

# TALKING ABOUT RACE



Toward a Transformative Agenda

## Resource Notebook

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**WORKING PAPER**

*...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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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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### **Talking About Race: 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 is 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. 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.

**Talking about race: 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 About Race: 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 racism 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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### **Talking About Race: 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 selfinterest:

*“...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.

A Kirwan Institute review of public utterances from speeches and political debates suggests that the 2008 presidential candidates are not talking directly about race unless they are addressing an African American, Latino, or other audience of color. In the past, we have seen messages from candidates that were framed to appeal to negative stereotypes and attitudes about race. While there have been some instances of racially insensitive utterances from politicians over the last year, it would appear that the current presidential candidates who have a realistic chance at the White House are not willing or equipped to engage in any substantive conversation about race, perhaps because they know that these conversations can be divisive and polarizing unless they are framed in a way that resonates positively with a majority of the American people.

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**Talking About Race:**  
**DOMINANT FRAMES USED BY 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES**

**Linked Fate Frame**

The central message of this frame is that every American has a responsibility to care about the well-being of all other Americans and that whatever affects one group in the society affects the entire society. Progressives use this frame to promote group solidarity and to suggest that despite many group differences, all American citizens belong to one group. Conservatives use this frame in a subtle way to create in-group and outgroup boundaries that justify the uneven distribution of resources and opportunities.

*“Let me say that again – this is a national disgrace. Anyone who thinks this is a local or regional crisis – anyone who thinks this is about “them,” and not “us” – is sorely mistaken. Think about how all Americans benefit from the commerce that goes through this city’s port. How all of us benefit from the oil and gas produced off your shores. All of us have been enriched by the culture and legacy of this city. And when our fellow citizens hurt – all of us hurt. Whether in Oklahoma City or New York City or New Orleans – when Americans our fellow citizens suffer – all of us suffer.”*

*Hillary Clinton—Excerpts of remarks from the Katrina speech, May 19, 2007*

**Individual Responsibility Frame**

The individual responsibility frame promotes self-discipline and self-determination as the primary means of success for all citizens. Progressives use this frame to suggest that individuals cannot be successful with the resources and opportunities that flow from group responsibility. Conservatives use this frame to argue against race sensitive government policies and federal assistance programs.

*“Look at how Democrats like Senator Clinton think about the economy. She said that it is ‘time to reject the idea of an “on your own” society and replace it with shared responsibility.’ She says she prefers a ‘we’re all in it together society.’ I see, out with Adam Smith and in with Karl Marx!...Dont Democrats see that individual initiative is at the heart of America’s unprecedented march to world economic leadership? Adam Smith wasnt heartless. Adam Smith saw that individual initiative would produce the greatest wealth for the entire society...”*

*Mitt Romney – Excerpts of remarks from the Young Republican National Convention, July 7, 2007*

### **Disparity Frame**

The disparity frame makes visible the inequality between different racial and ethnic groups in education, employment, housing and other opportunity domains. Progressives use this frame to illustrate that the racial “playing field” is not level for all Americans because of historic structural inequality. Conservatives use this frame to assert that racialized disparities illustrate the unwillingness of people of color to take responsibility for their own misfortune and that racialized disparities continue to exist despite substantial governmental interventions.

*“Third thing – we’ve got to recognize that we fought for civil rights, but we’ve still got a lot of economic rights that have to be dealt with. We’ve got 46 million people uninsured in this country despite spending more money on health care than any nation on earth. It makes no sense. As a consequence, we’ve got what’s known as a health care disparity in this nation because many of the uninsured are African American or Latino. Life expectancy is lower. Almost every disease is higher within minority communities. The health care gap.”*

*Barack Obama—Excerpts of remarks from his speech at Selma, AL Voting Rights March Commemoration, March 4, 2007*

### **Global Frame**

This frame makes visible the link between racial issues that we face in the United States and human rights issues throughout the world. Progressives use this frame to create a global context for racial inequality and to call for international solutions to global inequality and injustice and to promote civil rights in the U.S. Conservatives use this frame to assert that despite many problems, the U.S. continues to be the “greatest nation on earth,” or to justify the expenditure of vast resources to maintain the U.S. position of dominance throughout the world.

*“The NATO alliance has begun to deal with this gap by promoting global partnerships between current members of the alliance and the other great democracies in Asia and elsewhere. We should go further and start bringing democratic peoples and nations from around the world into one common organization, a worldwide League of Democracies. This would not be like the universal-membership and failed League of Nations’ of Woodrow Wilson but much more like what Theodore Roosevelt envisioned: like-minded nations working together in the cause of peace. The new League of Democracies would form the core of an international order of peace based on freedom.”*

*John McCain—Excerpts of remarks from his speech to the Hoover Institution on U.S. Foreign Policy, May 1, 2007*

### **Fear Frame**

This frame appeals to implicit and explicit fear of “the other,” be it other countries, other cultures, or other races. Conservatives use this frame in a variety of ways to garner support for homeland security, to justify the abridgement of constitutional rights, or to solicit support for crime legislation aimed at “safer streets.”

*“.. The first part of the executive order points out that the police should report all illegals suspected of committing a crime, or who have committed a crime. In fact, the year before I was mayor, the immigration service stopped taking names from the police department of people that the police department were reporting. So the problem that I had was, I had 400,000 illegal immigrants, roughly, in New York City. And I had a city that was the crime capital of America. I had to do something intelligent with them. I didn't have the luxury of, you know, political rhetoric. I had the safety and security of the people of New York City on my shoulders. So what I did was, I said – and I think this a sensible policy: If you are an illegal immigrant in New York City and a crime is committed against you, I want you to report that. Because lo and behold, the next time a crime is committed, it could be against a citizen or a legal immigrant. I said, if you are a child in New York City, of which we had 40,000 to 50,000 to 60,000 illegal immigrant children, did it make sense to leave them on the streets? The federal government deported only 758 people that year from New York City. So the reality is, my programs and policies led to a city that was the safest large city in the country, so they must have been sensible policies.”*

*Rudy Giuliani— Excerpts of remarks from the Republican Presidential Primary Debate*

### **Colorblind Frame**

This frame supports the notion 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. It also supports the view that the racial “playing field” is level and that any person can succeed in America through hard work and perseverance. Conservatives use this frame to oppose governmental programs and policies—including affirmative action—designed to redress the consequences of structural racism and eliminate race-based barriers to opportunity. When viewed through this lens, race-sensitive programs in education, employment, and other sectors are seen as giving an unnecessary advantage to people of color.

*“So what I meant was, if we stick to our basic principles, we will win next November. But we've got to remember our first principles – the fact that what the founding fathers told us a long, long time ago, that our basic rights come from God, not from government; that we have a system of divided government, both state and local and state and federal level. We believe in free markets. We believe in free people. We believe in free enterprise. And Americans who*

*work hard and play by the rules have a decent chance of living the American Dream, just like I have and so many others have. That's the things that we have to keep in mind. Let's don't get diverted onto some single individual, whoever their nominee is. They're going to lead us down the road to a comfortable mediocrity. And that's not the United States of America I grew up in."*

*Fred Thompson- Excerpts of remarks from the Republican Debate on Fox News, October 21, 2007*

### **Talking About Race: 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

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.)

**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 strategies, 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.)

**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.)

**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.

**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 precise psychological 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**

**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 occasion, reinforce or simply fail to suppress it." (Abstract by authors.)

**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.)

**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.)

**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)

**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.)

**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: Public Affairs*, 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.”

**“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.

## **Talking About Race: 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).

### **Cumulative Causation**

In structures, causation often involves the interaction between institutions in such a way that increases at each successive stage. In terms of structural racism, considering cumulative causation allows us to understand that it is not just one societal institution that is creating disadvantages

for certain groups; instead, it is the interplay between various institutions that blindly creates accumulated disadvantages.

**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. For example, the United States Census Bureau now lists more than 60 possible combinations of six basic racial categories and provides a "write in" area on the census form to accommodate individuals who identify themselves in a way that is not addressed on the form. 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**

Racism is a prejudice that declares that members of one racial group are superior (intellectually, physically, etc.) to another group. This prejudice may lead to animosity and/or discriminatory behavior against members of the perceived unequal or “inferior” group.

### **Segregation**

Segregation is the act or process of separating people by a particular attribute such as race. Segregation can be a means of discriminating against minority groups by separating them from the amenities and facilities utilized by the majority group. One major goal of the Civil Rights Movement was to end Jim Crow segregation practices.

### **Structural Racialization**

Structural racialization refers to a system of social structures and policies and the interaction of these structures and policies that produce cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities. Structural racialization extends beyond the racist actions of individuals and instead considers how disparities are created and upheld on a macro-level. It is also a method of analysis that considers how historical legacies, individuals, structures, and institutions work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages along racial lines.

### **Transformative Change**

This term 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/>

**Talking About Race:**  
**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**

[http://www.aspeninstitute.org/site/c.huLWJeMRKpH/b.612045/k.4BA8/Roundtable\\_on\\_Community\\_Change.htm](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/site/c.huLWJeMRKpH/b.612045/k.4BA8/Roundtable_on_Community_Change.htm)  
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

**Columbus Community Relations  
Commission**

community.ci.columbus.oh.us  
90 West Broad Street, Room #101  
Columbus, OH 43215-9005  
(614) 645-1993

**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

**Hope in the Cities**

www.iofc.org/en/programmes/hic/home/  
2201 West Broad Street, Suite 200  
Richmond, VA 23220  
(804) 358-1764

**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/about/lccref/  
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.:  
1536 U Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 339-9315

**Study Circles Resource Center**

www.studycircles.org  
P.O. Box 203  
697 Pomfret Street  
Pomfret, CT 06258  
scrc@studycircles.org  
(860) 928-2616

**YWCA Columbus**

www.ywcacolumbus.org  
65 South Fourth Street  
Columbus, OH 43215  
info@ywcacolumbus.org  
(614) 224-9121

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