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CHAPTER 3
THE FUTURE OF U.S. SOCIETY IN AN ERA OF RACISM, GROUP SEGREGATION, AND DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION

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Introduction

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1983, p. 19), several whites converse about a new book by a racist analyst. One character concludes that "the white race will be ... utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved ... It is up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things." Another character adds, "We've got to beat them down."

Today this concern with maintaining white domination over "other races" remains strong in the U.S. and seems to be increasing. It is found not only in white supremacist groups but also among white leaders and rank-and-file workers. Republican candidate Patrick Buchanan made this statement to the 1992 Republican convention: "And as those boys [National Guard at the 1992 riot] took back the streets of Los Angeles, block by block, my friends, we must take back our cities, and take back our culture, and take back our country" (Quoted in Zukin 1995, p. 47). Buchanan is referring to the growth of the non-European population. *Forbes* editor Peter Brimelow has argued that the U.S. is facing huge immigration waves that are reducing the white core. He asserts that the U.S. "has always had a specific ethnic core. And that core has been white." A few years back, some 90 percent of Americans "looked like me. That is, they were of European stock. And in those days, they had another name for this thing dismissed so contemptuously as "the racial hegemony of white Americans." They called it "America". (Brimelow 1995, pp. 5-10, 59).

Many white analysts fear processes and actions that may make the U.S. truly multicultural. Buchanan has argued that "Our Judeo-Christian values are going to be preserved and our Western heritage is going to be handed down to future generations and not dumped on some landfill called multiculturalism" (quoted in 1991, p. A27). This view is also held by white liberals. Journalist Richard Bernstein has argued, in very exaggerated terms, that aggressive training in multiculturalism is dominant and tyrannical on college campuses. He compares campus multiculturalism to the "terror" after the French revolution in its allegedly "narrow orthodoxy" and its "occasional outright atrocity" (Bernstein

1994, pp. 3-4). Liberal social scientist Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. views multiculturalism as dominating all levels of education and as making "an astonishing repudiation" of the idea of "a unifying American identity." He fears the great "assault on the Western tradition" by multiculturalism, which he also terms "tribalism" (Schlesinger 1991, pp. 13, 124-25). For white liberals like Bernstein and Schlesinger, as well as for conservatives like Buchanan and Brimelow, multiracial or multicultural efforts are seen as challenging white interests. All clearly fear the current and coming challenges to white domination.

These views have a deep history among U.S. intellectuals, including social scientists. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries many white social scientists (including leading sociologists such as Edward A. Ross) and other public intellectuals articulated views similar to these. Perhaps the most influential intellectual of the early 20th century, Madison Grant (a lawyer and zoologist), developed his ideas in *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916). He feared newer immigrant groups from southern and eastern Europe, asserting that interbreeding between European "races" would destroy the superior "Nordic race." This pseudoscientific racism fueled support for passage of the openly racist 1924 immigration law, which excluded most immigrants other than northern Europeans. The sadness recently expressed by white intellectuals and analysts over the loss of what they prize as "Western civilization" echoes the fears and ideas of earlier apologists for white domination.

Today, much evidence indicates that the majority of white leaders (including many contemporary social scientists by action or default) and rank-and-file whites desire to maintain and reinforce the white domination and hegemony they regard as central to the structure of the United States. From the first years of conquest to the present day, white racial domination has been a central organizing feature of North American society. Significantly, however, few social scientists have thoroughly researched and theorized this white domination in its past, present, and likely future incarnations. In this paper I call for renewed research on the patterns and realities of this racial domination, particularly in relation to the demographic changes now presenting challenges to it.

The Ongoing Demographic Revolution

Major challenges to white domination are arising from large-scale population changes now well underway. Whites of European descent are a modest and decreasing fifth of the world's population, and they constitute a decreasing proportion of the U.S. population. Whites are now a statistical minority of the population in four of the five largest U.S. cities -- including New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago --and in larger areas such as New Mexico, Hawaii, and the southern parts of Florida, Texas, and California. If current migration and birth rates continue, by about the year 2002 whites will become a minority of

California's population; by 2010, a minority of Texas' population; and by about 2050, a minority of the U.S. population. By about 2035 a majority of youth under the age of nineteen will be youth of color (Feagin, Vera, and Zsembik 1995). According to recent Census Bureau middle-scenario projections (assuming a rate of growth no less than for the 1980s), in the year 2050 the U.S. population will be about 383 million, with just under half, about 181 million, being Americans of color (Murdock 1995, pp. 33-47). At that point, there will be more Americans of color than there are whites today. By the late 2050s, if the rate of growth does not decrease, Americans of European descent will be the statistical minority. This marks a very dramatic change; not since the early 1700s have whites been a minority of this area's population.

These demographic changes have significant social, economic, and political implications, most of which have not yet been probed by social scientists. Let me mention a few. No later than 2040 the U.S. educational system will be predominantly composed of students of color; this has major implications for the staffing, structure, and curriculum of schools. If the association between being a family of color and having a lower than average income does not change, the proportion of poor families will increase, as will economic and related inequalities across the color line. By the late 2050s or so a majority of the labor force will no longer be white, and the population and labor force will be older (see Murdock 1995, pp. 193-97). The older retired population will have a majority of whites, while the younger working population will have a majority of workers of color. How will the latter feel about supporting elderly whites (e.g., on Social Security) who have created and maintained a white-racist society? There will likely be a racial polarization in regard to other politicized issues such as bilingual education programs and English as the official U.S. language. White politicians who have strongly opposed legal immigration and affirmative action will not likely be elected when the majority of their constituencies have become citizens of color. As voting constituencies change, so also will juries and justice systems, educational systems, and other government agencies.

What is White Racial Domination?

White racial domination encompasses the white attitudes, emotions, ideologies, practices, and institutions integral to the long-term domination of people of color. At the heart of this domination are socially organized practices of whites that deny people of color the dignity, opportunities, spaces, positions, and privileges available to whites (Feagin and Vera 1995, pp. 7-8). These white practices, which are racist in their use of the identifying markers of physical characteristics and biological ancestry, are an everyday matter and routinely "activate underlying power relations" (Essed 1991, p. 50). Undergirding the practices are strong ideological rationalizations. This white domination stems historically from the expansion of European capitalism and colonialism, which

dominated non-European peoples (by means of weaponry and epidemics) in order to secure raw materials, cheap labor, and access to new markets. When dominated peoples come to be seen in racialized terms by capitalist colonizers, capitalism, colonialism, and racism merge and reinforce each other (Feagin and Batur-Vanderlippe 1996). As Pierre Van den Berghe has noted, "Far and away the most widespread, enduring, and virulent form of racism and the costliest in terms of human suffering has been that which developed in western Europe and its colonial extensions in Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Western hemisphere" (Van den Berghe 1981, p. 362).

White Domination in Everyday Practice

Today as in the past, white domination encompasses the exploitation and sociospatial segregation of people of color, as well as the reinforcing phenomena of coercion, violence, and cultural dominance. There is a structure of racial separation and segregation maintained in an ongoing process of everyday discrimination and its rationalization. Indeed, one of the most striking features of U.S. society today is its extreme segregation along racial lines.

In the U.S. economy there is a dual labor market structure within which many if not most workers of color are forced into lower paying jobs by means of direct and indirect (e.g., via de facto segregated education) discrimination. This can be seen both across and within the blue-collar, white-collar, and elite occupational categories of the U.S. economy. At the top of the economic pyramid, white men hold virtually all powerful positions in large corporations and other major organizations. A 1980s analysis of top positions in major economic, political, and educational organizations found only 20 African Americans and 318 non-black women in these 7,314 powerful positions (Dye 1986, pp. 190-205). More recent studies suggest that the pattern persists. In the mid-1990s about 95 percent of the corporate positions at the level of vice president or higher were held by white men (Glass Ceiling Commission 1995, pp. 12, 60-61).

At all occupational levels, the dual structure is maintained by widespread discrimination against workers of color. One study of hiring discrimination in Washington, D.C. and Chicago used black and white testers applying for entry-level jobs; about 20% of the black men faced discriminatory treatment (Turner, Fix, and Struyk 1991). A 1994 survey of more than 1,000 African American employees in Los Angeles found six in ten reporting employment discrimination in the past year: the more their education, the greater the likelihood they faced job discrimination (Bobo and Suh 1995). The researchers also found that a majority of highly educated Asian and Latino American workers reported job discrimination. This pervasive system of workplace discrimination reserves many job opportunities and privileges for whites. The system also transfers the "results of the labor of one social group to benefit another" (Young 1990, p. 49).

Historically, much of the value of the labor of workers of color has been transferred to white employers by means of slavery or low wages, to a degree that exceeds that for white workers. One additional dual reality facing (disproportionately working-class) workers of color is a very high level of unemployment, which for African Americans has long been at least double that for white workers. As Willhelm (1970) long ago taught us, increasingly, workers of color are no longer needed in many areas of the U.S. economy.

From the beginning residential segregation has been a central underpinning of white domination. Massey and Denton examined black-white segregation in thirty major metropolitan areas and found little change in the high levels of residential segregation between 1980 and 1990. For African Americans residential segregation from whites was high at all income levels and in both cities and suburbs (Massey and Denton 1993, pp. 221-23). Widespread real estate and rental discrimination lies behind this racial geography. One U.S. research study (1989), using 3,800 test audits in 25 cities, estimated that black renters encountered discrimination about half the time, while black homeseekers faced discrimination 59 percent of the time. Latino American testers faced similar levels of discrimination (Turner, Struyk, and Yinger 1991). Recent housing-audit studies in Fresno, New Orleans, and Montgomery sent testers into traditionally white rental areas and found very high rates (70-80 percent) of anti-black (and in Fresno anti-Latino) discrimination by Anglo landlords (see Fair Housing Council of Fresno County 1995).

One possible white response to the demographic changes mentioned previously is to flee areas of high growth in residents of color, that is, to increase the degree of territorial separation and segregation. Frey (1997) has argued that population data show the U.S. is balkanizing, in part because of renewed "white flight". For example, as California has seen large-scale immigration from Asia and Latin America, many whites have left the state. During the first half of the 1990s most U.S. counties with substantial population gains from internal migration saw little percentage growth in the immigrant population; these areas are becoming whiter and older. In contrast, most of the 70 counties with significant growth in number of immigrants had low (net) numbers of domestic migrants (Frey 1997, p. 22). Most of the large West Coast, Gulf Coast, and East Coast cities are becoming more diverse in racial-ethnic terms, and whites are now, or soon will be, the minority population in them. Yet in other areas of the U.S., particularly the Midwest and Mountain West, diversity is not increasing, or these areas are actually becoming whiter (Frey and Tilove 1995, p. 44). Frey has underscored the spatial segregation here: "Early in the 20th century, the distance between immigrant communities and native-born communities could be measured in mere yards by city neighborhood boundaries. Later on, it widened to miles as a stark contrast between city and suburb became apparent. Current patterns suggest that the

distance between these two kinds of communities is widening even further" (Frey 1997, p. 22).

Some time ago Myrdal (1964 [1944] 2: 618) noted that residential segregation means whites and blacks do not interact "in the many activities founded on common neighborhood. Residential segregation also often becomes reflected in uniracial schools, hospital and other institutions." The experiential reality of enforced separation in space is at the heart of white domination, and it has serious consequences. In the early 1990s journalist Isabel Wilkerson's field report of two adjacent suburbs of Chicago, one white and one black, found that many whites "live out entire lives without ever getting to know a black person." Each racial group feared the other, but black Chicagoans were "fearful because much of their contact with white people was negative," while "whites were fearful because they had little or no contact" (Wilkerson 1992, p. 18). Today, as in the past, most white Americans seem to live in an isolated spatial "bubble" separated for the most part from the worlds of African Americans and other Americans of color.

Today, segregation in education often stems from residential segregation, and both help maintain the dual labor market. A recent Harvard research project reported that as U.S. courts in the 1980s and 1990s allowed school systems to discontinue desegregation programs, segregation of black and Latino children from white children increased significantly -- in both city and suburban school systems (Applebome 1997, p. A10).

Challenges for Sociological Theory

In his book *The World and Africa*, William E. B. Du Bois argued that the extreme degradation in European colonies overseas was "a main cause of wealth and luxury in Europe. The results of this poverty were disease, ignorance, and crime. Yet these had to be represented as natural characteristics of backward peoples" (1965 [1946]) p. 37). Africa had long been left out of European accounts of Western industrial development and affluence. By bringing the history of Africa to the center, Du Bois showed that African colonization had to be central to serious accounts of European development. Today, the economic development and wealth of industrialized nations are still linked substantially to past and continuing exploitation of resources and labor of people of color within these nations and across the globe.

If we are to understand the past, present, and likely future of the U.S. and other Western societies, we must place "race," or more accurately white racial domination, at the center of sociological analysis. Today, little social science research and theory -- outside the marginalized areas called "racial relations" or "minorities" -- does this. Indeed, most societal analysis ignores race or treats it as one variable among many, rather than as a central reality. (Given the poor record of most early, and numerous contemporary, social scientists in regard

to racism, the history of social science also needs to be thoroughly researched and factored into racial analysis.) Like Marx's placing of class exploitation at the center of analysis of Western societies, we need to place racial exploitation, oppression, and segregation at the center of analyses of Western societies. They *are*, at their cores, about racial oppression and domination.

Let me illustrate the neglect of racial domination in one major theoretical tradition. Modern sociology in the U.S. is sometimes said to have originated in the research of the famous "Chicago School," which centered much of its research attention on the social geography of cities. Drawing heavily on the analogy of plant communities, leading University of Chicago sociologists conceptualized urban development and differentiation in terms of an impersonal and natural competition of human groups. Groups such as whites and blacks located in "natural city areas" whose composition changed over time in processes such as group invasion and succession (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925). In the Chicago School's ethnographic studies the lives of those in poor areas were frequently portrayed in terms of a subculture of poverty. However, these researchers largely ignored the interventionist role of powerful business/political elites in shaping cities like Chicago. Their theories and generalizations not only ignored white racial domination but sometimes even reflected racist notions of superior and inferior racial groups common in this period (see, for example, Park, 1918). Certainly, subsequent sociological analysis of cities has moved beyond this perspective to give some attention to the role of racial discrimination in urban patterns (see Gist and Fava 1974), yet even today neither racial domination nor racial segregation is a central concept in urban research or in general sociology textbooks in the United States (see Logan and Molotch 1987).

Making arguments about the poor that are similar in a number of ways to the old Chicago School, William Julius Wilson, perhaps the most politically influential sociologist in the U.S., has recently published a third major book on the urban poor. Drawing on research studies of poor black Chicagoans, Wilson explains their severe economic problems mainly in terms of broad trends, such as the globalization of jobs, and argues that social problems of the black poor come from job troubles and from concentration in neighborhoods without middle-class residents or strong institutions (Wilson 1996). However, Wilson ignores or downplays the role of past and present racial domination in creating problems for African Americans in Chicago. For example, there is no discussion of the major role that powerful white real estate actors have long played in the city's high level of residential segregation nor of white-elite-controlled urban renewal programs that destroyed black neighborhoods and concentrated those displaced in adjacent poverty areas. Working in a long tradition of sociologists since the Chicago School, Wilson seems to argue that problems of the poor come from a subculture with inappropriate values (see Fitch 1996, p. 3).

In much social science research on societal problems there is a strong tendency to develop interpretations that do not deal centrally with racism or class exploitation and thus that are less likely to alienate elite interests that use and fund much of social science research. Wallerstein has suggested that there are only two possible languages for explaining inequality within a capitalist system: the view that some are of nobler birth, which does not work well in modern states with legal equality as official doctrine; and the view that all have equal opportunity but some do not use their inherent abilities. A culturally oriented interpretation of inequality "provides the only acceptable legitimation of the reality of large-scale collective inequalities within the ideological constraints of the capitalist world-economy" (Wallerstein 1991, p. 87). Those with low social status are there because of their cultural heritage. "They come from a group that is somehow less oriented to rational thinking, less disciplined in its work ethic, less desirous of educational and/or earned achievement" (Wallerstein 1991, p. 88). Much of the research of the Chicago School and of its descendants in modern sociology uses sophisticated versions of this common rationalization of inequality.

I do not have the space here to deal much with recentering sociological theory in regard to white domination, but let me suggest a few possibilities in regard to racial oppression and cities. Du Bois offers some insights in this regard. His work on Africa and African Americans shows the impact and importance of bringing formerly marginalized issues to the center of research analysis. In my view, an adequate sociological theory of urban development in the United States must bring white domination to the center of this inquiry. Racial segregation is not an impersonal phenomenon naturally arising in cities, but rather is shaped directly by white agents working diligently to create this pattern. Racial segregation is the foundation feature of U.S. urban settlements. From the beginning whites, particularly the powerful, intentionally constructed racial segregation, exploitation, and discrimination inside and outside cities in order to serve significant white interests.

In the African American case, specific agents took action to create the hegemonic system: slaveholders, shippers, and overseers in the slavery period; and white business elites, politicians, and workers since the end of slavery. Exploitation and segregation are still central to this racist system. Over nearly 400 years, African Americans -- first as slaves and since then as segregated and underpaid workers -- have contributed at least a trillion dollars in uncompensated labor to build up U.S. cities, and U.S. society, into a condition of great wealth and prominence. In addition to this uncompensated labor, African Americans (and other people of color) have had to contend with the many other harsh realities of racial degradation. Today, racial domination still serves the interests of most white Americans, and a major theoretical reconceptualization of its role at the center of the U.S. and other Western societies is necessary if sociology is to be relevant to the 21st century.

Conclusion

The demographic trend toward a new majority of Americans of color presents a threat to white domination in the United States. Dramatic changes are coming at a time of persisting racial oppression and inequality as well as persisting class oppression and inequality. Not only is the racial cleavage in the U.S. large and growing in several areas, but also, the income share of the bottom fifth of the population has decreased from one-sixth of that of the top fifth in the late 1960s to about one-tenth today. Metaphorically, one can think of the racial-ethnic population and related social changes as a railroad train headed down a track at a fast pace. Ahead on that same track is another train labeled white racial domination, which is headed in the opposite direction. A major train wreck appears to be imminent.

Clearly, in the near future there will be major social and political changes in the United States. How fast these changes will come is hard to predict. Yet, as I have suggested, certain transformations seem likely. Over the next few decades demographic changes will likely end white dominance of numerous political, juridical, and public school systems in many cities and several states (e.g., California, Texas, Florida, New York). Democratic institutions, such as universal suffrage and the peer-jury system, can no longer be relied upon by whites to maintain domination. The new majority of Americans of color will be less likely to acquiesce in continuing white discrimination and oppression. In many areas of the U.S. we are likely to see social upheaval, including demonstrations and uprisings. Because of the demographic changes, whites are under ever increasing pressure to desegregate institutions and redistribute resources.

However, today, most white leaders and rank-and-file whites do not seem inclined to desegregate institutions or redistribute resources. It is possible that threatened whites will react to the demographic changes in increasingly repressive ways. U.S. whites may devise new types of political exclusion, such as new literacy tests or poll taxes, or they may seek to exclude non-European immigrants as was the case before the 1960s (see Feagin 1998). Today many whites are moving into gated communities and private suburban enclaves and schools, and many are moving out of high-immigration cities and states. One possible scenario for the U.S. future may be racial-ethnic partitions like those in the former Yugoslavia. Or perhaps a majority of whites will decide to create a more violent system like the old South Africa with its highly repressive, but ultimately unstable, apartheid and white-minority rule.

Large-scale balkanization poses serious long-term problems not only for Americans of color but also for whites. Balkanization creates its own conflicts and instabilities. Moreover, living in all-white enclaves will not prepare whites for a world composed mostly of people of color. During the 21st century it seems quite possible that nations like Japan, China, and India will become

much more powerful economically and politically on the world scene. Most whites' lack of interest in destroying racial oppression and creating multicultural societies and a multicultural world, puts whites of European descent into an increasingly untenable situation in the long run. Turtle-like isolation will become an even more serious handicap for these whites over the course of the 21st century as they become a smaller and, likely, less powerful group on the global scene.

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CHAPTER 4
EROSION OF THE NATION-STATE AND TRANSFORMATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES[*]

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The rise of multiculturalism and the increase of claims for categorical equity are some of the most salient phenomena in the recent evolution of western democracies (Taylor 1992b, Kymlicka 1995, Pal, 1993). They are the signs of a profound crisis of the political institutionalization process inherent to modernity. This crisis can be summarized in three movements: a crisis of the public space where discussions over power and the resolution of conflicts take place; a crisis of the capacity of democratic institutions to achieve necessary compromises; and a crisis of the political community as "a source of mutual recognition and trust" (Kymlicka 1995) and as "a common moral horizon" (Taylor 1992a).

The failures of the political institutionalization process are closely related to the erosion of the Nation-State, challenged in its capacity to remain the main instance of the reproduction of social relations. Externally, globalization and the world market tend to deprive the State of its capacity to regulate the economic process. Internally, the fragmentation of the political community challenges the State's ability to insure political regulation.

Two sets of questions arise from this situation. First, are the erosion of the Nation-State and the fragmentation of identities irreversible processes? Second, up to what point are these processes problematic? In the case of the Nation-State, is it not possible that the weakening of political institutions can be compensated by the consolidation of the rule of Law? Is it not also thinkable that the multiplication of communities and categorical groups represents progress in the conquest of an ever-enlarged set of rights, rather than a fragmentation of society? We propose some answers to these questions by looking at the Canadian example, using results from our research on the formation and evolution of political identities in the prime ministers' speeches at the Federal-Provincial Constitutional Conferences in Canada from 1941 to 1992 (Bourque et Duchastel 1996a).