single composite measure. Next, I propose a new model in which shifts in the tenor of media coverage of race—focusing on the core values of egalitarianism and individualism at different times—leads the public to prefer more or less active government policies on race. I test the model using data

from Newsweek magazine and include appropriate controls for potentially confounding factors, such as generational replacement, policy mood, feedback from the policy process, and economic sentiment.” (Abstract by author.)

**Morrison, Toni. “On the Backs of Blacks.” *Time* 2 Dec. 1993: 57.**

(<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,979736,00.html>)

In this article, Morrison exposes what she calls “race talk,” the “explicit insertion into everyday life of racial signs and symbols that have no meaning other than pressing African Americans to the lowest level of racial hierarchy.” She suggests that popular culture—film, theatre, advertising, television, the press—is heavily engaged in race talk. Regarding immigration, she suggests that the struggles of new immigrants to America are routinely framed as a struggle between the recently arrived population and African Americans. As African Americans gain more opportunity and occupy more group space no longer formed along racial lines, pressure builds to figure out what white interests really are.

**Richardson, John D. “Switching Social Identities: The Influence of Editorial Framing on Reader Attitudes Towards Affirmative Action and African Americans.” *Communication Research* 32 (2005): 503-528.**

“An experiment investigated the impact of editorial framing on readers’ political cognitions and affect toward a different racial group. Participants read mock newspaper editorials endorsing *Grutter v. Bollinger*, a U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding affirmative action in higher education. The editorials were systematically manipulated to present different frames in four randomly assigned versions: remedial action, diversity, combined (both frames), and control (neither frame). Frame inductions did not significantly influence support for affirmative action. However, exposure to editorials presenting the diversity frame moderated the relation between whites’ pre-tested interracial attitudes (modern racism, white guilt, and belief in white privilege) and support for affirmative action. Editorials presenting the diversity frame also induced white participants to score higher on a measure of pro-black affect. Overall, the results suggest that frames can activate distinct social identities within the minds of readers, priming their applicability to the task at hand.” (Abstract by author.)

**Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. “Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes during Campaigns.” *American Political Science Review* 96 (2002): 75-90.**

“Recent evidence suggests that elites can capitalize on preexisting linkages between issues and social groups to alter the criteria citizens use to make political decisions. In particular, studies have shown that subtle racial cues in campaign communications may activate racial attitudes, thereby altering the foundations of mass political decision making. However, the

mechanism by which such attitudes are activated has not been empirically demonstrated, and the range of implicit cues powerful enough to produce this effect is still unknown. In an experiment, we tested whether subtle racial cues embedded in political advertisements prime racial attitudes as predictors of candidate preference by making them more accessible in memory. Results show that a wide range of implicit race cues can prime racial attitudes and that cognitive accessibility mediates the effect. Furthermore, counter-stereotypic cues especially those implying blacks are deserving of government resources-dampen racial priming, suggesting that the meaning drawn from the visual/narrative pairing in an advertisement, and not simply the presence of black images, triggers the effect.” (Abstract by authors)

### **Dialogue on Race**

**Augoustinos, Martha and Danielle Every. “The Language of ‘Race’ and Prejudice: A Discourse of Denial, Reason, and Liberal-Practical Politics.” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 26(2007): 123-141.**

“During the past 20 years, there has been a burgeoning literature on racial discourse in Western liberal democracies that has been informed by several disciplines. This literature has analyzed linguistic and discursive patterns of everyday talk and formal institutional talk that can be found in parliamentary debates, political speeches, and the media. One of the most pervasive features of contemporary race discourse is the denial of prejudice. Increasing social taboos against openly expressing racist sentiments has led to the development of discursive strategies that present negative views of out-groups as reasonable and justified while at the same time protecting the speaker from charges of racism and prejudice. This research has demonstrated the flexible and ambivalent nature of contemporary race discourse. The present article reviews these discursive patterns or ways of talking about the other and emphasizes the significant contribution that this work has made to research on language and discrimination.” (Abstract by authors)

**Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. “The Linguistics of Color Blind Racism: How to Talk Nasty about Blacks without Sounding ‘Racist.’” *Critical Sociology* 28 (2002): 41-64.**

([http://www.nd.edu/~rmcveigh/reap/Bonilla\\_linguistics.pdf](http://www.nd.edu/~rmcveigh/reap/Bonilla_linguistics.pdf))

“In this paper I argue that color blind racism, the central racial ideology of the post civil rights era, has a peculiar style characterized by slipperiness, apparent nonracialism, and ambivalence. This style fits quite well the normative climate of the country as well as the central frames of color blind racism. I document in the paper five stylistic components of this ideology, namely, (1) whites’ avoidance of direct racial language, (2) the central rhetorical strategies or ‘semantic moves’ used by whites to safely express their racial views, (3) the role of projection, (4) the role of diminutives, and (5) how incursions into forbidden issues produce almost total incoherence among many whites. I conclude the paper with a discussion on how this style enhances the

ideological menace of color blind racism.” (Abstract by author.)

**Condor, Susan, Lia Figgou, Jackie Abell, Stephen Gibson, and Clifford Stevenson.** “‘They’re not racist...’ Prejudice denial, mitigation and suppression in dialogue.” **British Journal of Social Psychology 45 (2006): 441-462.**

“Social scientific work on the suppression, mitigation or denial of prejudiced attitudes has tended to focus on the strategic self-presentation and self-monitoring undertaken by individual social actors on their own behalf. In this paper, we argue that existing perspectives might usefully be extended to incorporate three additional considerations. First, that social actors may, on some occasions, act to defend not only themselves, but also others from charges of prejudice. Second, that over the course of any social encounter, interactants may take joint responsibility for policing conversation and for correcting and suppressing the articulation of prejudiced talk. Third, that a focus on the dialogic character of conversation affords an appreciation of the ways in which the status of any particular utterance, action or event as ‘racist’ or ‘prejudiced’ may constitute a social accomplishment. Finally, we note the logical corollary of these observations – that in everyday life, the occurrence of ‘racist discourse’ is likely to represent a collaborative accomplishment, the responsibility for which is shared jointly between the person of the speaker and those other co-present individuals who on occasion, reinforce or simply fail to suppress it.” (Abstract by authors)

**Dion, Angela.** **Let’s Talk About Race.** White Plains, MD: Dion Communications, LLC, 2009.

This workbook is designed to facilitate purposeful group conversations about race. The text includes a discussion guide with “ice breakers,” readings, discussion questions, and homework. It also addresses all logistical aspects of these targeted discussions, including conversational ground rules, guidance on how to handle conflicts, and measures for evaluating progress.

**Eliasoph, Nina.** “‘Everyday Racism’ in a Culture of Political Avoidance: Civil Society, Speech, and Taboo.” **Social Problems 46 (1999): 479-502.**

“This ethnographic study brings together theories of civil society and race scholarship, to ask how people talk about race in conversations that are not exclusively devoted to talking about race. In theory, civic participation in voluntary associations expands citizens’ horizons; but in practice, thoughtful conversation about race can be impossible in public. In showing this process, the two U.S. civic groups studied here become springboards for refining theories of civic culture and ideology. Recent race scholarship examines racial discourse as a language that structures thought; few have asked how the very act of speaking about race can mean something in itself. The whites in these two groups were ‘doing things with words’ together, using references to race as moves in games. Avoidance of public speech was not just a result of participants’ way of ‘thinking through race,’ not primarily the symptom of a bond of shared,



secret racism. It was a bond of interactional norms, that revealed members' understanding of the very meaning of public speech itself, showing what they assumed the nature of the civic forum itself was. Paradoxically, in the two voluntary associations, members who could voice anti-racist sentiments in private, 'backstage' settings could not do so in more public, 'frontstage' settings. The very act of speaking carried meaning itself; theorizing this meaning-making can help us understand civic life and the reproduction of racism in it." (Abstract by author.)

**Heinze, Peter. "Let's Talk About Race, Baby: How a White Professor Teaches White Students about White Privilege and Racism." *Multicultural Education* 16(2008): 2-11.**

"There are a variety of methods by which the themes of white privilege and racism can be presented to white students. By using the concept of racial identity a continuum of racism can be considered. Furthermore, addressing white privilege and racism in the context of a multicultural psychology course allows white students to have a greater appreciation for the history and subjective experience of people of color in the United States, as this history has been irrevocably influenced by white culture. Using a continuum of racism as a pedagogical tool allows for the introduction of psychoanalytic group relations theory, helping students to think more critically about the categories of "racist" and "non-racist." This article presents the teaching methods the author employs, with the hope that these are additional tools which can be utilized in the field of white privilege and anti-racism pedagogy." (Abstract by author)

**Hutchinson, Earl Ofari. "Candidates Should Talk About Race." *Pacific News Service* 13 Oct. 2004.**

([http://news.pacificnews.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=063e0bd4e5a9b2fe44787d0858684301](http://news.pacificnews.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=063e0bd4e5a9b2fe44787d0858684301))

Hutchinson notes that the presidential campaign between Bush and Kerry was light on discussions about race. He suggests two reasons: first, the tremendous expansion of the black middle class has fueled the myth that "racial problems are largely part of America's distant and by-gone past, and except for isolated pockets of racial discord, the problems have long since been resolved through legislation and the enactment of social programs," and secondly, that candidates don't want to be perceived as "pandering" to minority interests by talking openly about racial problems. One danger here is that when presidential candidates shunt race to the back burner of the presidential debates, they invariably shunt them to the backburner of their legislative agendas.

**Kelley, Raina with Joshua Alston. "Let's Talk About Race." *Newsweek* 4 Dec. 2006: 42-43.**

(<http://www.newsweek.com/id/43970>)

Following Michael Richards' racist tirade at the Laugh Factory in November 2006, the author

notes her lack of surprise at his outburst. She speculates that our ability to discuss race is impeded by both our lack of a shared vocabulary and our preference to utilize politically-correct terminology rather than address personal biases. Kelley asserts that speaking in a politically-correct fashion has not eliminated racism but instead has “given prejudice a place to hide.”

**Kirwan Institute UPdate Fall 2007/Winter 2008: 1-16.**

(<http://kirwan.gripservers.com/publicationspresentations/biannual-newsletter.php>)

This issue of *UPdate* continues the Kirwan Institute’s transformative dialogue on race. In his executive notes, Director John Powell discusses why it is difficult to talk about race and how the frames and textures of racial dialogue resonate with audiences. Andrew Grant-Thomas, Deputy Director, discusses the recent public discourse between Bill Cosby and Alvin Poussaint regarding the underlying social forces affecting black family formation. This issue also introduces the Kirwan Institute’s new journal, *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* and includes information about the national conference, “Towards a Transformative Agenda around Race,” (November 29 to December 3, 2007) sponsored by the Kirwan Institute and The Ohio State University Office of Minority Affairs.

**Mazzocco, Philip. “The Dangers of Not Speaking About Race: A Summary of Research Affirming the Merits of a Color-Conscious Approach to Racial Communication and Equity.” Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University, May 2006.**

([http://www.eraseracismny.org/html/pdf/powell\\_event\\_handouts/The\\_Dangers\\_of\\_Not\\_Talking\\_About\\_Race\\_May\\_20061.swf](http://www.eraseracismny.org/html/pdf/powell_event_handouts/The_Dangers_of_Not_Talking_About_Race_May_20061.swf))

“It is tempting to take a color-blind approach that reduces attention to race and instead refers to other categories, such as class. In fact, until recently, the social scientific literature appeared to support this course of action. However, recent advances within the fields of social psychology and sociology have demonstrated that the color-blind approach to race may be impractical, at best, and at worst harmful to the quest for racial equality and interracial good will. In contrast, a color-conscious approach is not only feasible, but has been proven to be an effective means of targeting race-related attitudes. Color-conscious approaches show promise in fostering an appreciation of another group’s positive societal contributions, as well as structural constraints and advantages.” (Quoted from author’s concluding paragraph)

**McKinney, Carolyn. “Caught Between the ‘Old’ and the ‘New’?: Talking About ‘Race’ in a Post-Apartheid University Classroom.” *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* 10(2007): 215-231.**

“This paper explores difficulties in talking about ‘race’ and difference in a post-apartheid university classroom. The data come from classroom-based research conducted in a first-year

undergraduate English Studies course at a historically 'white' and Afrikaans university in South Africa. Drawing on poststructuralist ideas on discourse and the self, discourse and society, I analyze moments from classroom discourse and argue that the ways in which the students talk and think about 'race' and culture echo both resonances of the past as well as discourses in current circulation. I draw on the Bakhtinian notion of heteroglossia in order to understand why 'race' is simultaneously a taboo topic and an important self-identifier (the product of both apartheid discourses of discrimination and post-apartheid discourses of equity and redress) and argue for the need to deconstruct essentialist notions of 'race' and culture in the post-apartheid classroom." (Abstract by author)

**Miller, Joshua and Susan Donner. "More Than Just talk: The Use of Racial Dialogues to Combat Racism." *Social Work with Groups* 23 (2000): 31-53.**

"This article describes the use of structured, public conversations about race and racism, known as racial dialogues, as a means of responding to racism. The importance of understanding racial identity development and the dynamics of intergroup conflict when conducting racial dialogues is considered. Different models of racial dialogues are reviewed. The authors sponsored a racial dialogue at a school of social work that was tape-recorded and transcribed. Participants completed questionnaires. An analysis of the dialogue is presented and recommendations about the future use of racial dialogues are offered." (Abstract by authors.)

**Pollock, Mica. *Colormute: Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.**

"This book considers in unprecedented detail one of the most confounding questions in American racial practice: when to speak about people in racial terms. Viewing race talk through the lens of a California high school and district, *Colormute* draws on three years of ethnographic research on everyday race labeling in education. Based on the author's experiences as a teacher as well as an anthropologist, it discusses the role race plays in everyday and policy talk about such familiar topics as discipline, achievement, curriculum reform, and educational inequality. Pollock illustrates the wide variations in the way speakers use race labels. Sometimes people use them without thinking twice; at other moments they avoid them at all costs or use them only in the description of particular situations. While a major concern of everyday race talk in schools is that racial descriptions will be inaccurate or inappropriate, Pollock demonstrates that anxiously suppressing race words (being what she terms 'colormute') can also cause educators to reproduce the very racial inequities they abhor. The book assists readers in cultivating a greater understanding of the pitfalls and possibilities of everyday race talk and clarifies previously murky discussions of 'colorblindness.' By bridging the gap between theory and practice, *Colormute* will be enormously helpful in fostering ongoing conversations about dismantling racial inequality in America." (Publisher's summary)

**Roberts, Rosemarie A., Lee A. Bell, and Brett Murphy.** “Flipping the Script: Analyzing Youth Talk about Race and Racism.” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 39(2008): 334-354.

“In this article, we examine how youth in one urban high school talked about race and racism while participating in a curriculum that introduced the analytic lens of story types (stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and counterstories) to look at race and racism and engage these issues through storytelling and the arts. We draw on data from observations and focus group interviews to examine student-initiated themes and conversation as the curriculum unfolded. In particular, we look at the use of language, particularly racialized jokes and name calling, to consider how such talk functions to create social and rhetorical spaces where youth of color can express and critically analyze the particularities of their lived experiences of race and racism in a contemporary ‘color-blind’ context that asserts race no longer matters.” (Abstract by authors)

**Tatum, Beverly Daniel.** *Can We Talk About Race?: And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2007.

“Ten years ago, Tatum’s book asked the question, “*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*” Her latest book follows up with a broader question about the nation’s readiness to talk honestly about the forces that continue to make race such a thorny issue. In separate essays, Tatum probes the impact of continued segregation in public schools—mostly the result of segregated neighborhoods—on classroom achievement; the difficulty of developing and sustaining interracial relationships in a society that practices silence on race; and the longer-term implications of continued segregation on a changing democracy with a growing nonwhite population. Tatum blends policy analysis and personal recollections as an educator and self-described ‘integration baby,’ born just after the momentous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, into a cogent look at the forces that continue to separate the races and the urgent need to begin an honest dialogue. Tatum’s analysis is a probing and ambitious start of a series of books to prod national discussion on issues of race, education, and democracy.” (Review by Vanessa Bush of *Booklist*, April 1, 2007; noted on [www.beacon.org](http://www.beacon.org))

### **Thinking About Race**

**Giroux, Henry A. and Susan Searls.** “Race Talk and ‘The Bell Curve’ Debate: The Crisis of Democratic Vision.” *Cultural Critique* 34 (1996): 5-26.

These authors argue that scientific research on supposed race difference in human intelligence has contributed to a “new racism.” This new ideology “refuses to acknowledge that the issue of race is at the heart of its policy making (as in welfare cutbacks, etc.) on the one hand, and on the

other hand offers rationales for policy changes that claim to be color blind (as in the call to end affirmative action and racial gerrymandering).” Politicians like Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole exemplify this new racism that works through the power of judicial and legislative processes and uses public intellectuals who “make racism respectable in their talk radio programs and through the wide circulation of magazines, national newspapers, television, and other forms of media.”

**Huber, Gregory A. and John S. Lapinski. “The Race Card Revisited: Assessing Racial Priming in Policy Contests.” *The American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2006): 421-440.**

(<http://research.yale.edu/huber/papers/RaceCardRevisited.pdf>)

“In *The Race Card* (2001), Mendelberg finds support for her theory that implicit racial appeals, but not explicit ones, prime racial resentment in opinion formation. She argues that citizens reject explicit appeals, rendering them ineffective, because they violate widespread egalitarian norms. Mendelberg’s innovative research, however, suffers from several limitations. We remedy these deficiencies using two randomized experiments with over 6,300 respondents. We confirm that individuals do tend to reject explicit appeals outright, but find that implicit appeals are no more effective than explicit ones in priming racial resentment in opinion formation. In accounting for the differences between previous research and our own, we show that education moderates both the accessibility of racial predispositions and message acceptance. This suggests that the necessary assumptions of Mendelberg’s theory hold only for different and exclusive subsets of the general population.” (Abstract by authors.)

**Khan, Saera R. and Alan J. Lambert. “Perceptions of Rational Discrimination: When Do People Attempt to Justify Race-Based Prejudice?” *Basic & Applied Social Psychology* 23 (2001): 42-53.**

“This research investigated the role of situational context and personality factors in moderating perceptions of race-based decisions made by others. white participants were presented with a short story that described a taxi driver who refuses to pick up a black man. The primary dependent variable concerned the perceived rationality of the taxi driver’s decision. Analyses of these perceptions revealed 2 main findings, both of which involved need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty, & Morris, 1983). First, need for cognition moderated the effects of participants’ attitudes toward blacks, such that anti-black participants judged the taxi driver’s decision as more rational than did pro-black participants, but this was only true when participants also scored high in need for cognition. Second, participants who were experimentally induced to think about the task in an ‘analytical’ fashion also judged the taxi driver as relatively rational, but this again was only true for participants who scored high in need for cognition. The implications of these results for a controversial set of arguments regarding rational discrimination by the social critic Dinesh D’Souza (1995) are discussed.” (Abstract by authors)

**Lewis, Amanda E. "There is No 'Race' in the Schoolyard: Color-Blind Ideology in an (Almost) All-White School." *American Educational Research Journal* 38 (2001): 781-811.**

"This article examines the racial messages and lessons students get from parents and teachers in one suburban school community. I examine the explicit and 'hidden' curriculum of race offered in the school as well as exploring community members' racial discourse, understandings, and behaviors. During a yearlong ethnographic study, all community members consistently denied the local salience of race. Yet, this explicit color-blind 'race talk' masked an underlying reality of racialized practices and color conscious understandings-practices and understandings that not only had direct impact on students of color at the school, but also have implications for race relations more broadly. I argue that this apparent paradox is related to the operation of new racial ideologies becoming dominant in the United States today, and conclude with suggestions for how this racial logic might be challenged." (Abstract by author)

**Liggett, Tonda. "Frames of Reference: The Impact of Race on Teaching Strategy and Classroom Discussion." *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education* 40(2008): 386-402.**

"In this article, I examine the role of teacher racial identity on teaching strategy and the treatment of race in classroom discussions. I explicate how the pattern of minimizing the negative racial comments made to English language learners played out in participants' teaching and how it is reflective of socially constructed notions of race and racial discourse. The treatment of racial issues, in this sense, can be seen as a microcosm of larger social, historical, and political factors that shape individuals' thinking about equity and diversity. I argue that by analyzing these underlying factors in teacher education courses, the unconscious and often subtle ways that stereotypes based on race, culture, or English language proficiency, can be demystified and disrupted." (Abstract by author)

**Mendelberg, Tali. *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.**

"In the age of equality, politicians cannot prime race with impunity due to a norm of racial equality that prohibits racist speech. Yet incentives to appeal to white voters remain strong. As a result, politicians often resort to more subtle uses of race to win elections. Mendelberg documents the development of this implicit communication across time and measures its impact on society. Drawing on a wide variety of research--including simulated television news experiments, national surveys, a comprehensive content analysis of campaign coverage, and historical inquiry--she analyzes the causes, dynamics, and consequences of racially loaded political communication. She also identifies similarities and differences among communication about race, gender, and sexual orientation in the United States and between communication about race in the United States and ethnicity in Europe, thereby contributing to a more general theory of politics." (Excerpt from publisher's summary, Princeton University Press)

**Phelps, Elizabeth A. and Laura A. Thomas. "Race, Behavior, and the Brain: The Role of Neuroimaging in Understanding Complex Social Behaviors." *Political Psychology* 24 (2003): 747-758.**

(<http://www.psych.nyu.edu/phelpslab/papers/role%20of%20neuroimaging%20in%20understanding%20complex%20human%20behaviors.pdf>)

"Recent advances in brain imaging techniques have allowed us to explore the neural basis of complex human behaviors with more precision than was previously possible.

As we begin to uncover the neural systems of behaviors that are socially and culturally important, we need to be clear about how to integrate this new approach with our psychological understanding of these behaviors. This article reviews findings about the neural systems involved in processing race group information, in particular the recognition of same-race versus other-race faces and the explicit and implicit evaluation of race groups. Combining the psychological and neural approaches can advance our understanding of these complex human behaviors more rapidly and with more clarity than could be achieved with either approach alone. However, it is inappropriate to assume that the results of neuroimaging studies of a given behavior are more informative than the results of psychological studies of that behavior." (Abstract by authors)

**Philipsen, Dirk. "Investment, Obsession, and Denial: The Ideology of Race in the American Mind." *Journal of Negro Education* 72 (2003): 193-207.**

([http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3626/is\\_200304/ai\\_n9198707](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3626/is_200304/ai_n9198707))

"This essay seeks to shed light on the historical formation of racial identities and racialized thinking in America. Using a sociohistorical approach, the article explores the many ways in which racial ideologies are ingrained in the thinking and actions of both white and black Americans today. Arguably, despite much progress, American society as a whole—black and white, economically, culturally, politically—has grown so completely apart by a continuously crippling racial divide that what was once laboriously manufactured, namely race, is now pervasively perceived as natural." (Abstract by author)

**Westen, Drew. *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2007.**

The central premise of this book is that the prevailing understanding of how the brain works—a dispassionate process that makes decisions by weighing evidence and employing reason to reach the most valid conclusion—"bears no relation to how the mind and brain actually work." In chapter 10, Westen explores the conflict between conscious and unconscious "networks on race" and suggests that without strategically framed messages that appeal to the conscious

mental process, unconscious attitudes will prevail. This is problematic because racial bias tends to rest more deeply in the unconscious than in the conscious. According to Westen, research on unconscious networks finds that, “irrespective of what we may feel and believe consciously, most white Americans—including many who hold consciously progressive values and attitudes—harbor negative associations toward people of color.”

**White, Ismail K. “When Race Matters and When It Doesn’t: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues.” *American Political Science Review* 101(2007): 339-354.**

“Building on previous research on the effects of racial priming on the opinions of White Americans, this paper engages the question of how exposure to racial cues in political messages shapes the opinions of African Americans. I argue that explanations of racial priming that focus exclusively on White Americans are insufficient to explain how racial cues influence the opinions of Black Americans, as they fail to account for the activation of in-group attitudes and mis-specify the role of explicit racial cues. In two separate laboratory experiments, I test the effects of explicitly racial, implicitly racial, and nonracial verbal cues on both black and White Americans’ assessments of an ostensibly nonracial issue. The results point to important racial differences in the effectiveness of explicit and implicit racial verbal cues in activating racial thinking about an issue. Only frames that provide oblique references to race successfully activated racial out-group resentment for whites. Among blacks, explicit references to race most reliably elicited racial thinking by activating racial in-group identification, whereas the effect of implicit cues was moderated by the activation of negative representations of the in group. These findings not only demonstrate that racial attitude activation works differently for African Americans than for whites but also challenge conventional wisdom that African Americans see all political issues through a racial lens.” (Abstract by author)

**“Whites Underestimate the Costs of Being Black, Study Finds.” *ResearchNews.osu.edu. The Ohio State University.* <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/blckcost.htm>. Accessed on August 13, 2007.**

In a study conducted by Professors Philip Mazzocco, The Ohio State University, and Mahzarin Banaji, Harvard University, white respondents say they would have to be paid very little to live the rest of their lives as a black person, generally less than \$10,000. In contrast, study participants said they would have to be paid about \$1 million to give up television for the rest of their lives. Mazzocco suggests that these study participants do not really understand the extent to which African Americans, as a group, are disadvantaged.



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Affirmative Action**

A program designed to redress past discrimination against certain groups (usually racial/ethnic minorities and women) by increasing the opportunities available to them in areas such as employment and education. These policies are designed to increase the representation of members of these groups in institutions historically controlled by white men.

### **Civil Rights**

Civil rights are the fundamental privileges and freedoms granted to a person or group. These rights are guaranteed by the 13th and 14th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. As an adjective, the phrase is often invoked in reference to the political movement of the 1950s and 1960s that sought to obtain equitable opportunities and fair treatment for African Americans and other minorities.

### **Colorblind Racism**

“Colorblind racism” refers to the proposition that since the civil rights acts of the 1960s, racism is a thing of the past and that there is full equality in the society now that all people have rights under the law. Proponents of “colorblindness”—mostly conservatives—say that the country needs to transcend race by acknowledging the progress made over the past several decades. Race-conscious policies, they argue, stir up resentment among whites while also promoting a lack of ambition among people of color by holding them to a lower standard. As support for their claims, they point to the genetic evidence provided by the Human Genome Project that race has no biological foundation as a way to categorize people. They also cite a 1998 statement by the American Anthropological Association that explains ‘race’ as a classification system invented in the 18th century to justify status differences between European settlers and conquered and enslaved peoples, then expanded to support efforts such as the Nazi extermination of Jews.

In August 2002, the American Sociological Association took a stand against such attempts to abolish “race” as untrue and irrelevant. In a statement, the professional society urged social scientists not to ignore race classifications or stop using them as a research tool, even though they may be biological fiction. “Those who favor ignoring race as an explicit administrative matter, in the hope that it will cease to exist as a social concept, ignore the weight of a vast body of sociological research that shows that racial hierarchies are embedded in the routine practices of social groups and institutions,” the society wrote (1).

### **Diversity**

Diversity refers to the quality of being different. Being diverse means that there is variety rather than uniformity of a particular attribute. For example, affirmative action encourages a diverse workforce by striving to employ people from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity refers to one's membership in an identifiable social group that is founded on a particular racial, national, or cultural association. Affiliation with this identity may be denoted by an individual's adherence to group-specific customs, beliefs, or linguistic nuances. Unlike race, physical appearance is not a significant distinguishing characteristic.

**Frame/Framing**

As a verb, framing refers to the way in which an idea is presented and subsequently interpreted. The supporting details, context, and other cues can change the presentation of an idea and consequently affect the way in which the audience perceives the idea. Frames can be used to encourage some interpretations while discouraging others. The concept of a frame is largely attributed to sociologist Erving Goffman in his classic text, Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience.

**Integration**

Integration is broadly defined as the process of unifying parts of a whole. It often refers to uniting people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds so that they may freely associate with one another, as in a society. Integration differs from assimilation, as one must not forfeit his/her own ethnic identity in order to integrate.

**Marginalization**

Marginalization is the social process of demoting an individual or a group to a peripheral location so that the individual or group possesses minimal power or influence.

**Race**

"Race" is a relatively modern, complex, social, human construct. Our attempts to group and classify individuals based on this construct often have interesting outcomes. Research indicates that while there is some genetic variation in human beings, most of the differences are at the individual level and only a very small percentage of genetic variation can be traced to differences between groups. The scientific foundation for race has been called into question for over 100 years.

The following standardized definitions have been used to define race:

- A local geographic or global human population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics
- A group of people united or classified together on the basis of common history, nationality, or geographic distribution. Example: the German race
- A division of mankind possessing traits that are transmissible by descent and sufficient to characterize it as a distinct human type

**Racism**

As commonly conceived, “racism” is a prejudice which holds that members of one racial group are superior (intellectually, physically, morally, etc.) to another group(s). This prejudice may lead to animosity and/or discriminatory behavior against members of the group that is perceived to be inferior. Standard definitions of racism include the following:

Oxford English Dictionary: racism is a belief or ideology that all members of each racial group possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as being either superior or inferior to another racial group or racial groups.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary: racism is a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority or inferiority of a particular racial group, and it is also the prejudice based on such a belief.

The Macquarie Dictionary: racism is the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usually involving the idea that one’s own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others.

Ayn Rand gives us this unconventional definition of racism:

*Racism is the lowest, most crudely primitive form of collectivism. It is the notion of ascribing moral, social or political significance to a man’s genetic lineage—the notion that a man’s intellectual and characterological traits are produced and transmitted by his internal body chemistry. Which means, in practice, that a man is to be judged, not by his own character and actions, but by the characters and actions of a collective of ancestors. Racism claims that the content of a man’s mind (not his cognitive apparatus, but its content) is inherited; that a man’s convictions, values and character are determined before he is born, by physical factors beyond his control. This is the caveman’s version of the doctrine of innate ideas—or of inherited knowledge—which has been thoroughly refuted by philosophy and science. Racism is a doctrine of, by and for brutes. It is a barnyard or stock-farm version of collectivism, appropriate to a mentality that differentiates between various breeds of animals, but not between animals and men. (From an article published in the September, 1963 issue of *The Objectivist Newsletter*.)*

Other forms of racism include the following:

**Intentional racial discrimination** is the overt act of treating a member of one racial group less favorably than a member of a similarly situated racial group and producing a harmful or negative consequence for the person who is discriminated against. Example: Two male job applicants—one African American, the other white—have very similar skills and experience, but the African American applicant is rejected because of his race.

**Unintentional racial discrimination** occurs when situational conditions unknowingly create a disadvantage for people of a particular racial grouping. Example: A white manager asks her current employees—who are all white—to recommend people to fill a new position.

**Implicit racial bias** is denoted by subtle unconscious negative attitudes toward members of other-race groups. These attitudes may include fear, animosity, distrust, and superiority. Typically, implicit bias operates exclusively in our “unconscious mind” and is beyond our day-to-day perception. Implicit bias is fueled by a set of “symbolic attitudes” that develop in our unconscious mind over many years. These attitudes include positions on issues like race or liberal/conservative political ideology.

**Symbolic racism** is the belief that members of certain racial and ethnic groups do not live up to widely held American values such as hard work, honesty, and personal responsibility.

**Colorblind racism** is the belief that—despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary—race is not a significant factor in determining how opportunities, benefits, and burdens are distributed across the country’s population; that all Americans have an equal opportunity to achieve the “American dream.” This form of racism can weaken support for programs and policies that are designed to remove racialized barriers to opportunity.

**Strategic colorblindness** is the perception that talking about race acknowledges the reality of racial differences and is therefore a racist behavior.

**Institutional racism** is the process by which history, culture, people, policies, practices, and systems interact within a specific institutional framework (education, criminal justice, housing, etc.) to produce and sustain racial inequality.

**Structural racialization** (also called “structural racism”) is the process by which history, culture, people, practices, policies, and systems interact across institutional domains to produce and sustain racial inequality. A structural racialization analysis assists us in identifying and understanding the often invisible connections between housing, education, employment, transportation, and other “opportunity domains” that produce racial disparities and unbalanced access to benefits in our society.

**Transformative Change** refers to intentional change that seeks to alter the core of an issue, perspective, or situation in ways that are both innovative and creative. This type of change has wide-ranging ramifications, as it promotes deep understanding and may alter underlying assumptions, processes, and structures.

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<sup>1</sup> Lehrman, Sally. “Colorblind Racism.” Institute for Justice and Journalism. Posted September 18, 2003. Referenced Nov. 8, 2007. <http://www.alternet.org/story/16792/>

**A SHORT LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON STRATEGIES  
TO TALK MORE EFFECTIVELY ABOUT RACE**

**Advancement Project**

www.advancementproject.org  
1730 M Street, NW #910  
Washington, DC 20036  
ap@advancementproject.org  
(202) 728-9557

**African American Policy Forum**

www.aapf.org  
The African American Policy Forum  
Columbia University School of Law  
435 West 116th St.  
827 GREEN  
BOX E-7  
Mail Code 4089  
New York, NY 10027  
(212) 854-8041

**Applied Research Center (ARC)**

www.arc.org  
32 Broadway, Suite 1801  
New York, NY 10004  
arcny@arc.org  
(212) 513-7925

**The Aspen Institute Roundtable on  
Community Change**

www.aspeninstitute.org  
281 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10010  
ivettcl@aspenroundtable.org  
(212) 677-5510

**Center for Social Inclusion**

www.centerforsocialinclusion.org  
65 Broadway  
Suite # 1800  
New York, NY 10006  
info@thecsi.org  
(212) 248-2785

**Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for  
Race & Justice**

www.charleshamiltonhouston.org  
125 Mount Auburn Street, 3rd Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02138-5765  
(617) 495-8285

**Equal Justice Society**

www.equaljusticesociety.org  
260 California Street, Suite 700  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
(415) 288-8700

**ERASE Racism**

www.eraseracismny.org  
6800 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 109W  
Syosset, NY 11791-4401  
info@eraseracismny.org  
(516) 921-4863

**The FrameWorks Institute**

www.frameworksinstitute.org  
1776 I Street NW, 9th floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
info@frameworksinstitute.org

**Institute on Race & Poverty**

www.irpumn.org  
University of Minnesota  
N150 Walter Mondale Hall  
229 South 19th Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
(612) 625-8071

**The Kirwan Institute for the Study of  
Race and Ethnicity**

www.kirwaninstitute.org  
433 Mendenhall Laboratories  
125 S Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
(614) 688-5429

**Leadership Conference on Civil  
Rights, Education Fund**

www.civilrights.org/  
1629 K Street NW  
10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 263-2893

**NAACP National Headquarters**

www.naACP.org  
4805 Mt. Hope Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(877) NAACP-98

**National Anti-Racism Council of  
Canada**

www.narcc.ca  
# 122 - 215 Spadina Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5T 2C7  
(416) 979-3909

**National Campaign to Restore Civil  
Rights**

www.rollbackcampaign.org  
151 West 30th Street, 11th floor  
New York, NY 10001  
rollback@nylpi.org  
(212) 244-4664

**The National Resource Center for  
the Healing of Racism**

www.nrchr.org  
Three Riverwalk Centre  
34 West Jackson Street  
Battle Creek, MI 49017  
(269) 963-9450

**Opportunity Agenda**

www.opportunityagenda.org  
In New York City:  
568 Broadway  
Suite 302  
New York, NY 10012  
(212) 334-5977  
In Washington, D.C.:  
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## NOTES

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**KIRWAN INSTITUTE**  
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

THE CENTRAL GOAL of the Kirwan Institute is to contribute meaningfully to the field of research and scholarship on race, ethnicity and social justice, to assist in reframing the way that we talk about, think about and act on race and ethnicity and to elevate diversity so that we can envision and realize a society that is fair and just for all people. From day to day we are concerned about the internal workings of the Institute, but the real measure of our success must be the impact of our work in bringing about this vision of a true democratic society.

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