Paradigms of Race
Ethnicity, Class, and Nation

Introduction

Theories of race—of its meaning, its transformations, the significance of racial events—have never been a top priority in social science. The great social theorists of the 19th century, towering figures such as Ferdinand Toennies, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber, were all consumed with analyzing the transition from feudalism to capitalism and interpreting the dynamic forces shaping the emergent capitalist order. Although they shared this central intellectual concern, these men could not agree on which structural relationships were the most important factors in explaining the new bourgeois industrial society. What they could agree upon, though, was the belief that racial and ethnic social bonds, divisions, and conflicts were remnants of a preindustrial order which would decline in significance in the modern period. Marx and Engels, for example, predicted that as society split up into two great, antagonistic classes, social distinctions such as race and ethnicity would decrease in importance.

In the U.S., although the “founding fathers” of American sociology (men such as Lester Ward, William Graham Sumner, and Edward A. Ross) were explicitly concerned with the state of domestic race relations, racial theory remained one of the least developed fields of sociological inquiry. The pioneers were greatly influenced, not only by the Europeans, but also by the
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Social Darwinist currents of the period. Their work contributed, sometimes inadvertently but often by intention, to the racist hysteria of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The epoch of the emergence of modern social science in the U.S. coincided with a sustained period of racial reaction, marked by the institutionalization of Jim Crow in the South and the success of the movement for Asian exclusion. Especially in this atmosphere, adherence to biologicist perspectives on race severely limited innovation and social scientific interest in this field.2

Starting in the 1920s, the Chicago school of sociology began to rework social scientific approaches to race. The Chicago sociologists, led by Robert E. Park, were the first modern analysts of the subject, and their thinking shaped the dominant theoretical and methodological assumptions about race relations for the greater part of this century. Park's race-relations cycle, with its four stages of contact, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation, is widely regarded as one of the most important contributions to the field. Park postulated the cycle as a law of historical development, a way of analyzing group relations and assessing a "minority" group's progress along a fixed continuum.1

Beginning with Park's concepts, a set of assumptions have gradually come to characterize the field and serve as guides for social scientists investigating the nature of race in the United States. Blauner discusses these assumptions as follows:

First, the view that racial and ethnic groups are neither central nor persistent elements of modern societies. Second, the idea that racism and racial oppression are not independent dynamic forces but are ultimately reducible to other causal determinants, usually economic or psychological. Third, the position that the most important aspects of racism are the attitudes and prejudices of Americans. And, finally, the so-called immigrant analogy, the assumption, critical in contemporary thought, that there are no essential long-term differences—i.e. relation to the larger society—between the third world or racial minorities and the European ethnic groups.4

These assumptions are as much political and ideological as they are theoretical. They neglect both the institutional and ideological nature of race in America, and the systemic presence of racial dynamics in such social spheres as education, art, social policy, law, religion, and science. Instead they focus attention on racial dynamics as the irrational products of individual pathologies.5 Such assumptions make it impossible to grasp the specificity of racism and racial conflict in the U.S. They lead the analyst toward evolutionary models which optimistically predict the gradual absorption of distinct groups into the mainstream of American political, economic, and cultural life.6 Theories based on these assumptions, therefore, reveal as much about the prevailing state of racial politics and racial ideology as they do about the nature of race relations.

Three Approaches to Race

Racial theory is shaped by actually existing race relations in any given historical period. Within any given historical period, a particular racial theory is dominant—despite often high levels of contestation. The dominant racial theory provides society with "common sense" about race, and with categories for the identification of individuals and groups in racial terms. Challenges to the dominant racial theory emerge when it fails adequately to explain the changing nature of race relations, or when the racial policies it prescribes are challenged by political movements seeking a different arrangement.

In Part One of this work, we examine recent racial theory in the U.S. We argue that this theory is encompassed by three paradigmatic approaches to race and race relations—approaches based on the categories of ethnicity, class, and nation. These approaches are paradigms7 which have particular core assumptions and which highlight particular key variables. Racial paradigms serve as guides for research and have implicit and explicit policy and political action orientations.

There are, of course, limitations to this approach. We do not suggest that these three paradigms encompass all the racial theories generated during the period under consideration, but we do think that they embrace the vast bulk of them and demarcate the major lines of debate. Specific theories, and the paradigms themselves, are treated as ideal types: that is, the paradigms represent distillations for the purpose of analysis of complex and variegated theoretical arguments. A qualification to our approach, therefore, is the recognition that often a specific study cannot be neatly classified in one or the other paradigm. In many cases a particular work which we locate in one paradigm contains arguments which resemble those suggested by another paradigm. Any sophisticated theory, moreover, tries to take account of competing approaches by responding to particular elements—criticizing some, and integrating and synthesizing others.

Having made these qualifications, we suggest that in the contemporary period, race and racial dynamics in the U.S. have been theoretically understood by relying on one of three central categories: ethnicity, class, or
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nation. The dominant paradigm of race for the last half-century has been that of ethnicity. Ethnicity theory emerged in the 1920s as a challenge to then predominant biologicist and Social Darwinist conceptions of race. Securing predominance by World War II, it shaped academic thinking about race, guided public policy issues, and influenced popular “racial ideology” well into the mid-1960s.

At that point ethnicity theory was challenged by class- and nation-based paradigms of race. These theoretical challenges originated with the black and other racial minority movements which rejected two central aspects of the ethnicity approach: the European immigrant analogy which suggested that racial minorities could be incorporated into American life in the same way that white ethnic groups had been, and the assumption of a fundamental, underlying American commitment to equality and social justice for racial minorities.

The appearance in the late 1970s and 1980s of a white “backlash” signalled the decline of these challenges and marked the resurgence of ethnicity theory. Although it has sustained major attacks and required reformulation in certain respects, the dominant paradigm of ethnicity has not been supplanted. Today ethnicity theory once again reigns supreme in the somewhat altered guise of neoconservatism.

In the following three chapters, we discuss the three paradigms of race as part of a broader understanding of the evolution of racial theory, ideology, and politics from the 1960s to the 1980s. Our concern here is not to elaborate our own approach to racial theory. That theoretical viewpoint, advanced in the concept of racial formation, is presented in Chapter 4. Nor will we dwell on the political dynamics of race during the period in question. That subject is considered theoretically in Chapter 5, and historically in Chapters 6 and 7. Rather, our immediate purpose is to elaborate and evaluate the existing range of racial theory. By locating established approaches to race in the three paradigms and discussing the development of the dominant approach and its challengers, we shall set the stage for the introduction of our own perspective in the next section of the book.

We argue that, in the absence of a clear conception of race itself, studies of race developed during the postwar period had perforce to rely on one of the three central categories of ethnicity, class, or nation in their interpretations of racial dynamics in the U.S. Race has not been afforded explicit theoretical primacy since the demise of the biologicist approaches of the previous eras. Thinking about race since that time has subordinated it to a supposedly “broader” category or conception. Thus the existing racial theories—both dominant and challenging—have all missed the man-

ner in which race has been a fundamental axis of social organization in the U.S. It is for this reason that, in the following chapters and in this book as a whole, we attempt to develop an alternative conception which does not treat race epiphenomenally or subsume it within a supposedly more fundamental category.
Ethnicity

The definition of the terms "ethnic group" and "ethnicity" is muddy. "The connotation of an ethnic 'group,'" William Peterson writes in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups,*

...[I]ts members are at least latently aware of common interests. Despite the difficulty of determining at what point people become a group, that is, the point at which coherence becomes established, it is important to retain the fundamental distinction between a group and a category...¹

Theoretically, the ethnicity paradigm represents the mainstream of the modern sociology of race. The paradigm has passed through three major stages: a pre-1930s stage in which the ethnic group view was an insurgent approach, challenging the biologicist (and at least implicitly racist) view of race which was dominant at that time; a 1930s to 1965 stage during which the paradigm operated as the progressive/liberal "common sense" approach to race, and during which two recurrent themes—assimilationism and cultural pluralism—were defined; and a post-1965 phase, in which the paradigm has taken on the defense of conservative (or "neoconservative") egalitarianism against what is perceived as the radical assault of "group rights."

The ethnicity-based paradigm arose in the 1920s and 1930s as an explicit challenge to the prevailing racial views of the period. The pre-existing biologicist paradigm had evolved since the downfall of racial slavery to explain racial inferiority as part of a natural order of humankind. Whites were considered the superior race; white skin was the norm while other skin colors were exotic mutations which had to be explained.² Race was equated with distinct hereditary characteristics. Differences in intelligence, temperament, and sexuality (among other traits) were deemed to be racial in character. Racial intermixture was seen as a sin against nature which would lead to the creation of "biological throwbacks." These were some of the assumptions in social Darwinist, Spencerist, and eugenicist thinking about race and race relations.³

But by the early decades of the 20th century biologism was losing coherence. It had come under attack by adherents of Progressivism, and had also been called into question by the work of the "Chicago school" of sociology. The Progressive attack was led by Horace Kallen, who also introduced the concept of cultural pluralism, which was to become a key current of ethnicity theory. The Chicago sociologists were led by Robert E. Park, who had been secretary to Booker T. Washington, and whose approach embodied the other major current of the ethnicity paradigm, assimilationism.⁴

In contrast to biologically oriented approaches, the ethnicity-based paradigm was an insurgent theory which suggested that race was a social category. Race was but one of a number of determinants of ethnic group identity or ethnicity. Ethnicity itself was understood as the result of a group formation process based on culture and descent.⁵ "Culture" in this formulation included such diverse factors as religion, language, "customs," nationality, and political identification.⁶ "Descent" involved heredity and a sense of group origins, thus suggesting that ethnicity was socially "primordial," if not biologically given, in character. While earlier theorists did indeed assume this,⁷ later ethnicity theory came to question the validity of any primordial sense of identity or attachment, arguing instead that these concepts too were socially constructed.⁸

Early ethnicity-based theory, considered in the U.S. context, concentrated on problems of migration and "culture contact" (to use Park's phrase). The problems and foci generated by this approach have continued to preoccupy the school: incorporation and separation of "ethnic minorities," the nature of ethnic identity, and the impact of ethnicity on politics.⁹

With the advent of the vaguely egalitarian (racially speaking) vision of the New Deal¹⁰ and of the antifascism of World War II (a war which was antiracist on the Atlantic front but decidedly racist on the Pacific front), the ethnic paradigm definitively dislodged the biologicist view in what appeared to be a triumph of liberalism. There remained, to be sure, many survivals from the old theoretical system (Jim Crow retained its grip on the South, for example, which would prove crucial for racial events in the 1950s and 1960s), but in the main, cultural and intellectual acceptance of the inevitabil-
ity and even desirability of integration was achieved. Politically, the 1948 confrontation between integrationists and segregationists within the Democratic Party—a battle won decisively if not absolutely by the integrationists—symbolized the consensual shift.

Yet this victory was a hollow one where racial minorities were concerned, for the new paradigm was solidly based in the framework of European (white) ethnicity, and could not appreciate the extent to which racial inequality differed from ethnic inequality. Were the historical experiences which racial minority groups encountered similar to those of white Europeans? Were the trajectories for their perceived eventual incorporation and assimilation the same? To these questions ethnicity theorists generally answered yes. Many minority activists and movement groups, though, disagreed.

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Some Critical Remarks on the Ethnicity Paradigm

Substantial criticism has been directed at the ethnicity school for its treatment of racially defined minorities as ethnically defined minorities, and for its consequent neglect of race per se. These arguments point to the limits of the immigrant analogy in addressing what was in many cases a qualitatively different historical experience—one which included slavery, colonization, racially based exclusion, and in the case of Native Americans, virtual extirpation. In addition, it has been argued, the paradigm tends to "blame the victims" for their plight and thus to deflect attention away from the ubiquity of racial meanings and dynamics. We share much of this critique, and will not recapitulate it here. Instead we shall explore two less frequently noticed problems of the ethnicity approach to race: the social scientific, indeed methodological, limitations encountered by the ethnicity paradigm in its attempt to reduce race to an element of ethnicity, and the paradigm's consequent inability to deal with the particular character-

istics of racial minority groups as a direct consequence of this reductionism. The first of these we call the "bootstraps model"; the second we refer to as "they all look alike."

The "Bootstraps Model". As we have noted, substantial reworking of the ethnicity paradigm took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By 1975 Glazer and Moynihan felt themselves able to offer a general hypothesis on the dynamics of group incorporation: "Ethnic groups bring different norms to bear on common circumstances with consequent different levels of success—hence group differences in status."31

The "group norms/common circumstances" correlation raises enormous problems, which can in turn be traced back to the immigrant analogy. The key factor in explaining the success that an ethnic group will have in becoming incorporated into majority society (a goal whose desirability is unquestioned) is the values or "norms" which the group brings to bear on the general social circumstances it faces just as all other minorities have done. Since the independent variable is the "norms," the idea that "differences in status" could be affected by factors outside or even unrelated to the group is ruled out at the level of assumptions. Everything is mediated through "norms" internal to the group. If Chicanos don't do well in school, this cannot, even hypothetically, be due to low-quality education; it has instead to do with Chicano values. After all, Jews and Japanese Americans did well in inferior schools, so why can't other groups? Ongoing processes of discrimination, shifts in the prevailing economic climate, the development of a sophisticated racial ideology of "conservative egalitarianism" (or should we say "benign neglect")—in other words, all the concrete sociopolitical dynamics within which racial phenomena operate in the U.S.—are ignored in this approach. It is the European immigrant analogy applied to all without reservation.32

"Common circumstances," by contrast, are relegated to the dependent variable. They are the universal conditions to which each ethnic group must accommodate. The assumption is made that each minority faces the majority society alone. Successful achievement of mobility—the achievement of high group status—reflects group willingness and ability to accept the norms and values of the majority. The "difference" that characterizes a minority group, once incorporated, will be outweighed by the "commonality" it shares with the majority.

In other words, something akin to Milton Gordon's notion of "structural assimilation"33 is assumed to take place as immigrant groups pass beyond their "fresh off the boat" status and gain the acceptance of the majority. Yet this assumption is quite unwarranted with respect to racial minorities, whose distinctiveness from the white majority is often not appreciably altered by adoption of the norms and values of the white majority.
would in fact be just as plausible to assume the opposite: that in the case of racial minorities “common circumstances” consist in relatively permanent racial difference and non-incorporation.

The entire model for comparing and evaluating the success of ethnic groups in achieving higher status or in being incorporated into the majority society is limited by an unwillingness to consider whether there might be any special circumstances which racially defined minorities encounter in the U.S., circumstances which definitively distinguish their experiences from those of earlier European immigrants, and make the injunction to “pull yourselves up by your own bootstraps” impossible to fulfill.

“They All Look Alike”. In what sense can racial minority groups be considered in ethnic group terms? In what sense is the category “black,” for example, equivalent to the categories “Irish” or “Jewish”? The ethnicity paradigm does acknowledge black “uniqueness” because of the particular historical experience of institutionalized discrimination rooted in slavery. Yet there is something awkward, something one-dimensional, about ethnicity theory’s version of black exceptionalism. “Blacks” in ethnic terms are as diverse as “whites.” They resist comparison to the Jews and Irish, and even to Mexican Americans or Japanese Americans. The notion of “uniqueness” doesn’t go far enough because it is still posed within the ethnic group framework, while “black,” like “white,” is a palpably racial category.

In fact, with rare exceptions, ethnicity theory isn’t very interested in ethnicity among blacks. The ethnicity approach views blacks as one ethnic group among others. It does not consider national origin, religion, language, or cultural differences among blacks, as it does among whites, as sources of ethnicity. It would be quite interesting to see how ethnicity theory might address the range of subgroups represented in the U.S. black community. What distinctions might it employ? Haitians? Jamaicans? Francophones? Georgians? Northern/Southern? The black community has been intensively studied from an ethnographic standpoint, so there is no lack of materials for analysis. But ethnicity theory has not delved to any significant extent into the meaning of these “ethnic” distinctions.

There is, in fact, a subtly racist element in this substitution—in which whites are seen as variegated in terms of group identities, but blacks “all look alike.” In our view, this is nothing intentional, but simply the effect of the application of a paradigm based in white ethnic history to a racially defined group. Blacks are thus aggregated—and treated as the great exception—because they are so clearly racially identified in the U.S.

But this issue cannot be confined to blacks. Similar problems can be discerned in ethnicity-based treatments of other racially based categories: Native Americans, Latin Americans, and Asian Americans.
Given this qualification of the class paradigm, we suggest that there are three general approaches contained within it. We designate these as the market, stratification, and class-conflict approaches. The three approaches look to different economic spheres—to market relations (exchange), systems of stratification (distribution), and processes of class conflict (production)—to provide their respective frameworks of analysis.
The emergence of black nationalism in the mid-1960s ruptured the tenuous unity of liberal and radical factions within the civil rights movement and signalled a growing disillusionment with the moderate political agenda of nonviolence and integration. The rise and popularity of black nationalism initiated an intense theoretical and strategic debate about the nature of racism and the future of black politics in the U.S.

The nation-based analysis of black oppression and resistance had, of course, its historical antecedents. The refusal of integrationist solutions could be traced back at least to the repatriation movements of the mid-19th century, led by men such as Martin Delany and Paul Cuffe. The Pan-Africanist and Marxist-Leninist traditions had also elaborated nationalist analyses, and a substantial current of cultural nationalism existed whose components could be discerned in Du Bois’s The Souls of Black Folk, in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, and in the influential writings of Harold Cruse during the 1950s and 1960s. Strong nationalist traditions could also be found in other minority communities, notably among Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans.

The nation-based paradigm, to a far greater extent than the ethnicity- or class-based approaches, is a theoretical convergence, a resultant of disparate currents. Nationalist currents have always existed in the U.S.—in the form of minority-based political movements—responding to perceived failures of racial accommodation and integration. Nation-based approaches to race also have a long theoretical tradition, which analyzes in diverse ways the realities of racial separation and white supremacy. In the postwar period, nation-based approaches have taken on an additional theoretical dimension: the critical rejection of ethnicity-based racial theory.

Despite the wide range of specific approaches, nation-based theory is fundamentally rooted in the dynamics of colonialism. Colonialism in the age of capitalism differed from previous imperial systems in that it came to encompass the entire world. Launched from Europe in the 15th century, it reached its zenith in the 19th century, by which time all nations and territories had been assigned a place in “the modern world system.” Although in a state of disarray and breakdown today, the legacy of the colonial order remains in a variety of forms, extending from the position of international frontiers drawn in much of the colonized world by the ruling powers, to the existence of spheres of influence descended from systems of colonial rule, and indeed to the very contours of the international division of labor, based on unequal exchange and the domination of the “periphery” by the “core.” In the nation-based paradigm, racial dynamics are understood as products of colonialism and, therefore, as outcomes of relationships which are global and epochal in character.

Framing the paradigm in this way has several advantages. First, it emphasizes the relationships among the different elements of racial oppression—inequality, political disenfranchisement, territorial and institutional segregation, cultural domination—in contrast to the ethnicity or class paradigms which focus on a few aspects (or even one “fundamental” aspect) of the social order in an attempt to explain racial dynamics. Recognition of the centrality of the colonial heritage also provides an alternative to other, more taxonomic approaches to nation-based theories of race. Many writers have delineated, for example, “varieties of black nationalism”: bourgeois, proletarian, reformist, revolutionary, cultural, religious, economic, educational, etc. While efforts to catalog the range of nationalist positions within specific minority group traditions, and to trace debates within these traditions, obviously have merit, they often reveal a notable lack of specificity about the meaning of nation-based categories in such approaches. Nationalism is easily reduced to minority militance or separatism, for example, if no effort is made to specify its historical and theoretical origins in particular minority experiences of colonialism.

While not comparable in many respects, we include Pan-Africanism, cultural nationalism, Marxist debates on “The National Question,” and perspectives focusing on internal colonialism as specific analyses of race and racism which take shape within the nation-based paradigm. What these approaches share is their reliance on elements derived from the dynamics of colonialism to demonstrate the continuity of racial oppression from its origins in the national oppression prevailing in colonialism’s heyday. Chief among these is the use of racial categories to distinguish members of
the oppressor and oppressed "nations"—the colonizers and the colonized. Several consequences of these arguments may be specified: the explicit demand for organizations and movements uniformly composed of the "colonized" (i.e., the victims of racial oppression), the need for "cultural autonomy" to permit the development of those unique characteristics which the colonized group has developed or preserved through the ordeal of subjugation, or the necessity of "national liberation" to uproot the colonial heritage and restructure society on a non-racial basis.

Pan-Africanism

The roots of Pan-Africanism can be traced back to the black repatriation movements of Martin Delany, Paul Cuffe, and others in the mid-19th century. In the 20th century, Pan-Africanism took shape on two fronts: the first was a series of international conferences held in Europe and the U.S. from 1900 to 1945, most of them organized by W. E. B. Du Bois. These conferences were oriented primarily toward decolonization of Africa and had relatively little U.S. domestic impact.

The second front of Pan-Africanist activity was the formation, largely in the U.S., of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, led by Marcus Garvey. The UNIA had unprecedented success in mobilizing blacks, numbering millions of adherents at its height in the 1920s. Garvey sought to unite blacks throughout the world in a movement for the "redemption" of Africa, which he envisioned as a "racial empire." For him and his followers, Africa existed not only on the continent, but in the diaspora which slavery had visited on its inhabitants and their descendants. Thus the fates of blacks throughout the world were linked. The liberation and reconstruction of the African homeland would allow blacks finally to overcome the racial oppression which had sustained colonialism.

Garvey was greatly influenced by the doctrines of Booker T. Washington, specifically those promoting separate economic development. Garvey's economic argument, however, went beyond Washington's in two respects: first, he denounced the exploitation of Africa and African labor throughout the world. Second, he saw the black population of the U.S. not only in the "self-help" terms of Washington, but as

...a vanguard for Africa's redemption,... He believed that if the Negroes were economically strong in the United States, they would be able to redeem Africa and establish a worldwide confraternity of black people.

For all its excesses and errors, the most notorious being its rapprochement with the Ku Klux Klan, the Garvey movement represents one of the founding pillars of modern Pan-Africanism, and stands as a crucial source for much other black nationalism as well. Indeed it still represents the highwater mark of mass black political mobilization, rivaled only by the movements of the 1960s. In this respect it is entirely appropriate to treat Garveyism as the archetype of the Pan-Africanist tradition in the U.S.

Pan-Africanism maintained a limited foothold in the U.S. through the contributions of Du Bois, George Padmore, and C. L. R. James. When Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam in 1964 to form the Organization of Afro-American Unity, making a series of well-publicized trips to Africa and attempting to enlist the support of African governments in denouncing U.S. racism at the United Nations, he dramatically stimulated black interest in African issues. With the advent of "black power," the contributions of Malcolm, Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, and later, Amilcar Cabral and Walter Rodney received new attention in the U.S., and contributed to the Pan-African canon. Stokely Carmichael in particular moved to embrace Pan-Africanism after 1967.

Pan-Africanism enjoyed a further resurgence in the early 1970s. By this time, however, the fractured movement was only clinging to providing what in retrospect can only be seen as illusions of unity among black nationalists: the reference point of Africa had become symbolic. The precise character of the illusion was that U.S. political reference points could be subordinated to African ones. In 1975 even this fell apart in debates over the Angolan revolution. "Left" Pan-Africanists supported the MPLA, thereby accepting (often dogmatically) some version of Marxism and rejecting the racial determinism of "right" Pan-Africanists, who sided with UNITA.

The power of the Pan-Africanist perspective remains its ability to link the specific forms of oppression which blacks face in various societies with the colonialist exploitation and underdevelopment of Africa. The impact this theoretical current had in the U.S. stemmed from its argument that black identity conferred membership in a single worldwide black "nation"—the African diaspora itself.

Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism has had a particularly strong hold in the black community, where its roots can be traced back at least to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. As a broader phenomenon, however, cultural
nationalist perspectives have been enunciated and practiced in nearly all racially defined communities. Cultural nationalism has focused less on the political and economic elements of the nation-based approach than it has on cultural elements which give rise to collective identity, community, and a sense of "peoplehood."

Probably the most devoted and incisive cultural nationalist theorist has been Harold Cruse. In two early and highly original essays entitled "Rebellion or Revolution?" and in his massive and controversial The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, Cruse argued that "The only observable way in which the Negro rebellion can become revolutionary in terms of American conditions is for the Negro movement to project the concept of Cultural Revolution."

Cruse stressed the unique conditions facing American blacks, conditions which, while related to those encountered by other victims of colonialism, were unlike those of the African continent, the West Indies, or elsewhere. Cruse also accepted certain "domestic colonialism" concepts; indeed, he gave voice to them as early as 1962. Anticipating the "black power" view, he criticized the civil rights movement in the early 1960s for being dominated by liberal ideas and demands:

This Negro rebellion, mistakenly called by some the Negro revolution, is not revolutionary because it projects no new ideas beyond what have already been ratified in the democratic philosophy of the American Constitution.

He proposed that the movement "incorporate . . . a cultural program along with its economic, social, and political programs." A "cultural program," in Cruse's view, would recognize both the unique characteristics of black cultural traditions, and the essential part that these cultural elements—for example in music, art, or language—played in the cultural life of the U.S. Cruse suggested that the black movement focus its demands on "the creation and distribution of cultural production in America."

The ultimate aim of this challenge, Cruse argued, was "the revolutionizing . . . of the entire apparatus of cultural communication and placing it under public ownership."

This approach, needless to say, raised as many questions as it answered. How the cultural apparatus could be so transformed, how blacks could affect cultural production under the proposed new "revolutionary" conditions, and what would be the ultimate social and political impact of such a change, were only a few of the issues Cruse did not address. What was significant about his work, however, was not its immediate practical application. Rather, his accomplishment lay in the development of a culturally based radical perspective. His positions anticipated debates between integrationists and nationalists in the later 1960s and 1970s. He thus re-opened questions that had lain dormant for nearly half a century. In many ways Cruse explored the terrain upon which later, lesser figures of this current, such as Ron Karenga, Imamu Amiri Baraka, and Haki Madhubuti would stand.

Many black nationalists embraced African values, traditions, culture, and language through Pan-Africanism, while others became adherents of groups such as Karenga's U.S. organization or Baraka's Spirit House in Newark, without becoming Pan-Africanists politically. Cultural nationalism had many indirect effects on black "lifestyle": clothes, hair, language, and art reflected the perspective's upsurge. African heritage was often invoked to support domestic ideological and political aims.

Cultural nationalism was by no means limited to the black movement. In the Chicano movement, for example, it arose in the early 1970s, basing itself in the concept of Aztlán, particularly as developed in quasi-mythical form by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. The appeal of Aztlán, the lost Mexico of the North, evoked traditional Mexican cultural values untainted by Anglo domination. This symbolism was then applied to present-day realities of Chicano life. Such reference systems represented less any real possibility of forging a separate Afro-American or Chicano "nation" within the territorial borders of the U.S. (despite occasional illusions to the contrary), than efforts to unify previously fragmented minority groups by forging collective cultural identities.

Black cultural nationalism degenerated in the late 1960s and early 1970s as its discourse and symbolism was increasingly coopted and commodified. There was, it turned out, nothing particularly radical about afros, dashikis, or the concept of "soul." As Adolph L. Reed, Jr. noted:

[T]he intellectual climate which came to pervade the movement was best summarized in the nationalists' exhortation to "think black" . . . . Truth became a feature of the speaker's "blackness," i.e., validity claims were to be resolved not through discourse but by the claimant's manipulation of certain banal symbols of legitimacy.

Demographic, economic, and political fissures within the black community—whose "unity" and "peoplehood" had been central features of cultural nationalist theory—increasingly became too obvious to ignore. In the face of these changes, leading adherents moved on to new political horizons. Some, notably Baraka, made spectacular and belated conversions to Marxism-Leninism and Maoism, subsuming their original "racial" projects under broader "class" ones.
Interestingly, cultural nationalists have always manifested a certain disdain for political activity, especially normal politics, whether reform-oriented or radical. Their preference has been for building "countercultural" institutions, and, where necessary, for elite-led negotiations with the white power structure. A willful neglect of key political determinants of race—the racial state, class conflict, the politics of alliance and coalitions—ultimately doomed many cultural nationalist projects to irrelevance as U.S. racial formation processes overtook their models. Cultural nationalist projects which sought to create minority "nations" founded on common cultural reference points were never politically viable. The real accomplishment of cultural nationalist currents was in the nature of "consciousness-raising." They underscored the centrality of cultural domination in the logic of racial oppression, and stressed the importance of "cultures of resistance" in unifying and promoting collective identity among the oppressed.

Internal Colonialism

The internal colonialism perspective has been applied to national movements in many countries, among them France,\textsuperscript{40} Peru,\textsuperscript{41} South Africa,\textsuperscript{42} and Great Britain.\textsuperscript{43} In the U.S. the concept achieved great currency in the late 1960s and early 1970s (although earlier formulations, such as that of Cruse, can be found), when various writers employed it to account for the upsurge in racial minority militance. Radical nationalist movements (re)surfaced in black, Chicano, Native American, Puerto Rican, and Asian American communities at this time; these groups generally rejected reform-oriented politics, preferring to link their struggles with those of such national liberation movements as the Vietnamese, Algerian, or Chinese revolutions.

Internal colonialism approaches attempted the synthesis of different aspects of racial oppression: economic, political, and cultural, through the invocation of a colonial model. In most cases they appealed as well to nationalist forms of mobilization against this generalized system of oppression. Among the elements of internal colonialism which analysts identified were:

1. A colonial geography emphasizing the territoriality or spatial arrangement of population groups along racial lines;
2. A dynamic of cultural domination and resistance, in which racial categories are utilized to distinguish between antagonistic colonizing and colonized groups, and conversely, to emphasize the essential cultural unity and autonomy of each;
3. A system of superexploitation, understood as a process by which extra-economic coercion is applied to the racially identified colonized group, with the aim of increasing the economic resources appropriated by the colonizers;
4. Institutionalization of externally based control, such that the racially identified colonized group is organized in essential political and administrative aspects by the colonizers or their agents.

In some cases militant groups themselves adopted analyses of their conditions and demands based on internal colonialism arguments; in others, scholarly treatments brought these perspectives to bear. Notable studies were devoted to the black\textsuperscript{44} and Chicano\textsuperscript{45} communities.

Robert Blauner's \textit{Racial Oppression in America} is probably the most familiar general discussion of race in the U.S. written from an internal colonialism perspective, and the one most tailored to U.S. conditions.\textsuperscript{46} Blauner has two central preoccupations: the first is to provide theoretical arguments with which to counter the dominant ethnicity paradigm of race in the U.S. As we have seen, that approach sought to incorporate racial categories within ethnic ones, and thus to locate racial minorities in an analytical framework defined by the dynamics of assimilation and cultural pluralism. It generalized from European immigrant experiences in the U.S. to formulate racial theory in ethnic terms. A critical dialogue with Nathan Glazer, the chief spokesperson for the ethnicity paradigm, punctuates several chapters of Blauner's book.\textsuperscript{47}

The second overriding commitment in Blauner's work is a commitment to the radical nationalist politics of the 1960s, which Blauner admirably recognizes to have shaped his analysis in counterpoint with the sociological literature he seeks to criticize.\textsuperscript{48} He explicitly seeks to provide radical nationalist practice with the theory that it lacks. In adopting the movements of his times, however, Blauner is also forced to transfer their weaknesses from the realm of practice to that of theory.

Blauner effectively employs the distinction between "colonized and immigrant minorities" to criticize the ethnic group paradigm. "Colonized" minorities are those whose presence in the U.S. was the result of "forced entry," a criterion that serves well in general (though not absolutely) to distinguish between those whose entry was the direct result of processes of
conditions and colonial systems of discrimination composed of colonizers and colonized—systems which made use of racial distinctions—does not automatically carry over into postcolonial society. Even the specifically national aspects of the internal colonialism perspective (geography, culture, extra-economic coercion, and external political rule), are rather easily dispensed with, as Burawoy shows in his critique of Blauner. As applied to the contemporary U.S. (with significant exceptions such as Native American conditions or the case of Puerto Rico), the appeal of nationalism, in political practice or in theory, appears to be limited. Unlike many of the old colonial nations, and possibly because it was created out of a colony, the U.S. political scene allows radical nationalism little space. Even black nationalism, the most vibrant and multifaceted minority movement of this kind, has been mainly a refuge for activists and intellectuals disaffected by the intransigence of the racial order and disillusioned by moderate programs for change.

What is important in the nation-based account is the paradigm’s retention of an explanatory framework based on race (even if race is seen through the distorted “national” lens). Nation-based theories of race, while not free of epiphenomenalism, contrast sharply with both the ethnicity and class approaches in this respect. Perhaps it is the very inability of the nation-based account to specify precisely what exactly is “national” about racial oppression in the U.S. which leads it to lend a certain “primacy” and integrity to racial phenomena. The ethnicity and class paradigms, working from more secure assumptions about the “primacy” of their paradigmatic categories, tend to dissolve the unity of racially constituted groups.

While the nation-based account fails to demonstrate the existence of racial minority or colonized “nations” internal to the U.S. and structurally separated from the majority society, some applications of this paradigm do facilitate comprehensiveness in the study of racial dynamics. Nation-based approaches may unite the micro- and macro-levels of racially shaped experience, for example, or permit comparisons among different groups. Thus the nation-based approach serves in some ways as an inadequate but partial prototype for the approach we present in the following chapter in respect to “racial formation.”

Some Critical Remarks on the Nation-Based Paradigm

How effectively does the nation-based paradigm account for racial dynamics? In fact, the connection is tenuous. The analogy between U.S.

colonialism and those (Europeans) who “became ethnic groups and minorities within the United States by the essentially voluntary movements of individuals and families.”

In respect to Blauner’s second point of emphasis, derived chiefly from the militant black politics of the late 1960s (his “basic thesis that the most important expressions of protest in the black community reflect the colonized status of Afro-America”), the internal colonialism approach fares poorly. None of the protest phenomena Blauner cites (ghetto riots, cultural nationalism, ghetto-based “community control” movements) necessitates the internal colonialism perspective as a framework of explanation. Rioting has been explained as an extension of “normal” politics when institutionalized channels of political expression are blocked. What is “nationalist” about cultural movements among the oppressed is a matter of considerable ambiguity and debate. Ghetto community control demands have proved subject to quite moderate (or “reformist”) interpretation, besides proving to be at best “too little, too late” as key decisions about the cities’ fate are made elsewhere. At worst such demands provide grounds for rearticulation in new right or neoconservative analyses and programs, for example to provide codewords for opposition to busing or welfare rights.

Blauner’s approach also neglects class cleavages within minority communities, inter-minority group rivalries, and the extensive interpenetration in the U.S. of minority and majority societies, which, though hardly as complete as an ethnicity theorist like Glazer might wish to argue, casts into doubt the internal colonialism analogy in regard to territoriality, at the very least. This interpenetration, in our view, also suggests limits to other elements of the nation-based paradigm in the U.S. context. Cultural domination/cultural autonomy, for example, appears to be but one element of a broader cultural dynamic that includes both the distinctiveness and the interaction of majority- and minority-based cultural elements. Superexploitation does not encompass contemporary economic developments which include marginalization and permanent dependency for many on the one hand, and significant “upward mobility” for some on the other.

In many respects, then, the patent limitations of the analogy to Vietnam or Algeria, an analogy which was politically and not analytically grounded, doomed the internal colonialist version of nation-based racial theory.