

ETHNORACIAL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Lawrence D. Bobo

*Department of African and African American Studies and Department of Sociology,
Harvard University*

David Mickey-Pabello

Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, Harvard University

The research reported in this issue of the *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* spans a robust timeline stretching from the inception of racial categories in medieval times to the very recent and ongoing debate about the role of affirmative action in the United States. A reach of such long *durée* gives us greater purchase on how the politics of race, racialization, and exclusion have developed over time. In some respects, the articles contained in this issue channel a Marxian interpretation of policy with a racial twist. That is, that policy is an instrument or tool of the dominant racial group used to leverage resources in its direction as to maintain its dominant position in the social hierarchy (Marx and Engels 2002). However, the research presented within this issue is not uniform with respect to the desired impact of policies. The work is bifurcated by intentionality, and some policies discussed in this issue reached their intended goal while others resulted in unintended or unanticipated consequences (Merton 1936). Furthermore, the results of these policies have led to political distrust, causing further retreat by racially marginalized groups from political participation. This retreat has widened the gulf between the politically excluded ethnoracial groups and their means of achieving greater equity through public policy.

It is fitting to begin by recognizing that deep-rooted ethnoracial inequality is costly. It bespeaks positions of power, wealth and privilege for some and of powerlessness, poverty, and stigmatization for others. The research of distinguished sociologist Mary R. Jackman and Kimberlee A. Shauman drive this point home very forcefully. They take up one of the most fundamental indicators of well-being, mortality, and ask if African Americans are suffering excess deaths. In robustly theorized and methodologically careful analysis they show over the period from 1900 to 2000 African Americans suffer a total of 7.7 million excess deaths relative to gender- and age-group specific Whites. Moreover, there is only a brief period of sustained decline in the rate of excess deaths with recent years seeing a troubling rise in excess deaths among middle age and older African Americans in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Du Bois Review, 16:2 (2019) 285–289.

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doi:10.1017/S1742058X20000065

This is one of the most unequivocal indicators of a deep and persistent racial divide one can imagine.

One might have hoped and expected that the era of affirmative action would see a sharp reduction in excess mortality among African Americans. Political scientist, Ashley Brown Burns, and economist, William Darity, shed some light on why this has not been the case. They trace the legal evolution of the case for affirmative action. First proposed as mechanism to prevent discrimination and achieve greater material equality, the legal, policy, and cultural justification for affirmative action has morphed into a claim for the benefits of diversity. This logic de-couples the yardstick for assessing the impact and purpose of affirmative action from the attainment of greater equality to a vague aspiration for tolerance and mutual understanding, with risky and disappointing real world consequences.

A logical starting point is the question of the origin of the concept of race itself and how that concept has evolved. Philosopher Adam Hochman argues that the historic question “Is race modern?” is sensibly broken into six questions for which he provides answers: 1) Is the concept of race modern? (No, it is late medieval.) 2) Is there a modern concept of race distinct from prior concepts? (Yes, there are now concepts distinct from that used in fifteenth-century Spain.) 3) Are races themselves modern? (No, because there are no races- only racialized groups.) 4) Are racialized groups modern? (No, the Jews and Moors were racialized in Spain in the mid-fifteenth century.) 5) Are the means and methods associated with racialization modern? (No, Christian-Jewish relations in thirteenth-century England serve as an example.) And 6) are the meanings attached to racialized traits modern? (No, meanings attached to skin color date back to medieval times.) Hochman concludes that most of the content of these questions does not concern questions about race specifically *per se*, but instead, questions about racialization and racialized groups. He contends that the debate around the history of “race” would be better served by moving forward in this direction.

Our next articles focus on Reconstruction and “anti-democracy” policies that were disputed during the lifetime of this journal’s namesake, W.E.B. Du Bois. Cheryl Elman, Barbara Wittman, Kathryn Feltey, Corey Stevens, and Molly Hartsough used mixed methods (census data records and oral histories) to examine how the absence of racialized policies from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of Jim Crow shaped Black and White women’s settlement in Arkansas. The expansion into the frontier lands of Arkansas during this period brought along deforestation, development, and generous tenancy terms and wages which provided ample opportunities for both White and Black women to settle and purchase their own lands. This expansion made Arkansas more of a Frontier state, uniquely different from the Deep South state. By illustrating the industrious nature of Black women in the South as entrepreneurs and land owners, this scholarship is somewhat reminiscent of W. E. B. Du Bois’s *Black Reconstruction*, that fought against the notion that the failure of Reconstruction in the South was a result of the failings of Blacks themselves (Du Bois 2017). With the introduction of Jim Crow laws, the opportunities for upward mobility through land ownership for Black women in Arkansas ceased. Charisse Burden-Stelly develops a new concept termed “radical Black peace activism,” which, she argues, W.E.B. Du Bois sparked. Radical Black peace activism is characterized by a call for the end of global conflict, disarmament, racism, colonialism, and imperialism, instead seeking to obtain justice progressively through international cooperation and peaceful coexistence. During the Cold War, this brand of Black leadership was labeled as anti-American because it became viewed as too consistent with the Communist vision of peace. Ironically, this logic undermined this peaceful Black political movement in the name of democracy—reaching its pinnacle through the investigation, indictment,

and defamation of W.E.B. Du Bois. These two studies show how social policy changes and political dynamics stifled Black leadership and black entrepreneurs.

Sociologists Ann Morning, Hannah Brückner, Alondra Nelson reinvigorate one of the more contentious issues about the construct of race that was prominently discussed after World War II: is there a biological dimension to the social construction of race? This argument now comes at a critical point in history. Since World War II, when biological accounts of racial differences promoted genocide, more recent scientific advances in the study of genetics having little to nothing to do with the construct of race have refueled an unfounded public discourse about the role of genetics in race. The research measures peoples' perceptions of race and racial inequality as having biological underpinnings. In so doing it shifts the study of social desirability biases away from racial policy preferences to be inclusive of the perception of potentially genetically based racial inequality. The study finds that this new way of examining social desirability identifies 1-in-5 non-Blacks as attributing income inequality to unspecified genetic differences between groups. This study shows that the reemergence of genetics may have the undesirable consequence of refueling a public misconception about the relationship between race and genetics.

A study focusing on adoption of the Mauritian Constitution in 1968 reminds us that policies of ethnoracial exclusion are a global phenomenon. Political scientist Nicole Thornton examines why Afro-Mauritians (i.e. Creoles) are excluded in Mauritian multiculturalism despite representing over a quarter of the population. Other identity groups that characterize the multicultural inclusivity of Mauritius such as Hindus and Muslims (religious), and Chinese (nationality) are recognized by the Mauritian Constitution. However, due to their legal exclusion, Afro-Mauritians are not afforded the benefits of multiculturalism ensured by the constitution and are subject to socioeconomic and political marginalization. By analyzing public policy discourse Thornton argues that non-Creole political actors created a privilege of multicultural inclusion, where non-African diasporic ethnic groups were deemed worthy of multicultural inclusion, while other ethnic groups with a stronger native claim to the land like Afro-Mauritians are excluded because they present a potential threat to territorial claims over Mauritius. "Multiculturalism has advocated the inclusive belief that there are commonalities between distinct cultural groups existing across the spectrum of humanity while still legitimizing and reinforcing the racist belief in a sub-humanity that cannot belong," Thornton writes. Continuing with the theme of ethnoracial exclusion Helen Marrow, Linda Tropp, Meta van der Linden, Dina Okamoto, and Michael Jones-Correa use an original representative survey to examine the attitude of U.S.-born Whites and Blacks toward first-generation Mexican and South Asian Indian immigrants. Using theories of secondary transfer effect (STE) that posit that contact between racial group A and racial group B influences how racial group A or B will incorporate a new racial group C, these social scientists find that Whites who had the most frequent amount of contact with Blacks are most receptive towards both immigrant groups, even after controlling for perceptions of threat. However, for Blacks, greater contact with Whites did not produce more receptive attitudes towards the immigrant groups. These two studies point to important contextual features of when and why racial groups come to be socially and politically excluded. Sociologists Calvin Rashaud Zimmerman and Grace Kao take an intersectional approach to how teacher perception of noncognitive skills are influenced by race and gender. Drawing on national data for first-grade teachers, they find key differences based on key gender-race pairings with respect to math and literacy assessments. Their results suggest ways in which Black and Asian children are penalized relative to White children, these patterns importantly interact with gender.

Political scientist Rudy Alamillo investigates political outliers: Hispanics who support Donald Trump. Given that the policies of President Trump and his administration are commonly seen as anti-Hispanic, and certainly anti-immigrant, Alamillo poses an interesting paradox: Why would Hispanics support Trump? Using a novel measure of racism called the “denial of racism,” his paper finds that, much like non-Hispanic Whites, Hispanics were also classified as high on the measure for “denial of racism.” This new measure was so strong that it supersedes party identification, race, and ideology as the strongest determinant of support for Trump. However, only few Hispanics support Trump and identify as being highly in “denial of racism.” Nonetheless, it is a fascinating study on the denial of racism and voting behavior.

Rosemary Nonye Ndubizu investigates how the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) both infused and obscured racial and gender bias in their debate informing the Reagan administration’s alternative housing voucher program. Ndubizu’s results show how critiques from low-income Black mothers were ignored, leading to further housing discrimination, poor housing conditions, and paternal supervision by the state. Her findings show that ignoring feedback loops results in a backfire where the policy worsens the conditions it sought to ameliorate. Similarly, Linnea Evans, Arline Geronimus, and Cleopatra Howard Caldwell show how the way policies are aimed at delivering a school choice environment have backfired for Black adolescent girls. Using Detroit as their case they interviewed 26 Black adolescent girls (aged 15–18) that experienced several changes in their schooling environments due to a series of school reforms in Michigan. Evans, Geronimus, and Howard Caldwell found that the reforms that were geared to encourage college-going hindered the time-use of these young women. The reform limited their ability to focus on human and social capital activities they believed to be important to their academic success. The results suggest that a choice environment is an insufficient substitute for the benefits gained from having access to high quality neighborhood schools. Together these two studies show how policies may backfire to worsen conditions for the groups they were created to help.

Other work found in this issue focuses on demonstrating how trust and heterogeneity in political participation serve to divorce Blacks and LatinX from the means of achieving equity. Sociologist Aaron Rosenthal shows that political distrust is a double-edged sword; it both sparks a desire to engage in the political process and fosters demobilization. However, that distrust is racially distinct. For Whites, distrust is about tax dollars being poorly spent which leads them to seek control over “their” investment. For non-Whites, distrust of government is grounded in a fear of the criminal justice system, and drives disengagement by fueling a need to stay off the grid and retreat from the political process. Political science has also found that predicting political participation for racial groups is best studied by looking at each racial group separately. Sunmin Kim argues that, although the literature has focused on specific models to predict each racial group’s behavior, the literature largely ignores intra-race differences and inter-race commonalities. He uses latent class analysis to identify various styles of political participation and then examines the distribution of racial groups across these styles. He finds that there are considerable intra-race differences in political participation styles, and that there are also considerable inter-race commonalities across racial groups.

As a collection, these articles illuminate how racial and ethnic identities are used in policies to leverage resources in favor of those already in power, and show that the distrust in the system has led to decreased political participation that is counterproductive to controlling the tools to create the mythical “level playing field.” While the work in this issue has advanced our understanding of ethnoracial exclusion, it

also points to the most glaring problem for social science research on race: intention. Many of the policy studies focusing on the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries could argue that the racial exclusion of Blacks was intentional, along with Thornton's study of Creoles in Mauritius. Although this issue deals in part with the intended and unintended nature of some policies, there could be more nefarious ethn racially discriminatory explanations for policies that backfire, have unintended consequences, or reach their intended outcome because they were framed as colorblind or under such auspicious language that concealed their true spirit. This could be argued about the defamation of Du Bois: was the true intent about eradicating "anti-democracy" or the destabilization of Black leadership? Were the Black women in Ndubizu's study intentionally ignored, given the appearance that the Regan administration at least tried, but failed to properly address Black housing issues? Is affirmative action really about colorblind meritocracy, or driven by fears that access to America's most prestigious schools give an "unfair" advantage to racially underrepresented students? While social science research on race and ethnicity has come close to this issue of intentionality by investigating unconscious or implicit racism (Greenwald, McGhee and Schwartz 1998), showing the invisibility of structural racism (Bobo, Kluegel and Smith 1997), finding that political attitudes are shaped by the threat of another racial group (Bobo 1998), and describing how racism exists despite the rejection of overt racism (Bonilla-Silva 2006), it has not yet connected the true intent of the policy architects to policy outcomes. However, the persistence of ethnoracial disparities between groups over time and chasm between the ethn racially excluded groups and the policy means of equity has drawn the ire of social science (Reskin 2012).

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