

**The Colonial Relationship:
The African and European in the United States Today**
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INTRODUCTION

The majority of sociological work (and social scientific work, in general) regarding race relations in the United States has been significantly limited in its theoretical explanatory power and practical application. This limitation is due primarily to the inherent bias of scholars toward assimilation into dominant society on the part of subordinated groups. Maintaining such a bias establishes as a goal or desired outcome, the racially equal distribution of resources or racial equality in the society defined by the dominant group. Such a paradigm is flawed, however, in that it does not consider the very foundation on which the dominant society rests. In the case of the United States, it is essential to recognize the importance of economic and cultural European supremacy (or colonialism) in the foundation of dominant society.

Even the majority of "liberal," structural arguments fail to consider the persistent relationship which exists between the colonizing European and the colonized African in the United States. Thus, any paradigm which fails to address the colonial nature of contemporary society in the United States is fundamentally flawed and, as a consequence, the goal of "racial equality" through assimilation and integration into dominant society can not be achieved. Moreover, scholarly work which advances such a paradigm and consequent goal (whether intentionally or not) perpetuates the colonial foundation of dominant society which oppresses racially less numerous populations. If, on the other hand, a paradigm is employed which accounts for the colonial nature of dominant society, the approach of assimilation and integration is replaced by one of self-determined, self-defined racial liberation. Such an approach, then, is not dependent on dominant society and consequently can be achieved. In essence, it is only through racial liberation that a true racial equality can become a reality.

The relationship between the African and the European in the United States is one which has received much attention, but one which also suffers from a resistance to fully recognize the past and present colonial relationship between the two groups. Stated plainly, in the United States, the African is rarely conceptualized as a colonized subject, nor is the European considered a colonizer. Failing to do so, however, rejects the history and experiences of both groups and the political and social economy of today. In this work, then, I will argue for the need to conceptualize the African population as a colonized people, and the European as a colonizer. In doing so, I will draw parallels between the African and both the Native American and Chicana/o populations. I will also address the weaknesses presented by several sociological approaches which fail to account for the colonial relationship between the European and the African. This, failure, it is argued actually perpetuates the colonial relationship. The underlying argument in this work, then, is that until the African population in the United States is conceptualized as a colonized people, even "liberal" social scientists will perpetuate the colonial relationship by placing hopes in racial equality through assimilation, instead of in self-determined racial liberation.

THE AFRICAN AS A COLONIZED POPULATION

European expansionism throughout the world was accompanied by an ideological premise of superiority. In general, European contact with other populations was moulded by the former's belief that only Europeans could bring "true culture" to the populations outside Europe. In areas throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia this is widely acknowledged. The European, as culturally superior, felt it a duty to "enlighten," "civilize," and "give culture to" the savage, unruly, primitive natives of "newly discovered?" lands. But for each geographical area in which the Europeans arrived, there existed a slightly different situation.

In the case of what is now the United States, European arrival was followed by an almost complete genocide of the Native American nations. Although the ethnocentric ideological currents of that time did play a significant role in European contact with Native Americans, in the end there remained few indigenous peoples on the Eastern seaboard to "benefit" from European "generosity".

In reality, the majority of Native Americans who were not fatally contacted by the European fled westward onto temporarily safer ground.

The consequent lack of a plentiful indigenous labor force to correspond with the particular economic activity which arose in the region, resulted in a labor vacuum which was rapidly filled by a forced, enslaved African population. Therefore, it is plausible to conceptualize the African population as "a replacement of" the Native American population in serving the needs of the European. That is to say, it is hypothetically conceivable that if a sufficient number of indigenous peoples had survived the European onslaught and had remained (surely against their will) to labor for the European, the importation of enslaved African labor would not have been necessary. Regardless of the validity of this hypothetical argument, the point is clear: the African and indigenous populations must both be conceptualized as colonized people in the United States. This is true whether or not the African was a "replacement for" a not-so-abundant indigenous population. The same can be said of the Chicana/o population as the European expanded westward (see, for example, Barrera, 1979). Also important, however, is that although the Native American and Chicana/o populations were colonized and lost the land on which they survived, it is only the African population whose labor was systematically and savagely exploited in the form of slavery in what is now the United States.

The importance of bringing the Native American populations into this discussion regards social sciences' inability or unwillingness to conceptualize the US situation in colonial or neo-colonial terms. To the extent that colonialism is discussed, it is the relationship between the European colonists and the mother country which is so characterized. The same could be said of many other areas on the globe, particularly in Latin America. It is said, for example, that the American War of Independence was the end of colonialism in the United States. But the reality is that colonialism, in the United States, had two levels: First, and foremost, there was an occupation of land by European settlers which was currently inhabited. Secondly, there was a colonial relationship between the "new American" and the British. In the former case, there was a colonizer and a colonized, the "new American" and the indigenous populations, respectively. Moreover, this colonialism continues to this day in the US, though perhaps in a neo-colonial manner. The fact that many Native American peoples live on "reservations" which are ultimately in the hands of the state, is, simply put,

colonialism.¹ But our Euro-centric, Manifest Destiny education and language focuses solely (until very recently) on the colonial relationship between the "thirteen colonies" and the mother country. However, this should not be seen as an anomaly. Rather, this type of framework for conceptualizing and understanding the world is consistent with most colonial situations.² It is not surprising, therefore, that the African population in the United States is also viewed in relation to this Euro-centric structure. That is to say, the African population is not conceptualized as a colonized people in the United States, nor are all the pervasive factors of colonialism and neo-colonialism accounted for and applied to discussions of racial relations in the contemporary United States.

DEFINING COLONIALISM

It is necessary, at this time, to mention more specifically what is meant by colonialism and the colonial relationship between the African (as well as the Native American and the Chicana/o) and the European. In this work I rely on the definition of colonialism as set forth by Mario Barrera (1979) who defines the term as follows:

colonialism is a structured relationship of domination and subordination, where the dominant and subordinate groups are defined along ethnic and/or racial lines, and

¹ A recent stand-off between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Native Americans on several reservations in the Southwest vividly expresses the present-day colonial nature of the relationship between European and Native American. The stand-off regards the use of video poker machines on Native American lands. The state claims illegality, while the Native American nations claim autonomy. Regardless of the outcome of this particular incident, the pattern it represents is clear: Native American land in the 1990's continues to be occupied--physically, economically, culturally and politically--by a regime and people who refuse to acknowledge and accept the colonial nature of US society and the Native American struggle for self-determination.

²Take, for example, the situation in Mexico or any Latin American country. The struggle for "independence" from Spain was seen as the fight against colonialism. Yet, this was merely a struggle against one type of colonialism. The victory of 1821 was not a victory of the Aztec or Maya populations. For these populations, colonialism continues up to the present. Yet, our colonial mentality, which denies the livelihood of populations prior to European contact, has us believe that in 1821 Mexico freed itself from Spanish control. In reality, the Spanish and mestizo colonizers of Mexico were freed from overt Spanish control. The native populations, however, continued to be controlled by the colonizer.

Perhaps one present-day movement which is addressing this issue is Sendero Luminoso of Peru. In this case, it appears that the struggle is aimed at actually rejecting the totality of the colonial nature of society which is rarely addressed. That is to say, Sendero Luminoso seems to be advocating a radically new paradigm which holds as its reference point the overthrow of all facets of colonialism in the Americas. Moreover, the international campaign of 500 Years of Indigenous, Black and Popular Resistance, is also drawing attention to this situation. All of this is to illustrate the extent to which the true colonial nature of society is denied. Our language, culture, education, society... has been shaped around and wholly penetrated by a Euro-centric paradigm of history and society.

where the relationship is established and maintained to serve the interests of all or part of the dominant group (193).

A perhaps more simple but certainly compatible definition of the term is that offered by Gail Omvedt: "the economic, political and cultural domination of one cultural-ethnic group by another" (quoted in Barrera, 1979: 193). The special appeal of the latter is found in the specificity it gives to cultural domination. This type of domination is central to this work, for it moves beyond simply economic issues. This is not to deny the importance of the economic realm, nor is it meant to imply that Barrera ignores the cultural realm. However, it is true that many social scientists do, in fact, fail to account for both the economic and cultural (albeit they are closely related to one another). Furthermore, I do not wish to discuss here the differences between the numerous colonial situations which have existed in the world, for clearly there are many. Nor will I distinguish between "classic" colonialism and neo-colonialism. Rather, the definition I am employing, I believe, is general enough to capture the majority of colonial situations, as well as distinguish colonialism from other types of dominating relationships (i.e., capitalism). In capitalism, for example, there exists domination and subordination, but the relationship is not defined in terms of oppression along ethnic or cultural lines. Nor does capitalism necessitate cultural domination which is central to colonialism.

Yet, it is the cultural domination aspect of colonialism which is most often ignored by social scientists, particularly those who advance structural arguments. In fact, this appears to be the main criticism I have with liberal or Marxist approaches, as will become clear shortly. William K. Tabb (1970), for example, fails to stress this realm of oppression in the colonial arrangement, even though he correctly identifies the colonial nature of society in the United States. He states: "There are two key relationships which must be proved to exist before the colonial analogy can be accepted [in the United States]: (1) economic control and exploitation, and (2) political dependence and subjugation. Both necessitate separation and inferior status" (23). Thus, although he does advance the argument of colonialism in the United States, his argument could simply fall within the class reductionist school because he fails to explicitly address the cultural domination present in the colonial relationship. I am not suggesting that Tabb's ideas, therefore, are incorrect, but rather incomplete.

But, it must be noted that Tabb's analysis tends to be more effective than most in explaining the contemporary relationship between Africans and Europeans in the United States. This is primarily

because he does employ a colonial (or internal colonial) model in his work. The majority of social scientists, however, fail rather completely in conceptualizing the African in the United States as a colonized population. Both conservative and liberal thinkers tend to de-emphasize the importance of colonization and its effects on both the African and the European. Even "liberal" or "radical" scholars tend to deny the powerful grasp that 500 years of colonization as had on the construction of society and the paradigms which we employ to view it.

Failing to account for the fundamental colonial relationship which built the United States, most social scientists, it can be argued, actually perpetuate the colonial order. This is because, by ignoring colonial domination, one rejects the notion of self-definition and self-determination on the part of the colonized population. Denying the colonial relationship results in placing hopes in racial equality through assimilation or integration. That is to say, although many scholars overtly claim to steer clear of advancing assimilation or integration as solutions, they often end up, in the final instance, advocating these methods if only by not conceptualizing alternatives. I believe this is the case primarily because the colonial relationship is not acknowledged and accounted for which inherently limits the analysis and restricts the parameters of our paradigms.

Colonialism in the United States can not be separated from capitalism. Colonialism is, after all, a particular form of capitalism. For this reason, class-based theories are quite effective at explaining the current situation of Africans in the United States. However, class-based theories do not go far enough because they fail to address the additional pillars on which colonialism rests. Thus, it is necessary to bring to an analysis of the United States a colonial paradigm which will adequately address the economic, cultural and political spheres which oppressed and continue to oppress the colonized population. In specific, it can be argued that in the economic realm, racial privilege, in addition to class, characterizes the colonial relationship between European and African. In the cultural sphere, the colonial relationship is characterized by the oppressor imposing an identity (and consequently history, culture, position...) on the colonized. Finally, the colonial relationship is maintained through the political sphere by creating a state of dependency. Therefore, although class does play a pivotal role in the United States, the relationship between the African and European must

be viewed through the colonial paradigm which includes racial privilege, cultural identity, and political dependence.

In the remainder of this work, I discuss each of these issues. In doing so, I refer to various approaches to the race relations question which fail to adequately account for these issues. Such a failure, it is argued, actually perpetuates the colonial relationship by inevitably advocating some type of assimilation on the part of the African population.

THE ECONOMIC SPHERE AND RACIAL PRIVILEGE

Although racial privilege is not limited to the economic sphere, it is here that it most often plays out and has the most differentiating effect. Clearly, if one approaches society from a materialist perspective, this is necessarily the case. Moreover, it is in the economic sphere that racial privilege and racial ideologies which created racial privilege developed. Therefore, in discussing racial privilege, it is necessary to first address the development of racial ideologies. Then, with an understanding of racial privilege, the deficiencies of both the immigrant analogy and class-based models should become apparent.

Racial Ideologies which lead to Racial Privilege

Racial ideologies developed out of economic interest. That is to say, belief systems which advocated an inherent inferiority because of one's race seems to have developed out of the need to justify the vulgar exploitation of the African by the European. This does not mean that ethnocentrism has not been commonplace in history. However, the belief in biological superiority developed only when slavery came under attack. Thus, African enslavement, though economically motivated, needed ideological justification if it were to continue. Simple ethnocentrism, however, did not justify such a vulgar exploitation. As Barrera points out, the belief that one's own ethnic group is superior to others has been commonplace in history. Yet this belief

has traditionally been justified on cultural grounds, often religious in nature, and not on the idea that the other groups are inherently and biologically inferior. It was not until biological thinking began to displace religious thinking in the eighteenth century that

racial distinctions in the modern sense could be made, and it was not until the nineteenth century that full-blown racial ideologies were developed (197).

Barrera further points out that racial ideologies were always tied to the advancement of certain interests. These ideologies, particularly in the "New World", served to justify the exploitative relationships. Thus, the belief that the African was not equal to the European, if even fully human, ideologically justified the vulgar exploitation of the African in serving the needs of the European.

William Julius Wilson (1980) contends:

the planters created and cultivated the ideology of biological racism, declaring blacks biogenetically inferior to whites, both as a weapon to justify the system of slavery when it was under attack . . . and in order to generate a spurious race pride among white laborers and thus diffuse labor militancy by stressing color distinctions instead of class distinctions (46).

Stephen Steinberg (1989) states it plainly: "It is facile to think that blacks were enslaved because they were seen as inferior; it would be closer to the truth to say that they were defined as inferior so that they might be enslaved" (30). Pierre van den Berghe (1981) further comments:

Colonials are treated as . . . complete strangers whose very humanity is sometimes called into question. . . . A saying of Andean Mestizos concerning Indians puts it well: *El indio es al [sic] animal que mas [sic] se parece al hombre*. ("The Indian is the animal which most closely resembles man.") Not unexpectedly, racism is the ideology of colonialism, *par excellence*, . . . (85-86).

Thus it must be recognized that, racial ideologies developed out of the economic sphere. The result of racial ideologies is racial privilege. Therefore, in a discussion of the United States, it is not enough to merely focus on class or capitalism. Rather, race has played an extremely important role in the development of society. That is to say, racial ideologies and racial privilege must be accounted for in any discussion of race relations in the United States. Yet few social scientists actually address racial privilege. Those that do (namely, dual labor market theory and split labor market theory(see, for example, Bonacich, 1972, 1976)) tend to ultimately reduce race to class. Moreover, these theories do not recognize that once racial privilege is institutionalized and becomes part of European culture (even with the overt dismissal of racial ideologies), race becomes an organizing principle in itself. Prior to looking at class theory, however, it is important first to address the immigrant analogy approach which both liberal and conservatives have evoked in analyzing the situation of the African in the United States. The immigrant analogy, like class-based models, fails to address racial privilege.

Immigrant Analogy

In analyzing the African situation in the United States, many public policy recommendations and scholarly works have invoked a comparison between the African population and immigrant populations. This comparison is done by conceptualizing the situation of Africans as one limited to "minority" status. That is to say, since Africans are a less numerous population in comparison to Anglo-Saxons in the United States, they can and should be compared to other "minority" populations such as the Italian, Irish, Asian or Latin American. This type of comparison is referred to as the immigrant analogy, for it treats the African population as occupying a social position equal to that of immigrant populations. I wish to state clearly at this point the need to flatly reject such an analogy.

In general, the analogy is based on a question of integration and assimilation. Although many authors deny this position, my claim can be supported rather simply. For example, R. A. Schermerhorn (1970) states that the central question in comparative research in ethnic relations is: "What are the conditions that foster or prevent the integration of ethnic groups into their environing societies?" The immigrant analogy (or the comparison of populations which inevitably are historically and culturally distinct) seeks to answer the same question. Schermerhorn further clarifies for us the meaning of integration. He states: "As presented here, integration is not an end-state but a *process* whereby units or elements of a society are brought into an active and coordinated compliance with the ongoing activities and objectives of the dominant group in that society" (14, my emphasis). Such a guiding question is not necessarily misguided. However, when one considers the fact that roughly every corner of the globe has been colonized by European forces and continues to be in a subservient position--serving the needs of the European--such a guiding question becomes merely a perpetuation of the colonial relationship. Add to this the simple, but vivid statement by Tabb: "Integration is possible only between equals. Since a colonial relation is inherently unequal, it must be broken before one can talk of integration" (23). Moreover, those researchers who argue that integration is not actually their desired outcome might, instead, advance pluralism as the goal. However, the options of cultural, ethnic or political pluralism face the same difficulty. That is to say, pluralism can not be achieved in a society which has been structured and defined by the colonizer.

Therefore, whether overt integration or covert integration (as would be the case in pluralism) is desired, the immigrant analogy necessarily advances an integrationist approach.

The immigrant analogy can take on two forms. On the one hand, the African can be compared to European immigrant populations (e.g., Italian, Irish, Jewish) and the African ghetto is compared to the European minority ghetto. On the other hand, the African can be compared to another colonized population (e.g., Latin American, Asian). In both cases, the result is a perpetuation of racial ideologies directed against the African and the reinforcement of European supremacy. In the latter case--when comparing the African population to other colonized populations--the immigrant analogy serves little other purpose than the pursuit of constructing or maintaining conflict and antagonism among the populations it compares. Stated crudely, the immigrant analogy fuels the colonial "divide and conquer" technique because it is based on the notion of assimilation into European society. Therefore, when the African population is compared to a group which has a "higher assimilation or integration rate" than that of the African (which is almost always the case), racial ideologies are fueled and perpetuated and a "blaming of the victim" is certain to follow. It can be argued, in fact, that the primary purpose of the immigrant analogy is not to understand the effects of colonialism and confront them, but rather to preserve European supremacy across all non-European populations.

Yet, it must be noted that the analogy is often employed by liberals in an attempt to actually bring attention to the differences between the immigrant and African populations. In reality, however, merely employing the technique (whatever the intended purpose) serves to create conflicts among the compared populations and advance assimilation into European society as the desired outcome. I believe Ivan Light (1972), for example, wishes to demonstrate the absurdity of comparing the African with the Chinese and Japanese immigrant populations. Yet, he demonstrates the absurdity by actually employing the comparison. Although his conclusions reveal that these are not equivalent populations and therefore should not be placed on the same balance, his employing the technique actually acknowledges the immigrant analogy as a valid research method. Similarly, Edna Bonacich (with Light (1988)) also employs the technique. In their study of Korean entrepreneurs, they often compare the group to "local workers" or "local poor". Bonacich questions: "Why was the American Dream left to non-American immigrants?" (367). What follows is a litany of reasons why Koreans

were more likely to enter into small business than were "locals". With regard to local "disadvantages minorities", the author states: "The ["disadvantaged minorities"] were likely to have less capital and less education than the immigrants. There may also have been cultural and experiential differences . . ." (368). Welfare and unemployment insurance were also believed to have played a role. The question sure to arise is: Is such a comparison valid and if so, does it contribute to the state of knowledge? With regard to comparing the African population in the United States to an immigrant population, I would argue that it is not valid nor does it contribute to our state of knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative to fully reject the analogy from the outset.

Although the social sciences are always faced with employing imperfect data, we must continually maintain the notion of "all else being equal" or "all else held constant". The immigrant analogy, when employed with the African population is a far cry from this methodological position. One group is comprised of voluntary (though perhaps economically forced) immigrants (some which are European, others, at the very least, not African). The other group is comprised of non-voluntary, colonized African residents in the United States. The only issue being equal for non-European immigrants and the African population is that both groups are, by skin color, minorities in a European society. This one equality does not justify employing the immigrant analogy.¹

Thus, the conservative position which employs the immigrant analogy does so in the hopes of saying: "Well the Italian/Irish/Asian/etc succeeded in America, why can't the Africans?". The liberal responds by employing the analogy and saying: "See, here's all the reasons the Asian succeeds and not the African."² And even by concluding that the immigrant analogy is not a valid analogy, the liberal's effect is the same as the conservatives: it creates animosity between populations because even if the researcher rejects the assumption, the research itself assumes some common baseline from which to compare the populations. I would argue further, that comparing the African population to other colonized populations such as the Native American and Chicano/a is also dangerous because colonization effected these populations quite differently. Thus, we must recognize the futile

¹ I hope not to be misunderstood. The comparison of immigrant groups in the United States may be a valid research tool, depending on the groups. A comparison between, say, Irish and Italian immigrants or Salvadoran and Guatemalan, etc . . . is not inherently misguided. It is when the immigrant analogy is applied toward the African population that it must be rejected.

² I do not wish to be understood as advancing the notion that the Asian population has, in fact, "succeeded." I am merely presenting an example.

nature of the immigrant analogy, mention it as futile and categorically and comprehensively reject it because, above all, it fails to conceptualize the African as a colonized population, viewing it instead as simply a "minority" population.

Along the same lines, conceptualizing the African population simply as a "minority" population (as the immigrant analogy does) fails to account for racial privilege in the colonial relationship. Although this is plainly obvious when the African is compared to a European immigrant population, it is also present in a comparison with other populations. The racial position accorded to Africans in the United States has always been the lowest. It seems most likely to me that this is a product of the enslavement of Africans which was justified by a racial ideology which tended to demonstrate the "evolutionary pattern" of humanity from black to white. It is plausible that such an ideology is facilitated by the idea of a "somatic norm image" to which Harry Hoetink (1967) refers. However, and this is the crucial point, racial ideologies and racial privilege developed from the material interests of colonizing powers. The form these racial ideologies took (and the possible hierarchy of racial privilege if it does exist) is a result of institutionalization of racial ideologies which allowed race to develop into an autonomous (if only relatively autonomous) organizing principle. For this reason, just as the African population can not be "reduced" to or compared to simply any "minority" population, nor can the relationship between the African and European be reduced to class. However, many structural arguments (particularly Marxist) have a tendency to do so.

Class-Based Models

The comprehensive inclusion of race in structural arguments is almost non-existent. Instead, structural theories advance class-based analyses which, in essence, dismiss racial domination as merely a manifestation of class domination. John Solomos (1986), summarizing what he believes to be the Marxist camp, states: "There is no problem of 'race relations' which can be thought of separately from the structural (economic, political and ideological) features of capitalist society" (104). He continues: "Marxists agree that there is no race relations problem as such, that there is no problem of racism which can be thought of as separate from the structural features of capitalist society" (107).

Certainly with regard to the United States, it is true that race relations must be viewed in the context of capitalism. Further, given that the United States is capitalist, classes are necessarily a primary organizing principle. However, the United States, given its historical development, is not only capitalist but is, in addition, racist. Capitalism in the United States has its foundation in colonialism. Therefore, in analyzing society in the United States, the colonial relationship must be accounted for, rather than simply attributed to capitalism. The relationship is capitalist, but it is a type of capitalism which incorporates a racial dimension. Therefore, class-based theories fail to account for racial privilege which is at the heart of the colonial relationship. Robert Blauner (1972) states it well:

Social privilege is not unique to racist societies. Like hierarchy and exploitation, it is a universal feature of all class societies, including those in which ethnic and racial division are insignificant. . . . systematic inequality and systematic injustice are built into the very nature of stratified societies. But when these inequalities and injustices fall most heavily upon people who differ in color or national origin because race and ethnicity are primary principles upon which people are excluded or blocked in the pursuit of their goals, such a society is in addition racist (22: my emphasis).

Elsewhere he states: "For America is clearly a mixed society that might be termed colonial capitalist or racial capitalist" (13).

One can imagine if individuals would have been enslaved regardless of race or ethnicity or religion, etc. that the United States today might be simply capitalist. This was, however, not the case. As we know, with the enslavement of Africans came racial ideologies and racial privilege which became institutionalized in our society. As a result, it is imperative to address race as one of the primary principles of organization. I do not contend that it is the primary principle, nor that it is more primary than class. In fact, it is probably more superficial than class in that it is based on physical appearance rather than resources (which allows for ease in control on the part of society). Whether superficial or not, it is clearly one of the primary organizing principles (as is gender) and, therefore, must be asserted as such. Racial privilege is perhaps as powerful as class privilege. This is, after all, the essence of the colonial relationship.

But it is crucial to keep in mind that racial privilege is not limited to the economic sphere. Though it is materialized in this sphere (which allows social scientists to actually measure it), racial privilege is present in all realms of society. Jeffrey Prager (1972-73) points this out as follows:

A system of racial subordination operates in this country for purposes separate and distinct from the system of capitalist exploitation. . . . The presence of privilege in the American system indicates that all white people benefit (though in different ways) from this system of racial subordination. . . . The presence of privilege intimates that through economic, cultural, political and psychological processes, white people have historically been able to advance at the expense of and because of the presence of black people and other members of the Third World (133).

Thus, I wish to turn now and look at the cultural dimension of the cultural realm.

THE CULTURAL SPHERE AND IMPOSED IDENTITY

In specifically addressing the cultural sphere of society, I am not denying the primacy of economic factors in shaping society. In fact, as I have argued earlier, racial ideologies and racial privilege first generate out of the need to justify and facilitate domination in the economic sphere. However, racial ideologies and, consequently, racial privilege become incorporated into a culture with time. That is to say, racial privilege becomes institutionalized and is thus reproduced, not necessarily by individuals acting consciously, but by the structures of colonialism itself.

Blauner notes: "The colonial situation differs from the class situation of capitalism precisely in the importance of culture as an instrument of domination. Colonialism depends on conquest, control, and the imposition of new institutions and ways of thought" (67). Ashis Nandy (1983) comments, "the impact of colonialism on India was deep. The economic exploitation, psychological uprooting and cultural disruption it caused were tremendous" (31: my emphasis). Nandy is referring mostly to the indigenous population of India, but it is easy to imagine the multiplied effect colonialism had on the African population in the United States, having being transplanted, separated and enslaved.

In the case of Africans in the United States, not only was the culture disrupted, it was also denied. That is to say, the racial ideologies which developed often denied the very humanity of the African, not to mention the denial of culture. Instead, an identity was imposed by the colonizing European on the colonized African. As John Rex (1986) points out, an essential element in racial ideologies is that "ethnic groups sometimes had identities imposed on them to restrict their mobility and to facilitate their exploitation and oppression" (71). For example, all Africans, regardless of particular histories or cultures, were categorized as one group. Clearly this facilitated the economic

interests of Europeans. Histories and cultures of the African population were ignored by the colonizer who defined the colonized to serve the European's needs. From the perspective of the dominant society, the African quickly became a population without history and without culture.

In a colonial relationship, it is central that the colonized are defined by the colonizer. Thus, the African was deprived of self-definition which, necessarily, result in European cultural domination. Even with shifting economic needs and changing racial ideologies, one thing is clear: the identity of the African has always been imposed. The structures of the colonial relationship perpetuate this imposition of identity. All aspects of African life--from family structure to speech to values--are viewed in comparison to the European. This is particularly the case in the social sciences.

Depriving the African of self-definition has implications for both the African and the European.

As James E. Blackwell (1991) states:

By reassuring white superordination through legal sanctions, [racial ideologies] were instrumental in creating a socio-psychological state among most white Americans . . . -- that is, the belief in the inherent inferiority of the black race and the natural superiority of white people. In time, many blacks internalized this view (9).

Similarly, van den Berghe observes:

[The colonized] principal defense was often to "work within the system," i.e. to pretend to be what his masters thought he was and by doing so, to manipulate, evade and deceive to maximum advantage. Indeed, deceit is the last resort of the weak in oppressive situations. But it has its costs too. The role of the "good native" ascribed to the colonial subject was demeaning and robbed him of human dignity; furthermore, by playing it, he reinforced the stereotype that created the role in the first instance and thereby helped perpetuate the system (109).

Yet the importance of cultural domination as it regards race relations is rarely addressed in sociological work. Although cultural representation and culture certainly have been discussed, most of these discussions fail to conceptualize cultural domination within the structural framework of the colonial relationship. Rather, when culture is addressed, it is often placed "beyond," "parallel to," or "as an alternative to" the economic realm. My argument here, however, is that the cultural domination of the African population, specifically the colonizer imposing an identity on the colonized, developed out of the economic interests of Europeans. Moreover, the economic and cultural realms are very much attached to each other. I would go as far as to say that one cannot be wholly separated from the other. Thus, it is only by addressing the cultural sphere within the colonial framework that we will understand its full implications.

As cultural domination has become institutionalized, it continues to serve the interests of the colonizer by maintaining the colonial relationship. Failure on the part of social scientists to address the effects of cultural domination further perpetuates the colonial relationship. Liberal social scientists, in particular, though not overtly, tend to perpetuate the colonial relationship by failing to account for cultural domination which robs the African population of self-definition.

Throughout the spectrum, from conservative to liberal, many sociological works advocate "color blind" public policy. More often than not, this policy recommendation is founded in the belief that the economic situation in which the majority of Africans find themselves can be separated from the cultural domination to which the African continues to be subjected. For example, van den Berghe comments: "In short, notwithstanding much recent ideology to the contrary, Afro-Americans are as Anglo as anyone is in America" (177). Such a comment suggests that the experience, history, and culture of the "Anglo" is the same as that experienced by the African in the United States. Volumes have been written and everything in this paper thus far speak to the contrary. The experiences of the African in the United States compare to no other group of peoples on earth. Therefore, the type of thinking van den Berghe's statement represents is, simply put, colonial.

Yet this is precisely the type of thinking which is often involved in "color blind" policy recommendations. For example, many were surprised to see Nixon's advisor on urban social problems, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, advance essentially a class-reductionist model. It should, however, come as no surprise that a "conservative" would deny the colonial relationship and advance a color blind approach, especially in light of the fact that color blindness is often advanced by "liberals". Cultural domination and self-definition, is ignored which means the colonial relationship is denied.

Color blind approaches, for example, expect that European and African workers in the United States, would hold similar points of reference, similar desires, and above all, similar experiences of exploitation. Such an expectation, however, denies the colonial relationship. Just as we would not expect the European working class and the native working class in South Africa to hold a common perspective, nor should we expect it in the United States among the European and African populations. Color blindness, in a society in which the effects of colonialism so vibrantly persist,

merely perpetuates cultural dominance at least to the extent to which it advocates assimilation of Africans into dominant European culture.

Color blindness in a colonial society merely places a mask on cultural domination. James Turner (1973) vividly makes this point by criticizing: "Much of the academic research and analysis of the race relations situation during the past three decades seems to accept the liberal assumption of historian Kenneth M. Stamp that, 'Negros are, after all, only white men with black skins, nothing more, nothing less'" (241). Thus, if one accepts Stamp's position, one is flatly denying, at the very least, cultural differences and, in general, the colonial experience. Further, it is interesting to question how many times these liberals would go as far as to say "Europeans are, after all, only black men with white skins, nothing more, nothing less". Though these statements are technically equivalent, it is rare to ever hear the latter.

Thus, cultural domination is rooted in the colonizer imposing an identity on the colonized. Having been robbed of self-definition, the African population has faced increasing difficulty to assert any alternative to assimilation. This is not to say, however, that assimilation is inevitable. In fact, because of the effect of cultural domination on the European, assimilation and integration of the African is impossible. Notwithstanding any "American Creed," history tells us that in European defined society, there is a particular place for the African. This position is not equal to that of the European. That is to say, assimilation is impossible until the colonial relationship is shattered, in which case there would be no assimilation, but rather self-defined, self-determined liberation. This is not, however, an easy task. In fact, in light of what has occurred in the political realm, the notion of asserting a self-identity is becoming (or remaining) quite difficult. I wish to turn, now, to address the political realm, though, I admit, in a rather incomplete fashion.

THE POLITICAL SPHERE AND DEPENDENCY

By denying the African the ability of self-definition, the maintenance of the colonial relationship is largely placed in the political sphere. That is to say, there is rarely the need to engage in full-scale

physical coercion to maintain the oppression of the African population. Force is, however, certainly employed by the state in the form of an occupying army--the police. But, there are also non-violent, systematic ways in which the colonial relationship is maintained. These include, but are not limited to, affirmative action, public sector employment, welfare, "foreign aid", and the "democratic" political process as a whole. In essence, the colonial relationship is maintained by creating a situation of political dependency.

Tabb, in his chapter entitled: "The Black Ghetto as a Colony" comments on what I consider the political sphere. He states:

In any colony there is always room for bright natives to hold responsible and important positions . . . Education and the acceptance of the goals and outlook of the colonial power were (and are) the requisites for the acquisition of such jobs by natives. These acculturated natives can serve as minor functionaries in the ghetto . . . They can act as middlemen between other natives and the colonist businessmen who can reside "abroad." Natives who are brought into the system not only directly serve the colonial power but also are examples to others of how working hard within the system can bring advancement. Their success suggests that others who work can make it as well, and that those who do not are to blame for their own failure (27).

If this type of analysis is correct (which colonial experiences throughout the world certainly suggest is the case), then one can argue that the role of the political sphere in colonialism is the maintenance of the colonial relationship: dependency. It is through the political sphere that the imposed identity is solidified.

One issue which must certainly be placed in the political realm is affirmative action because it is, after all, a policy of the state. With regard to this issue, van den Berghe makes several observations which illustrate the degree to which affirmative action serves the colonial relationship (though I must state that I firmly disagree with the conclusions he draws). He comments on three observations which relate well to the ideas of Tabb outlined above. Firstly, van den Berghe states: "Among the nonwhite minority groups themselves, bitter factionalism and hostility are fanned in the competitive process of fighting over the rather meager spoils of affirmative action" (181). Secondly, he contends: "Affirmative action increases the class gulf between the black middle class and the ghetto subproletariat. It clearly benefits some of the former, but does little or nothing to alleviate the very serious and worsening problems of the latter" (181). Finally, he states: "Affirmative action demeans the groups it is supposed to help since the rationale for it implies inferiority. Its philosophy is

clearly paternalist, and it often creates a quasicolonial structure for blacks (in the form of "offices of minority affairs," "black studies programs," racially labeled scholarships, awards and positions, and the like)" (181-182).

It is easy to notice, through these observations, the extent to which the colonial relationship, in the form of racial privilege and cultural domination, is perpetuated through affirmative action. Moreover, at the foundation of affirmative action is the dependence of colonized populations on the colonizer and it can be argued that affirmative action actually increases that dependence. The result of affirmative action programs (particularly those aimed at middle-class Africans) is a dependence on institutions and forces outside African control (e.g., education, employment,...). In addition, it seems that those most likely to benefit from affirmative action are those individuals or sectors of the African population who have internalized cultural dominance. That is to say, affirmative action necessarily advocates assimilation into dominant society which results in a perpetuation of the colonial relationship.

Another issue in the political sphere is public sector employment. There appear to have been created "pockets" of employment specifically designated as "African" jobs. These jobs are most heavily concentrated in public sector, and therefore, should be considered in the political sphere. Similarly, the welfare system in the United States is structured in such a fashion as to perhaps reduce starvation, but it is certainly not structured in a way which might reduce poverty. The result both public sector employment and welfare is a dependence on the state. Additionally, though little capital is aimed at the African population, that which is can be considered "foreign aid." That is to say, whether private or public, the funds which are aimed at the African community are within the realm of programs "approved" by the colonizer. The colonial relationship is, thus, maintained, paralleling "foreign aid" in the international context.

Also noteworthy in the political sphere is "democratic" process which can be termed in classic colonial terms: indirect rule. Africans are typically gaining control of political institutions at a time when those institutions are dependent on either corporate or state decisions. Tabb points to the dependence of the African population on the colonizer. He writes:

Richard Hatcher, the mayor of Gary, Indiana, commented in a speech that his electoral success had not brought about meaningful black control: 'There is much talk about

black control of the ghetto,' he said. 'What does that mean? I am mayor of a city of roughly 90,000 black people, but we do not control the possibilities of jobs for them, of money for their schools, or state-funded social services" (31).

Tabb further notes: "Once black leaders are chosen and start dealing with those who hold real power, they will find that in order to get concessions they must first get rid of the militants who are 'causing trouble and alienating the whites'" (31-32). These militants, I believe, are those confronting the colonial relationship. In specific, these militants are often asserting their own identity, which is perhaps the most threatening to the colonial regime.

Therefore, even with the election of Africans to the political structure, the colonial relationship remains intact. In order to reach political power in the first place, one must, at the very least, resist self-definition. Once in power, one perpetuates the colonial relationship by "playing by the rules set forth by the colonizers."

Manning Marable (1983) comments on this political dependence in the following way:

In the U.S. form of constitutional government, racial minorities can influence major public policies only when their agenda is sufficiently acceptable to one or both of the major white capitalist parties . . . Blacks are pressured to become dependent on white liberals and moderates to articulate their agendas . . . Historically, this has meant that many Blacks have been forced into political coalitions with whites, . . . formations which are usually directed by whites, financed by whites, and chiefly comprised of whites. . . . The NAACP, Urban League, and other civil rights groups in the twentieth century were dependent upon white foundation, corporate and political support. . . . Blacks repeatedly were trapped into alliances as dependent clients, unable or unwilling to break from the logic of a closed but supposedly democratic system (8).

Although the ideas presented in this section regarding the political sphere are largely preliminary, I do believe they serve as issues which must be confronted. Moreover, when viewed in relation to the cultural and economic realms, the notion of political dependency leads to a particular approach regarding the struggle for racial equality. At the very least, the struggle for true racial equality must acknowledge and address the colonial relationship.

CONCLUSION

It is my hope that through this paper I have demonstrated the need to conceptualize race relations in the United States as a colonial relationship. By looking at various works in the social sciences regarding race relations, I have attempted to illustrate the shortcomings of approaches which fail to

consider the economic, cultural and political spheres which are active in the colonial relationship. Moreover, I have attempted to illustrate how, in failing to view the United States in a colonial framework actually perpetuates colonialism.

Colonialism in the United States (as elsewhere) is based on racial privilege, cultural domination--in particular, an imposed identity on the colonized--and political dependence. Each of these areas, working together and having been institutionalized, maintain a situation of colonization in the United States. Therefore, any effort to achieve true racial equality must address the very foundation of society in the United States: colonialism.

Assimilation is nothing more than a neutral term for European supremacy, for it denies the validity of self-defined identities on the part of colonized populations. True racial equality is only possible through the assertion of self-defined identity. James Turner (1973) comments:

The issue of identity is inescapable, and pride in race is playing a crucial part in the new identity; it no doubt will lead--as it already has done--to a considerable degree of racial self-consciousness. Many black men and women are not struggling to become free, simply in order to disappear. [On the contrary] there are Afro-Americans who do not want to disappear and desire to preserve specifically Afro-American values and cultural traits (240).

Ralph Ellison (1973) adds:

For the solution of the problem of the American Negro and democracy lies only partially in the white man's free will. Its full solution will lie in the creation of a democracy in which the Negro will be free to define himself for what he is and, within the large framework of that democracy, for what he desires to be (82: my emphasis).

The full solution, then, is racial liberation. True racial equality, within the colonial relationship, is impossible for it counters the interests of the colonizer. Consequently, we must not focus solely on the "European prejudice" side of the equation. The burden, at least most of it, must shift to the African population and defining its own identity on the colonizer. This is necessarily the first step. Within the colonial paradigm, only assimilation is possible. It is the paradigm itself which must be destroyed in favor of full human liberation.

The role of the social sciences, then, is firstly to de-colonize itself. The colonial nature of society and its institutions must be acknowledged and confronted. Additionally, the social sciences need to develop concrete means (though not necessarily within the confines of the current framework

of society) of breaking economic and political dependency. Above all, the focus of the social sciences must be praxis.

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be praxis.

--Paolo Freire

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