Foreword

The perspectives of white students on inequality documented in this book remind me of the epigram attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "You may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time." After reading these student accounts, however, I would add a sadder phrase: "You can fool most of the people most of the time." This is especially true if the topics concerned are racial and class inequality and those being fooled are ordinary white Americans. Those doing this fooling are the wealthy white elites that still control U.S. society. This book demonstrates that these elites have largely succeeded in brainwashing the majority of ordinary whites into accepting a worldview that even contradicts the latter's self-interests.

In this informative, exciting, and well-theorized book, social scientist Melanie Bush probes deeply into understandings and rationalizations about racial and class matters held by many students at our largest urban public university, the City University of New York (CUNY). Bush's analysis of student views is in the tradition of classical social science studies that have described racial and class views of ordinary Americans, such as Gunnar Myrdal's pathbreaking analysis of racial ideology, *An American Dilemma* (1944), and Joe Feagin's pioneering analysis of anti-poor views, *Subordinating the Poor* (1975). Melanie Bush, like her predecessors, has described well the views that ordinary Americans, particularly white Americans, hold in regard to matters of poverty, inequality, and race.

For this project, Bush interviewed students and staff from Brooklyn College, which educates a significant number of CUNY's more than two hundred thousand students. She used a variety of concatenated research

methods—a survey of nearly five hundred students; focus groups with 131 students, faculty, and staff; interviews with seven faculty members; participant observation of thirteen student activities; and much archival data. Collected at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the survey data and focus group commentaries are examined in depth in order to offer a frequently original analysis of the ways in which ordinary Americans—particularly white Americans—make sense out of racial and class matters in their surroundings. In a detailed and nuanced analysis, we hear clearly the articulate voices of the hundreds of people, mostly young people, who participated in this research project.

Strikingly enough, the data show great ignorance, much misinformation, many misapprehensions, and an array of rationalizations about racial and class inequality. Thus, like numerous other researchers, Bush finds that most young whites believe the United States has mostly achieved racial equality, even though much research shows otherwise. Yet, these often woefully misinformed white students include some of this country's better-educated and relatively privileged youth. Indeed, within the general U.S. population, relatively few Americans—and only a minority of whites—have had the opportunity to devote several years of their lives to college studies exploring what the United States is about, historically and on the contemporary scene. Even with this advanced education, most remain seriously undereducated, even in regard to critical class and racial realities in their own everyday lives. One might reasonably conclude, as Bush does, that much of their ignorance and rationalizing misinformation has been generated, or reinforced, by the many educational settings within which they have already spent much of their lives.

Numerous social scientists have carefully documented the high level of class, racial, and gender inequality in U.S. society. The material reality is one in which the wealthy, whites, and men are at the top of well-entrenched class, racial, and gender hierarchies. Yet, as Bush demonstrates from her data, this large group of white students does not see these great inequalities, or does not see them as so great as to be problematical for what they, and most other Americans, view as the "world's greatest democracy."

The central issue of this book is the ideological rationalizing and framing that are deeply and routinely inculcated in the minds of average Americans, especially white Americans. Drawing in detail on rich survey and interview data, Bush limns an array of important ideological discourses and mechanisms by means of which youth, mainly white youth, interpret social inequalities. While she draws on other data periodically, Bush places heaviest emphasis on students' survey and interview data in showing their everyday understandings and identifying central mechanisms of

ideological construction that support and reproduce the class and racial hierarchies of U.S. society.

One important interpretive mechanism involves students' naturalization and mystification of the poverty that they do see. Although most recognize that there still is poverty, they tend to be fatalistic about it or blame it on the lack of motivation of the poor. A second interpretive mechanism is related to this: Most of these white students—as well as many other Americans and people overseas—routinely view whiteness as normal and thus view "American" as a white identity. That is, for them the American identity does not really include Americans of color or those citizens born outside the United States. These views are clear examples of what Hernan Vera and I have described as "sincere fictions of the white self." They are typically held with sincerity if not fervor, yet they are deeply rooted in ethnocentrism and racial stereotyping about who is, and is not, virtuous and American.

Bush's data are rich and enable her to examine yet more mechanisms that help to reproduce patterns of racial and class inequality. One such mechanism takes the form of the "rigid regulation of discourse," that is, the unwillingness of most whites to allow serious questioning of standard interpretations of wealth, justice, and inequality issues. It is not simply that these white college students are misinformed or engaging in stereotypical thinking. Instead, they view their misunderstandings and stereotypes as true and correct—as, indeed, quasi-religious pieties whose orthodoxy should not be questioned. These students do not stand apart from the rest of the society, for most whites consider such establishment views as correct dogma. Such views are constantly reiterated as "truths" in the media, education, and the pulpit.

Two other interpretive mechanisms that these students use to present their stereotyped understanding of class and racial realities involve linguistic coding. They often use coded language to bring up racist views without seeming racist. Examples include coded references to Americans of color in the frequent use of such terms as "crime," "welfare," and "urban areas." (Thus when they speak of "crime," they likely do not have in mind embezzlement scandals involving leading corporate executives. Nor are they likely to include in "welfare" their grandparents who are getting social security.)

This terminology, like similar terminology used across white America, is specifically utilized to hide racial and class stereotyping just beneath the surface. The students also use racial narratives that regularly place positive judgments on whites and white behavior and negative judgments on people of color and their behavior, such as narratives suggesting that whites do not often commit murder or use drugs while Blacks and Latinos often do. The reality, of course, is that whites do much murder and are the major consumers of illicit drugs in the United States.

Bush identifies even more mechanisms that help to reproduce racial and class hierarchies. One is the typical life pattern reported by most students. Segregation is characteristic of most aspects of their daily living, so that most white students have limited contacts with people of color. Whites in academic and other settings often rationalize the social and residential segregation that whites have created, historically and currently, with the sincere fiction that people of color prefer to be "with their own kind." Coupled with these views is the naïve notion that racism exists now only because people of color keep talking about it. Other interpretive mechanisms reinforcing racial hierarchy include white students' misapprehension that it is now whites who are suffering from unfair advantages because of remedial programs that attempt to undo discrimination faced by Americans of color, along with the weight that students give to individualism and individual competition as being best for all and as leading to a fair society. This view, in turn, is often coupled with a commitment to the status quo, which includes stigmatizing resistance to it. Inegalitarian social realities, in their view, are naturally that way and cannot or will not be changed.

For the most part, the status quo ideology wins out. Most white students parrot what they have been taught by parents, media, church, and schools. As they speak in this book's chapters, we constantly see just beneath the surface four hundred years of class and racial oppression. They often speak in status-quo-affirming rationalizations. One cannot readily understand what they are saying without, as Bush demonstrates, understanding their historical and social contexts. It is these contexts that have created or reinforced misunderstandings and rationalizations of social inequality. The troubling views of these white students represent much more than a distorted "knowledge" into which they have been socialized; they reflect the way in which the dominant elite maintains its powerful position in entrenched hierarchies.

Knowledge is often an instrument of domination. Since these white students are young, they are, as Pierre Bourdieu might say, the "dominated among the dominant." They, as young whites, now mostly buy into a view of the United States that is often demonstrably false. Yet, the data strongly contradicting their stereotyped views rarely have an impact on the status quo ideology. In their views on the racial and class hierarchies that are central to U.S. society, with a few exceptions, these youth accept the rich white man's view of the world. Strangely enough, this ideology is so strong that the majority are unable even to understand the class-driven world that is hurting their, and their families', life chances. There is an extraordinary disconnect between what the country really is and what these students believe it to be.

This book is social science at its best, for it shows clearly that good social science not only tells us much about the empirical reality of society

but also much about its moral realities and potential as well. Here, as elsewhere, excellent social science is oriented to moral and ethical issues. It helps us to see how we are dominated, and how to resist that domination. In that sense, good social science brings more freedom to a United States where the value of freedom is frequently parroted for the very purpose of suppressing the real freedom of U.S. citizens. While this is committed social science, it is also committed to demythologizing and democratizing an inegalitarian social world. Forces that try to dominate us and our youth are revealed, empirically, for what they are, and demythologized, to work toward a better democracy.

In spite of her generally negative portrait, Bush concludes with a more hopeful message, for she sees in many comments by the students glimmers of accurate understandings of social realities—and thus possibilities for change in the future. Fortunately, there are what Bush calls some "cracks in the wall of whiteness." As she sees it, there are times when these students test and contest the hierarchical world around them, however limited this testing may be. These are areas of thought and inclination that might be used to bring a change in how white youth view an inegalitarian world. They include their often strong beliefs in ideals of democracy and justice, at least at an abstract level, as well as their sometimes realistic, class-related understandings about their own financial insecurities and employment futures. There is also substantial critical reaction among them to the more extreme machinations of the rich, which have become more obvious in recent years. There is, too, some hope in the critical thinking that may come, for some at least, out of discussions in college courses. The broad educational goal is to foster and generate much more contestation of the class and racial hierarchies, and associated rationalizations, that dominate these students' lives.

While there is a certain difficulty in placing too much faith in such potential change, Bush is adamant about the need to challenge student rationalizations, misunderstandings, and stereotypes by many means, including more innovative and critical educational efforts. She is surely right that there is a great need to find many new ways to disrupt the unreflective understandings of racial and class matters among white youth and, indeed, many other Americans.

In the end, we come up against very hard questions about the likely future of U.S. society. Why do most white Americans and many other Americans cling to the firm belief that the United States is a model democracy without significant structural inequality in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary? Can the United States ever become truly democratic when many ordinary Americans, especially the white majority, accept an ideology that heavily benefits those who are the most powerful and the richest? These are

enduring questions that must be answered by substantial citizen organization for progressive change, if the United States is ever to become in reality the democracy it loudly proclaims itself to be.

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The Here and Now

> American Idealism . . . has always existed in a paradoxical linkage with greed, an alarming tolerance for social injustices and the racial blindness that allowed the same mind that shaped the Declaration of Independence to condone slavery.
>
> —*New York Times*, editorial, 31 December 1999

The economic and political changes that occurred between the 1960s and the first years of the twenty-first century provided the social context, in the United States and globally, for the shift in public opinion from an assumption of collective responsibility for the common good and toward a belief in the social survival of the fittest. This book analyzes the role of race, racialization, and racism within this framework and in the process of uniting and dividing ordinary people. The second edition includes discussion of the changes in reality and in perception in the years that followed (2001–2010).

To what extent did the transitions of the late twentieth century that brought an end to the Second Reconstruction[1] and undermined the bargaining power of an increasingly global workforce also lead to an acute sense of white victimization, as is often portrayed by the media?[2] Has that changed in the last decade? What does it mean to be "white" in the twenty-first century? What role does the educational system play in shaping beliefs and attitudes about race and society; what role should it play?

Using research conducted first in 1998–2000 and then in 2009 at a college within the largest urban public institution of higher education in the nation, this book explores beliefs and attitudes about identity, privilege, poverty, democracy, and intergroup relations, illuminating the connection between

everyday thinking and the institutions, policies, and programs that structure society. Examining views of ordinary people, I outline numerous mechanisms and dynamics of power that generate and reinforce dominant narratives about race and support structural hierarchies, as well as "cracks in the wall of whiteness" or potential opportunities to interrupt these processes.

EVERYDAY THINKING MATTERS

At the "United Nations World Conference against Racism," in 2001, Gay McDougall, chair of the Commission to End Racial Discrimination, was asked, "Who is responsible for racism and how do we change people's minds?" She responded: "Racism is more than about how one person treats another; racism is imbedded in our systems. It is not about changing minds; it is about changing institutions. We need to get beyond attitudes and get to the structures that have been in place from one generation to the next" (Secours 2001b).

However, I argue that the critical relationship between racial attitudes and social structures desperately needs to be examined if historical patterns of systemic racial inequality are to be challenged and overcome. It seems logical that heightened awareness of the expanding polarization of wealth over the last four decades among ordinary whites might influence their views about the root causes of sustained racial inequality. They themselves increasingly face the consequences of the economic constrictions of the base and the explosion of a part-time, temporary, and service-oriented workforce. Over 50 percent of workers say they are living paycheck to paycheck (Rivera et al. 2009, v) up from 25 to 30 percent just a decade ago (Schor 1998, 20).[3] Poor, working- and middle-class whites are experiencing economic pressures related to global restructuring that African Americans and Latinos have suffered for over two decades (Price 1995, 19).

"Roughly 40.3 million households spent more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing in 2008, while 18.6 million of these households spent more than half—up from 13.8 million in 2001."[4] In 2008, average pay for corporate executives soared to nearly 344 times that of the average worker (Anderson et al. 2008, 1). "An in-depth study in 2004 on the explosion of CEO pay revealed that, including stock options and other benefits, CEO pay is more accurately $500 to $1" (DeGraw 2010b). Wealth and income disparities between racial groups have been exacerbated by policies and practices such as sub-prime lending and housing foreclosures that have disproportionately affected communities of color. The current recession has already been experienced by many "Blacks in the US as a depression that, in terms of unemployment, equals or exceeds the Great Depression of 1929" (Rivera et al. 2009, iii).

Where do most whites place blame for the economic insecurity they are experiencing? Do they feel discriminated against, as white people? Dr. Jack Levin, director of the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict at Northeastern University, suggests that many do and that this resentment has led to an increased incidence of racially driven hate crimes on college campuses. He writes, "It's a defensive position from the point of view of these students, who are what used to be the proto-typical college student: white, male and Protestant. Now they have to share with people who are different—Black, Latino and Asian students—and they don't like losing their advantage and privilege" (Lords 2001, 10). The election of Barack Obama did not halt these incidents. In fact, some report an increase in hate crime, more than half involving race (Dervarics 2008). Exploring these questions allows us to better understand the way that ordinary whites think about the role of race in everyday life that perpetuates longstanding racialized patterns in workplaces, schools, housing, and other aspects of public policy.[5]

Increasing attention has been paid in the last few decades to addressing dynamics of race by examining "whiteness," a compilation of institutional privileges and ideological characteristics bestowed upon members of the dominant group in societies organized by the idea and practice of pan-European supremacy. This has been done through studies of racialized imagery (Chito Childs 2009; Yancy 2008; Morrison 1992; hooks 1995; Dyer 1997; Fine, Weis, Powell, and Wong 1997; Nakayama and Martin 1999), everyday thinking (Picca and Feagin 2007; McIntosh 1992; Wellman 1993; Feagin and Vera 1995; Frankenberg 1997; Shipler 1997; Lipsitz 1998; Berger 1999; Williams, L., 2000), theoretical notions of the construction of whiteness (Smith 2007; Saxton 1990; Allen 1994; Brodkin 1994; Roediger 1994, 2002, 2005; Ignatiev 1995) and structural patterns such as in schools (Leonardo 2009; Pollock 2008), cities (Shaw 2007), and the law (Haney-López 2006). Much of the recent literature has taken an explicitly anti-white supremacy or anti-racism stance (Tochluk 2008; Smith 2007; Harvey, Case, and Gorsline 2004), though with varied analyses and remedies. Scholar Joe Feagin has developed the concept of a "white racial frame" to describe the embeddedness of white supremacy in the development of a racialized United States. He explains that the use of stereotypes, metaphors, images, emotions, and narratives both emanate from and support systemic racism (Feagin 2009).

By linking the consciousness of ordinary people (particularly whites though not exclusively) and structural patterns of inequality, this book bridges the theoretical concepts, lived experiences, and implications of a ra-

cial hierarchy. The social reality of "race" (institutions, systems, structures) could not be maintained without widespread support for and/or complicity with ideological justifications for the system that places whites *as a group* in a distinctively higher position than all other racial groups along nearly all indicators of socio-economic status. Drawing on the beliefs, attitudes, and ideas of those who participated in this research, I outline fourteen mechanisms that reproduce racialized structures of power by eliciting ideological loyalty from ordinary people. I also describe nine "cracks in the wall of whiteness" that provide opportunities to challenge the racial status quo.

EQUALITY: MISPERCEPTION OR REALITY?

Why do most whites believe we have achieved racial equality in the United States, while social and economic measures indicate otherwise? A study conducted jointly in 2001 by the *Washington Post*, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University found that 40 to 60 percent of all whites believe that the average Black is faring as well or better than the average white and that "African Americans already have achieved economic and social parity" (Morin 2001, A1). Since then, whites increasingly indicate they believe that we have achieved racial equality. In a poll conducted in January 2009 by the *Washington Post* and ABC News, 76 percent of whites reported that Blacks have achieved racial equality, or will soon achieve it.[6] Furthermore, 81 percent of whites reported that Blacks who live in their community have as good a chance as whites to get housing they can afford; 83 percent said Blacks in their community have as good a chance to get a job for which they are qualified (*Washington Post*-ABC News Poll 2009).

In another poll conducted in 2009 by CBS and the *New York Times*, 62 percent of whites versus 44 percent of Blacks thought both races had equal opportunity. Roughly 25 percent of whites versus 51 percent of Blacks said that whites have a greater chance at getting ahead. This difference in perception needs to be understood in relation to social, economic, and political indicators for these two communities. A report entitled "The State of the Dream 2009," published by United for a Fair Economy, indicates that 24 percent of Blacks and 21 percent of Latinos are living in poverty, versus 8 percent of whites (iii); median household incomes of Blacks and Latinos are $38,269 and $40,000, respectively, while the median household income of whites is $61,280 (18, 19). Only 18 percent of people of color have retirement accounts, compared to 43.4 percent of their white counterparts (23). On the *median*, for every dollar of white wealth, people of color have fifteen cents.

On average, people of color have eight cents for every dollar of white wealth (28) (Rivera et al. 2009).

What explains the differences in perception between Blacks and whites? Why are there such vast misperceptions by both groups about existing levels of inequality? The gap between the perception of equality and the reality of inequality has real consequences. One's degree of awareness about structural realities plays an integral role in everyday decisions made on the job, at the polls, in schools and stores, and in the choice of housing (Lipsitz 1998; Secours 2001a). If someone believes we have achieved equality, he or she is less likely to support measures to address inequality. To the extent that whites are aware of inequality, their beliefs about the underlying causes are significant.

For example, while housing segregation between whites and Hispanics and between whites and Asians exists, it does not appear to be due to negative beliefs about those communities. On the other hand, whites appear to avoid living in neighborhoods with more than a small Black population because they associate Blacks with high crime, low housing values, and low-quality education (Emerson, Chai, and Yancey 2001, 932).

In the range of 10 to 15 percent Black residents (in a neighborhood), whites state that they are neutral about the likelihood of buying a house. Above 15 percent Black, whites state that they are unlikely to buy the house. The strength of this stated unlikeliness increases with increases in the percentage of Black residents . . . even after responses are controlled for the reasons typically given for avoiding residing with African Americans (Emerson, Chai, and Yancey 2001, 931–32).

According to the 2000 Census, whites are more likely to be segregated than any other group (California Newsreel 2003, 19). In 2009, white households with children were indeed more segregated from Black, Hispanic, and Asian households than white households overall. Poor white households tend to display the highest levels of dissimilarity particularly with corresponding poor households of other racial and ethnic groups. White households with children are the least likely to live in integrated neighborhoods though the authors state that their study does not reveal whether whites chose the area because of services or race/ethnicity of the community (Iceland et al. 2009, 16).

When levels of inequality are misperceived, structural realities such as poverty become associated with communities of color as if they are cultural characteristics. This translates to a belief that there is no need for institutional redress through programs such as affirmative action. Racism is viewed as a problem of interpersonal relationships and not related to system-wide patterns that differentially position whites and people of color. The logic of discourse about "reverse" discrimination makes sense in this context because discrimi-

nation is analyzed ahistorically and out of the broader social context whereby redress can compensate for structural patterns.[7]

In other words, when decisions and actions are based on misperceptions, there are consequences. Formal research has been conducted on white attitudes toward Blacks on a regular basis since the first national survey in 1942 by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Denver (now at the University of Chicago) (Smith and Sheatsley 1984, 14). The 2001 *Washington Post* survey found that whites who hold more accurate views of Black circumstances are more likely to believe the government has social obligations. These include the responsibility to ensure all schools are of equal quality (69 percent of whites with accurate views versus 57 percent of whites with misperceptions) and the responsibility to ensure that all races are treated equally by courts and the police (79 percent of whites with accurate views versus 60 percent of whites with misperceptions) (Morin 2001, A1). Table 1.1 provides additional information about gaps between perceptions and reality, in three domains.

Not only has there been no decline in the Black–white income gap, in 2004, a typical Black family had an income that was 58 percent of a typical white family's (Isaacs 2007) while in 1974, median Black incomes were 63 percent those of whites.[8] The proportion of Black per capita income today to that of whites is strikingly similar to the initial counting of Black slaves in the Constitution: three-fifths that of whites (Sklar 2003a, 56). In addition, whites are twice as likely to have money invested in stocks, bonds, or mutual funds and half as likely to have reported recent difficulties in paying their rent or mortgage (Morin 2001, A1).

Table 1.1 Whites' Perceptions of Racial Equality

Percentage of whites who hold perception	That the average Black compares to the average white in relation to:	Reality
61	Equal or better access to healthcare	Blacks are nearly twice as likely to have no insurance
49	Similar levels of education	17% of Blacks have completed college versus 28% of whites
42	Similar earnings	Black median income $27,910, 50% under $25,000; white median income $44,366, 30% under $25,000

Source: Richard Morin, "Misperceptions Cloud Whites' View of Blacks," *Washington Post* Final Edition (11 July 2001), A1.

Compounding these misperceptions is the notion that we are in a post-racial society and no longer need to calculate the racial impact of policy decisions, legislation, and programs. However, "when elected officials consciously consider racial impacts during the lawmaking and budget-setting processes, they have the opportunity to eliminate existing racial disparities and prevent unintended consequences" (Johnson 2010, 2). Given that how people think underlies how they act, it is critical to understand how beliefs and attitudes develop.

"WHITE BACKLASH" AND RACIAL CODING

These misperceptions directly relate to the sentiment among some whites in the United States (commonly termed "white backlash") that the liberal social policies established during the 1960s pandered to Blacks to the detriment of the well-being of whites. This perspective asserts that anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles for freedom and justice and against white supremacy, U.S. global domination, and hegemony went too far (Winant 2001, 148). Calling upon the United States to live up to its ideals was one thing; making those ideals a reality was another.

Although this type of white resentment surfaced in the 1960s, the civil rights movement, war on poverty, and discourse about the "Great Society" created an environment where social responsibility and expanded, democratic participation were encouraged. Society engaged in a widespread debate about the nature of poverty and the ideals on which the country was founded that led to "the elaboration of social policies based on vastly expanded notions of equality, democracy and social justice. . . . A mature global liberalism held sway, promising the spread of the good and then the great society to all Americans and eventually to all who followed our example and leadership" (Bush 2001).

This environment left many whites conflicted about their allegiances, yet the economy was still in a period of expansion, so white anger about the advances of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians did not dominate. It was not until the mid-1970s that their sense of victimization and resentment began to crystallize. "The emergence of conservatism as a political and intellectual force in the 1970s and 1980s was an important turning point in post-World War II American politics. Prior to the 1970s, conservatives had a limited influence in the shaping of domestic policies and programs. There were influential conservatives, but no dominant ideology that shaped political life" (Stafford 1992, 101).[9]

In the mid-1970s, working- and middle-class whites began to experience layoffs and the reconfiguration of their economic and political lives as the period

of economic constriction commenced that extend into the crisis evident today. This experience led many whites to seek explanations for why they have such a difficult time staying afloat. Without the means to explicitly express feelings of blame, racialized coding has become a routine part of mainstream discourse. This allows for plausible deniability against claims of racism. An *Atlantic Monthly* cover story entitled "When the Official Subject is Presidential Politics, Taxes, Welfare, Crime, Rights or Values, The Real Subject Is Race" (Edsall 1991, 53–86) analyzed this coding as it developed. "In this cryptic vernacular we have a new and insidious form of race-baiting that is so well camouflaged that it does not carry the political liabilities" (Steinberg 1995, 214). However, "much of the way that race matters in politics occurs via a process of 'racial coding'" that influences voting practices (Bobo and Charles 2009, 253).

During this period, mainstream discourse flaunted images of successful Blacks and often portrayed interracial friendships as commonplace. Articulated particularly in media and political debates, this development provided some positive images of Blacks in contrast to the predominantly stereotypical depictions as criminals and athletes; however, these images also have had a detrimental influence. Numerous movies and television shows suggest that race in the United States is mediated solely through personal relations and that racial inequality and racism is a thing of the past. Early examples include *The Cosby Show*, *The Jeffersons*, *Forrest Gump*, *Pulp Fiction*, *White Men Can't Jump*, *Webster*, and *Diff'rent Strokes* (DeMott 1995, 12–13). More recent films include *Guess Who?*, *Daddy Day Care*, *Corrina, Corrina*, and *Hitch*, many of which involve interracial relationships (Chito Childs 2009).

At a time when historical and structural explanations for racial inequality are not readily accessible to the public at large, the perception of a wallet as a gun and the implicit acceptance that racialized fear justifies murder[10] stand as dramatic testaments to the continuing significance of race. The issue at hand is not solely whether people interact in a civil manner, nor whether we all "get along." Rather, this book focuses on everyday processes and discourses of power, linking agency and structure within a political and economic framework. Henry Giroux, author and scholar, said:

> There are too few attempts to develop a pedagogy of whiteness that enables white students to move beyond positions of guilt or resentment. There is a curious absence in the work on whiteness regarding how students might examine critically the construction of their own identities in order to rethink whiteness as a discourse of both critique and possibility. (Giroux 1997)

I do not however, subscribe to the notion that our primary task is to forge a positive white identity, because if race was constructed as a tool to dominate and subordinate, how can we render it positive? I focus on questions of

agency and optimism, process and structure, while recognizing simultaneous, contradictory, and sometimes competing forces as they are articulated in everyday life.[11]

Social life *is* competitive for most people under capitalism.[12] For poor, working- and middle-class whites, the desire for an upper edge flows from a material sense of insecurity.[13] Media and popular discourse suggests that their vulnerability is due to the increasing numbers and standard of living of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians and not to the increasing power and wealth of the rich though "The increase in incomes of the top 1 percent of Americans from 2003 to 2005 exceeded the total income of the poorest 20 percent of Americans. . . . This growing concentration of income at the top . . . had been under way for more than 25 years" (Johnston 2007).

This book sheds light on a range of mechanisms that construct mainstream narratives to explain history from the perspective of the rich and powerful, hiding the material and structural realities faced by most people regardless of community.[14] Studies comparing Blacks' and whites' attitudes about race often conclude that divergent perceptions exist. Dissimilarities in attitude are described as isolated differences of opinion and rarely are compared to actual data. They less frequently offer an analysis about the reasons for, or significance of, the disparities. The following excerpts demonstrate this point: "*New York Times* and CBS News conducted a national survey in June 2000 to ascertain the attitudes of Blacks and whites on the issue of race in America" (Sack and Elder 2000). "It was concluded that even after the dismantling of legal segregation thirty-five years ago, today Blacks and whites continue to have starkly divergent perceptions on many issues pertaining to race and they remain largely isolated from each other in their everyday lives" (Horton 2000, 35). Newer studies more often address the question of why the disparity in perception exists.

Some suggest that the gap reflects the use of different reference points for analysis (how far we've come or how far we have to go) (Eibach and Ehrlinger 2006), or emanate from a notion of zero-sum possibilities for equality between groups (Eibach and Keegan 2006). Others have found that "people who were lower in prejudice perceived that less racial progress had been made compared to those who were higher in prejudice . . . [and] more strongly anchor their perceptions of racial progress on how far the US has to go to achieve equality in the future" (Brodish, Brazy, and Devine 2008, 523). In this case, the difference in perceptions influences individual opinions toward policies such as affirmative action.

It is also important to compare perceptions to realities as this allows us to understand how patterns of inequality persist through the use of ideological narratives that justify the status quo. When we expose the actual state of

racial inequality in society, both a "mechanism" and a "crack" are exposed. For example, when structural factors that underlie patterns of poverty and wealth within particular racial groups are mystified, it is difficult to challenge them. Identifying this mechanism and demystifying these systemic factors can provide the means to interrupt the patterns and transform the racialized structures.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSITIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

This book focuses particularly on academia; however, similar racialized patterns can be found in the public sector overall, such as in health care, transportation, social services, libraries, and the justice system. For example, funding of prisons has directly increased in proportion to a decrease in funding to higher education; correspondingly, the jail and prison population of the United States has nearly quadrupled since 1980 at a cost of $25,000 a year per prisoner (Sklar 2003a, 56). Nationally, net cost at public four-year colleges grew from 39 to 55 percent of median family income from 1999–2000 to 2007–2008, for the lowest income quintile (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education 2008, 10). One might wonder whether a constricting job market for college graduates might have anything to do with these shifts (Romer 1999).

"From 1996 to 2005, government spending on criminal justice related expenses increased by 64 percent. . . . In 2005, the United States spent $213 billion on the criminal justice system. . . . By way of comparison, in 2005, state and local governments spent less than $42 billion on housing and $192 billion on higher education." "This was during a period when crime rates dropped to the lowest they have been in 30 years" (Petteruti and Walsh 2008, 7). "Between 1977 and 1999, total state and local expenditures on corrections increased by 946 percent—about 2.5 times the rate of increase of spending on all levels of education (370 percent). Researchers from Post Secondary Opportunities found that between 1980 and 2000 . . . corrections' share of all state and local spending grew by 104 percent and higher education's share of all state and local spending dropped by 21 percent" (Page, Petteruti, Walsh, Jason Ziedenberg 2007, 7). This is particularly significant since it is well documented that states with higher levels of educational achievement have lower rates of violent crime. "Of the 10 states that saw the biggest increases in higher education expenditure, the violent crime rate declined in eight of the 10" (ibid.). In a society organized by race, funding for criminal justice rather than education has significant racial consequences.

Furthermore, in 2003, the City University of New York senior colleges were funded at fifty-five percent of SUNY (State University of New York) state-operated colleges when compared on a full-time-equivalent student basis (FTE), down from 81 percent in 1990. In a Professional Staff Congress report to the CUNY Board of Trustees in November 2006, it was revealed that 72 percent of CUNY students were people of color, compared to only 19 percent at SUNY. This difference, taken in the context of the disproportionate population of persons of color within the corrections system makes quite an extraordinary statement about the disparate way that funding is allocated by race, intentionally or not.[15]

That the median income of whites is $55,096 versus $34,001 for Blacks and $40,766 for Hispanics, exposes the true nature of this racial discourse.[16] There is not now, nor has there ever truly been an even playing field on which motivation could ensure success society-wide. Rhetoric calling for personal responsibility in striving for upward mobility serves only to reinforce images of lazy and unmotivated, frequently criminal Blacks and Latinos. As the data demonstrate above, spending money on prisons rather than schools calls into question the integrity of that discourse.

It is this connection between the impact of racially discriminatory policies and practices on the lives and dreams of communities of color *and* the fate of our society as a whole, that motivated this study. The individualist creed that underlies the capitalist ethic and inspires a philosophy of social survival of the fittest has a devastating effect on all people. Whites more frequently than other groups support mainstream explanations often because of the material benefits they receive from the system (however small) and because even if they are poor, there is a stronger belief that they too can one day achieve the "American Dream." To this notion, James Baldwin once said:

> But this cowardice, this necessity of justifying a totally false identity and of justifying what must be called a genocidal history, has placed everyone now living into the hands of the most ignorant and powerful people the world has ever seen. Moreover, how did they get that way? By deciding that they were white; by opting for safety instead of life. (Baldwin 1984, 92)

CONCERN FOR THE COMMON GOOD AND THE FUTURE OF US ALL

By incorporating the language of standards, merit, individual responsibility, and civility, racially coded language provides justification for de-funding of the public sector and maintaining more privileged populations as the main

beneficiaries of public higher education. To what extent do whites accept these explanations? How aware are they of the vast economic changes that have occurred since the 1970s both in the United States and globally? Heightened awareness of globalization allows us to become more cognizant of how our past, like our present, is embedded in a history larger than our own and how the institutions, processes, and values that have shaped U.S. history arise out of global processes (Foner 2003, 35).

The increasingly concentrated wealth at the top has resulted in the constriction of social programs and access to resources for all people and certain groups especially. Ideological explanations are drawn upon to justify these changes. During a period when the *rapports de force* have provided the social and political milieu for a move to the right, the successful de-funding of the public sector (Giroux 1997), and the dismantlement of the welfare state, what is on the minds of ordinary people, particularly whites?

This book therefore examines dominance and privilege rather than subordination or underprivilege. Studies about race generally presume that a discussion about race is about the "other." Whiteness is assumed, considered the norm and the center. However I examine ways that whites participate in maintaining status, and access, rather than explanations for social inequality based on the cultural deficits of the poor that have been so widely discussed since the 1960s (Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Lewis 1966; Valentine 1968; Leacock 1971). The findings seek to contribute to the literature on race by providing insight into how whiteness influences day-to-day perceptions about society, ultimately reproducing racialized patterns in everyday living. The current experience of those classified "white" needs to be examined within the context of fundamental historical transformations that include economic pressures, an extended period of conservative ideological onslaught, and increasingly limited opportunities for nearly all people.

The idea that upward mobility and the American Dream can be achieved by anyone who works hard has become less secure. Instead, some communities have been depicted as lazy, unworthy, the cause of everyone's troubles (including their own), and beyond the scope of our concerns. Many people have lost hope in the possibility of liberal reform. Historically whites have been and are currently being seduced to an ideological position that defends the status quo and the polarization of wealth and does not challenge the vast inequalities that have been exacerbated in the global economy. With a belief that, following Eric Wolf, "historical processes are pre-eminently political and economic, reinforced through ideology" (Schneider and Rapp 1995, 3), the research done for this book set out to measure the effectiveness of this campaign in the present context and offers an analysis of the implications for academia, based on the findings.

WHY HERE, WHY NOW?

Schools, and the domain of education, provide groups with different types of knowledge that ultimately function to reproduce a social division of labor. They distribute and legitimate forms of knowledge, values, languages, and style that constitute the dominant culture and its interests and act as part of a state apparatus.[17] Finally, they produce and validate economic and ideological imperatives that underlie the state's political power (Giroux 1983, 258). A vivid example of this process as it is articulated in school achievement can be found in data indicating, "Among youth from the top quartile, 42–44 percent graduated from college, as against only 6–9 percent of youth in the bottom quartile, a gap of more than 35 percentage points."[18] (Haveman and Smeeding 2006, 131). Related to funding, in 2006–2007 differences in total revenues per pupil ranged between the 5th ($7,740) and 95th ($22,653) percentiles of districts with median spending $10,754 (Zhou and Johnson 2009, 4) revealing how structural inequality patterns itself into the educational system. At the same time,

> To understand modern universities and colleges, we need openness to contradiction. For universities both reproduce and subvert the larger society. We must distinguish between the functions universities publicly promise to perform—the social goods they are chartered to produce—and certain of their actual consequences that, while commonly unintended, are no less real: the production of dissent, deviance, and the cultivation of an authority-subverting culture of critical discourse. (Gouldner 1979, 45)

The next four chapters explore these issues through the perspectives of the hundreds of people who participated in this research. Chapter 2 focuses on understandings about identity. How do students see themselves and each other; how is identity conceptualized? What is whiteness or blackness, and what does it mean to be Latino, Asian, or Jewish? What is the process by which people are classified? First recollections of "a thing called race" are explored as well as how identity manifests within campus politics. Chapter 3 summarizes students' thoughts about what it means to be "American," their beliefs about democracy, the flag, the foreign-born experience, national identity, and the relationship of race to these topics. The chapter examines students' beliefs about assimilation and the American Dream.

Chapter 4 explores how students interact with each other. Whom do they associate with on campus, and with whom do they socialize outside of campus? How often have they been in the home of someone of another race? Do they perceive social segregation on campus or racial tension? What are the rules for interaction? These questions are addressed as the chapter examines

students' beliefs about colorblindness, human nature, and interracial relationships. Chapter 5 examines how poverty and wealth are theorized in everyday conversation. In what contexts do whites question dominant narratives, and when do they uphold mainstream explanations for why "things are the way they are," such as poverty and inequality? Do students believe whites are discriminated against in today's world? Do they believe everyone has a fair chance, and if not, do they think measures should be taken to equalize opportunity? Do they view education as a right or as a privilege solely for those who merit advancement? Do they think society ought to get "tough on crime"? This chapter analyzes students' views about equality and justice in today's society.

Finally, chapter 6 provides an analysis of what people had to say about these questions, outlined in three sections. I suggest fourteen mechanisms and sites through which patterns of racialized inequality are perpetuated and identify nine "cracks in the wall of whiteness": places, spaces, and times when we can make a difference through an analysis of the meaning of white racial consciousness at this moment in time. In conclusion, the chapter offers recommendations for higher education in particular, education in general, and society at large to increase awareness about the role of race in everyday living and offers possible trajectories for future research.

This book is an attempt to understand and shed light on the everyday thinking of whites in order to demonstrate how common ideas function to reproduce racialized patterns of inequality and render structural causes and outcomes invisible. For example, the issue has been raised that the gap between whites' perceptions of equality and the actual existence of inequality is sustained by misinformation, a lack of accurate information, regulated ideological discourse, and a sense of hopelessness. However, how does it happen, in everyday interaction? What are the mechanisms that produce, reproduce, and reinforce mainstream narratives that defuse and disempower the agency of ordinary people? What can be done to address this dynamic?

This book explores, therefore, the appearance of two nations, separate and unequal (Hacker 1992; Shipler 1997), and asks whether this is a random act of mysterious blindness (you know, "shit happens") or whether multiple processes and mechanisms convey the notion that poverty is "natural," especially the kind patterned along lines of race. Mainstream explanations about why certain people (and groups) are poor tell us it is because "they" are "less smart," "genetically weak," "lazy," "angry," "greedy," "violent," and "unmotivated." Could these justifications actually reflect manipulation? Just because I'm paranoid, it doesn't mean no one's following me. Does it matter whether these depictions are deliberately orchestrated to elicit racial loyalty and maintain the economic order?

In a society founded on power on the one hand, and built upon democracy and equality on the other, it is not just that there are two worldviews. One represents the replication and reproduction of power relations, and the other represents the opportunity for a better, more just and equitable world for all.[19] This book focuses how it happens that, while the majority of whites do not fall within the category of the richest one percent, they take on a worldview that supports that group's interest and frequently contradicts their own material reality.

The goal of this research was to further our understanding of the racial dynamics in the United States and support the development of strategies that challenge the pervasive inequality and injustice that continue to plague the United States and the rest of the world. To what extent have we indeed achieved a "post-racial" society? Where is agency located for whites who observe contradictions in the mainstream narrative? How might we strengthen our efforts toward a more racially and socially just and humane world order? How might we reclaim the ideals that so proudly define the United States as a nation, only this time truly actualize the notion that "all people are created equal"? Howard Winant writes:

> Today, racism must be identified by its consequences. Racism has been largely—although not entirely, to be sure—detached from its perpetrators. In its most advanced forms, indeed, it has no perpetrators; it is a nearly invisible, taken-for-granted, commonsense (Gramsci) feature of everyday life and global social structure. Under these conditions—racial hegemony—racism may be defined as the routinized outcome of practices that create or reproduce hierarchical social structures based on essentialized racial categories. (Winant 2001, 308)

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND WHITENESS

> The discovery of personal whiteness among the world's peoples is a very modern thing—a nineteenth and twentieth century matter, indeed. But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it? Then always, somehow, some way, silently but clearly, I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, amen.
>
> —W. E. B. Du Bois 1920, 29–30

The concept of whiteness has been recognized over the last several decades as a means to address a significant and missing dimension within discussions of race and ethnicity. However, notions of white racial identity have long been significant in the writings of scholars of color. Among the many examples include, William J. Wilson, who in 1860 wrote "What Shall We Do with

the White People?" analyzing presumptions of whiteness in the Declaration of Independence and during the early years of the United States as a nation (Roediger 1998, 58). Similarly, Frederick Douglass critiques the centering of the white experience in his famous speech, "What to the Slave Is Your Fourth of July?" (Douglass 1970, 349). In 1861, Harriet Jacobs describes the annual practice of "muster," a time when armed whites terrorized the enslaved population in anticipation of revolts. She suggests that this institution served to unite whites across class lines (Roediger 1998, 336). In 1891, Anna Julia Cooper examined the naturalization of whiteness in the women's organization Wimodaughsis (Cooper 1998, 88). However, "discounting and suppressing the knowledge of whiteness held by people of color was not just a by-product of white supremacy but an imperative of racial domination" (Roediger 1998, 6).

WHAT IS "WHITENESS"?

The concept of whiteness has powerful utility as a means to critique systemic patterns of racial inequality. It reveals the ways in which whites benefit from a variety of institutional and social arrangements that often appear (to whites) to have nothing to do with race. Being white has generally been associated with ancestry from the European continent and the denial of African blood. The borders of whiteness have shifted during different periods in history to include or exclude various groups. Many immigrants of such ancestry have enjoyed exceptional achievement upon their integration into U.S. society (Brodkin 1998). However, the claim to European heritage is often less significant than whether one is identified as white in everyday interactions (Alba 1990, 3). By enlisting in this pan-ethnic "club," whites "became party to strategies of social closure that maintained others' exclusion. . . . That the once swarthy immigrants from southern, eastern, and even northern Europe eventually became white, is another way of saying that 'race' is an achieved, not an ascribed status" (Waldinger 2001, 20).

Many controversies have emerged about the concept of whiteness. These relate to terminology, the origins of racialization, and levels of individual, institutional, social, and collective responsibility for racial inequality. A key debate is whether whiteness should be reformed as an identity or abolished as an assumption of privilege (Roediger 1994; Ignatiev and Garvey 1996; Kincheloe et al. 1998). Many scholars have called for interdisciplinary studies of this concept, which has shown significant contemporary saliency as a topic for investigation.[20] This is particularly so as the boundaries of racial classification shift, precipitated by twentieth-century

population migrations as well as political and economic transformations within the global world system.

Race and Ethnicity Theory

Theories about race and ethnicity provide the framework within which the study of whiteness has emerged. This section reviews the history of the concepts of race and ethnicity and summarizes how this idea of "whiteness" developed over time.

The initial emergence of the notion of pan-European racial superiority and the system of racial hierarchy, exploitation, and oppression has been pinpointed to over six hundred years ago with the appearance of capitalism (Cox 1948, 322). It is true that "civilizations were recognized as distinct constellations of socio-cultural formations for thousands of years prior to the rise of the modern, colonial, capitalist, Eurocentric world-system" (Bush 2009, 5). Anibal Quijano suggests that globalization is the "culmination of a process that began with the constitution of the Americas and colonial-modern Eurocentric capitalism as a new global power" for which the social classification of the world's population around the idea of race was fundamental (Bush 2009, 5). While contact and interaction across geographically distinct populations occurred during earlier times, there is no evidence of race prejudice even in the Hellenistic empire, which had extended further into Africa than any other European empire (Cox 1948, 322). St. Clair Drake describes the sixteenth century as "a historic watershed in global relations between Black and white people," and states that neither racial slavery nor systemic white racism existed prior to this, although color prejudice was present in some places (Drake 1987, xxiii).

While interethnic interactions have a long history, they did not necessarily reflect inevitable conflict, competition, or struggle (Smedley 1998, 690). Identities were constructed by a wide range of characteristics including, but not limited to, place of birth, language, kinship, religion, or occupation. They were generally context-specific and malleable up to the seventeenth century (Smedley 1998, 691, 692). Furthermore, Drake found that, up to the seventeenth century, blackness was not a stigma, nor was race essentialized in the way that it later came to be (Harrison 1998, 620, 621).

With the emergence of capitalism, the colonial exploration of the globe, and the beginning of the slave trade between Africa and parts of the "new" world, racial notions began to take hold as an expression of pan-European hegemony. They were used to justify the subordination and exploitation of large numbers of people who formed a labor pool for building settlements and cultivating the land. During the earliest period in the development of

capitalism, "the white man had no conception of himself as being capable of developing the superior culture of the world—the concept 'white man' had not yet its significant social definition—the Anglo-Saxon, the modern master race, was then not even in the picture" (Cox 1948, 327).

Racial dynamics, however, quickly developed within the context of the expansion of capitalism and colonial settlements. This process initially took the form of a European center with Euro-dominated colonies. Ultimately, the British settler colony of North America evolved into the United States, which then became the new center (Drake 1987). A vivid example of this process of racial development was the fateful Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 in Virginia, which established boundaries distinguishing between Africans, Europeans, and native peoples (Zinn 1995, 37–59). This event is generally portrayed solely as a response to common exploitation and oppression, as African and European bond-laborers rebelled to demand an end to servitude. However, another key component of this struggle was an orchestrated attempt by the dominant elites to drive a wedge between these groups and the native population. Any combination of these forces was a tremendous threat to the white planters, whose wealth was great compared to that of the general white population. Poor Europeans had much more in common with enslaved Africans, and a potential alliance could have been disastrous for those in power. "In the early years of slavery, especially, before racism as a way of thinking was firmly ingrained, while white indentured servants were often treated as badly as Black slaves, there was a possibility of cooperation" (Zinn 1995, 37).

The plantation bourgeoisie responded to the threat of coalition by offering European laborers a variety of previously denied benefits, such as amnesty for those who rebelled, corn, cash, and muskets for those finishing their servitude, the right to bear arms, and the opportunity to join slave patrol militias and receive monetary awards. "They constituted the police patrol who could ride with planters, and now and then exercise unlimited force upon recalcitrant or runaway slaves; and then, too there was always a chance that they themselves might also become planters by saving money, by investment, by the power of good luck; the only heaven that attracted them was the life of the great Southern planter" (Du Bois 1979, 27).

This may be viewed as the nation's first "affirmative action" policy (Harrison 1998, 621). These actions were taken to quell this potentially dangerous alliance and as a means for control. Racism on the part of poor whites became a practical matter (Zinn 1995, 56). The explicit use of race and white supremacy was implemented as a tool to divide and conquer. Prior to this period, there was little advantage and therefore little motivation for poor whites to ally themselves with the ruling powers. At this time, though, they were accorded "social, psychological and political advantages" calculated to alienate them from their fellow African bondsmen (Morgan 1975, 331–33, 344; Du Bois 1979, 700). In other words, racism was implemented as a means of control to establish and maintain intact the structure of social organization.

Racial domination became encoded in the process of nation-state building for the United States as "Blacks were sold out to encourage white unity and nationalist loyalty to the state" (Marx 1998, 267). Slavery, therefore, played a critical role in providing a justification for the unification of whites racially as a nation (Marx 1998, 267), a pattern that continues to impact national identity, notions of whiteness, and formulations of race in society today.

Whites were told that their whiteness rendered them "superior," and to maintain this status they needed to place their allegiances with those in power who had the resources and could divvy up benefits. While particularly applied as a black–white polarization, this ideological formulation of race was also flexible. A stigma of racial inferiority could be invoked as needed to maintain divisions and enforce a social hierarchy. For example, during the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese workers were used as the primary labor force in building California's railroads. They were brought to the Americas as replacement workers for enslaved Africans, sometimes using the same ships that bought people from Africa (Zia 2000). Their subsequent brutalization, subjugation, and exclusion were framed overwhelmingly in racial terms (Smedley 1993, 268). This stigma was similarly applied to native and Mexican peoples who were characterized as savages, unfit to own and govern their land "coincidentally" at the time that those lands were desired by the wealthy elite. The "Trail of Tears" and the annexation of one-third of Mexican land are brutal testaments to this history of internal colonization, land appropriation, and genocide.

Throughout the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries the formation and consolidation of working-class whiteness (Roediger 1999, 14) was founded not just on economic exploitation but also on racial folklore (Du Bois 1970). Du Bois describes this dynamic eloquently:

> It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them. (Du Bois 1979, 700, 701)

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, various theoretical trends emerged in the social and biological sciences to further justify the

ordering of the world. These included Linnaeus's classification by descent (The Great Chain of Being), Cuvier's racial categorization that sorted humans into three subspecies (Caucasian, Mongolian, and Ethiopian) with differing permanent abilities, and a series of other typologies that attributed various characteristics to the classifications they named. "These models created a new form of social identity as the concept of 'race' developed as a way to rationalize the conquest and brutal treatment of native populations and the institution of slavery" (Smedley 1998, 697). During the following period the issue of origins (polygenist versus monogenist) was debated, providing the context for Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which demonstrated there were no permanent forms in nature (Banton 2000, 57).

By the mid-nineteenth century, virtually all whites in the United States had been conditioned to this arbitrary ranking of peoples, and racial ideology had diffused around much of the world, including to the colonized peoples of the Third World and among Europeans themselves (Smedley 1998, 695).

The Twentieth Century

The end of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth were marked by two significant U.S. Supreme Court decisions concerning the Fourteenth Amendment that[21] signified important shifts in the racial order within the United States (Baker 1998, 2). In 1896, *Plessey v. Ferguson* codified the practice of "separate but equal," and in 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling overturned it. Dominant theories of social Darwinism and later writings on cultural relativism paralleled these events (Baker 1998, 3), even as these events contributed to shaping the direction of social science concepts. "The social context from which turn-of-the-century constructs of race emerged—industrialization, poll taxes, public lynching, unsafe working conditions, and Jim Crow segregation—at the same time gave rise to a professional anthropology that espoused racial inferiority and, as a consequence, supported and validated the status quo" (Baker 1998, 3).

The turn of the century marked a period of contestation about who was to be included in the category designated "white," as a huge influx of immigrants from Europe and other parts of the globe tested the boundaries of citizenry and racial identity. Paralleling the pace of immigration at the end of the nineteenth century, the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the largest number of immigrants (8.8 million) admitted into the United States (Kraly and Miyares 2001, 47). The vast majority (92 percent) of these people originated from Europe.[22] At issue was the question of how they would be integrated and racially designated in U.S. society. The nation's expanding industries needed labor: mass immigration made cheap labor easily available. Immigrants were

exploited but also "used as an instrument for more effective exploitation of others, whether native or immigrant. For this reason, immigrant workers were sometimes compelled to put aside their ethnic loyalties" (Steinberg 2001, 38). African, Asian, and Mexican workers were used as a low-paid labor source for the least skilled jobs and sectors and established the infrastructure for industrialization and modernization. European immigrants worked primarily within the modern industrial sector that strategically provided them with opportunities for upward mobility (Blauner 1972, 62). This reality challenges the popular notion that all Americans "start at the bottom" and work their way up the ladder. The racial labor principle designated a different bottom for different groups (Blauner 1972, 62, 63). At the same time, up to nearly the mid-twentieth century, white ethnics, particularly Jews, Italians, and Irish, were not fully accepted as whites, but neither were they designated Black.

In social theory, the first half of the twentieth century brought further developments in the understanding of race and ethnicity. Franz Boas's study of immigrant head shape called into question the presumption of the immutability of race and laid the groundwork for the later writings of Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Melville Herskovits (Smedley 1993, 278). While justifications for anti-immigration legislation were articulated in language about the inferiority of immigrant stock as demonstrated by their physical frailty, Boas asserted that physical differences between immigrants and native-born populations disappear after these groups live in the same environment. During this period, Du Bois significantly contributed to the paradigm shift in the social sciences toward recognition of the connection between race and the concept of culture, united in an understanding of economics and politics (Baker 1998, 107–10). He described race as a social relationship, integral to capitalism, and the ultimate paradox of democracy constructed to reinforce and reproduce patterns of systemic inequality (Du Bois 1986, 372). "Back of the problem of race and color, lies a greater problem which both obscures and implements it: and that is the fact that so many civilized persons are willing to live in comfort even if the price of this is poverty, ignorance and disease of the majority of their fellowmen: That to maintain this privilege men have waged war until today" (Du Bois 1953, xiv).

From Biological to Social Scientific Explanations of Race

During the first half of the twentieth century the usage of an ethnicity-based paradigm to understand social relations in the United States emerged as an extension of challenges made to biologistic and social Darwinist conceptions of race (Omi and Winant 1994, 12). Ethnicity was offered as a way to describe the process of group formation using a focus on culture

and descent rather than biology and on the process of migration and the adaptation of immigrants in the United States. In 1913, Robert Park of the University of Chicago, a leading theorist within this group, asserted that by their second generation, Poles, Lithuanians, and Norwegians were indistinguishable from native-born Americans (Schaefer 1995, 111). Park projected that ethnicity would dissolve as immigrants integrated into society and that there was a pattern of integration into U.S. society, which he labeled the "race relations cycle." This involved stages of contact, accommodation, assimilation, and amalgamation achieved through intermarriage (Steinberg 2001, 47). Park considered all modern nationalities to be a mixture of several groups.

According to this idea, ethnicity was expected to disappear into a new "American" culture. This period marked a new stage in the consolidation of whiteness as a racialized category such that European Americans were transformed into a pan-ethnicity that represented the distancing of individuals from their national origin, heritage, and language, and being grouped as "white" (Alba 1990, 312). Two books in particular drew attention to the primacy of race within the social relations of U.S. society and signaled a paradigm shift from the belief in biological to cultural explanations of racial difference.

In 1945, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, by M. F. Ashley Montagu, a physical anthropologist, asserted: "The idea of 'race' was not so much the deliberate creation of a caste seeking to defend its privileges against what was regarded as an inferior social caste as it was the strategic elaboration of erroneous notions, which had long been held by many slaveholders. What was once a social difference was now turned into a biological difference, which would serve, it was hoped, to justify and maintain the social difference" (1945, 20). Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* (1944) put forth a call for racial democratization, emphasizing the need for the assimilation of African Americans. Myrdal wrote, "If America in actual practice could show the world a progressive trend by which the Negro finally became integrated into modern democracy, all mankind would be given faith again—it would have reason to believe that peace, progress and order are feasible. America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity" (Myrdal 1964, 1021–22).[23]

Myrdal's study became "the blueprint for state-based racial reform in the post-war era, strongly influencing debates about segregation and the runner-up to the *Brown* decision" (Winant 2001, 158). His suggestion that racism revealed a contradiction between American ideals and practice was considered a major advance at the time it was written. It later became apparent that this work marked a shift in emphasis from a biological focus to the social scientific notions of cultural inferiority still evident today (Steinberg 2001, 265).

SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC THEORIES OF POVERTY

The next phase of race and ethnicity theory was marked by Glazer and Moynihan's publication of *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963). The authors asserted that immigrant groups do not "melt" into U.S. society but are transformed into new social forms based on political interests rather than on culture or heritage (Omi and Winant 1994, 18). New communities were unlike each other and unlike those from where they migrated. Moynihan and Glazer argued that the United States had developed a pluralist model that acknowledged differences but emphasized cooperation. By the 1970s, they spoke of ethnicity as a social category that allowed contemporary forms of group expression based on distinctiveness and, in turn, provided an opening to demand rights based on the group's character and self-perceived needs (Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 3).

Beyond the Melting Pot examined five ethnic groups in New York City and implied (sometimes explicitly) that the American commitment to progress and achievement was justly and equally apportioned. The book asserted that inherent cultural norms, ideology, and values led to the success and progress of one group but not another. Structural relations of the social system were neither considered nor deemed significant in their analysis (Mullings 1978, 11). In this way, Moynihan and Glazer equated the histories and rationalized the social inequities experienced by Jewish, Italian, and Irish immigrants ("ethnics"), Puerto Ricans, and African Americans.

While the concept of the "undeserving poor" had long been established, deriving from the period of early capitalism when pauperism was the fate of large numbers of people who forfeited their land and were displaced to the city, it was during the 1960s that the phrase "culture of poverty" emerged. In formulating this framework, Oscar Lewis compares groups of people who are poor, and whom he characterizes as having negative traits, values, and norms, to those who were poor but do not appear to have such negative attributes. He writes, "The culture or subculture of poverty comes into being in a variety of historical contexts. Most commonly it develops when a stratified social and economic system is breaking down or is being replaced by another, as in the case of the transition from feudalism to capitalism or during the industrial revolution" (Lewis 1961, xxv).

Lewis states elsewhere that the causes and consequences of poverty are a direct result of the total social system, in particular, industrial capitalism (Lewis 1969, 190–91). He asserts that the structure of society is the most important factor in the perpetuation of poverty. Lewis's description of the characteristics of what he called the "culture of poverty" included a high degree of family disintegration, disorganization, resignation, and fatalism. Unfortunately, his work was used as a justification to blame individuals and

groups exhibiting these characteristics and to justify inequality through an explanation of the inherent cultural weakness of the poor (Lewis 1969, 191) rather than as a means to critique the system within which these characteristics appear. This (mis)interpretation of Lewis's work parallels the underlying assumptions, particularly about the weakness of the African American culture, in Moynihan and Glazer's writings (1963) as indicated above and in Moynihan's later writings (1965) about a "tangle of pathology" characterizing Black families with negative, self-perpetuating values. These theories functioned to bolster mainstream discourse that continued to emphasize the superiority of whites and white (ethnic) culture and the inferiority of African Americans and Latinos in particular. Eleanor Leacock's critique of this theoretical trend emphasizes that groups have different histories. Adaptive acts are institutionalized as internalized values appropriate for living in a given position in the socioeconomic system. She writes, "Poverty, as a structural feature of our society, cannot be changed by a change of attitudes only" (Leacock 1971, 34).

The dynamics shaping mainstream discourse from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s were complex. Liberal public officials had long used "damage imagery" that conveyed negative portraits to argue for policies and programs to help the poor (Scott 1997, xvi–xvii). Simultaneously, many groups and individuals were calling for a new vision of society based on social equality and justice for all and concern for the common good. This led to the characterization of this period as a "Second Reconstruction." The prevalence of the culture-of-poverty framework reflected a conservative influence that sought to command the parameters of thinking about the poor in an attempt to limit the power of a vision of society concerned with the common good, so well articulated by many popular movements of this period (DiLeonardo 1999, 59; Steinberg 1999, 222). The ruling elite was clear about what was at stake should structural factors responsible for the unequal organization of society be revealed.[21]

Theoretical notions of the culture of poverty have remained a central part of public discourse. In the 1990s, this concept was utilized in attacks on the public sector and debates about welfare and higher education. Issues of standards and merit have been raised without the language of race, yet imply cultural deficits of Black and Latino communities and implicitly presume white superiority.

Another explanation for group differences that reemerged during the 1970s is the concept of ethnicity. While previously employed in discussions about the process of assimilation, this notion had not been consolidated as an explanation for differences in social position between "white ethnics," "model minorities," and other communities of color. This marked the emergence of oblique coding of race in literature, media, and discourse, allowing racialized policies and

practices to function without the bluntness of explicit language. After all, who would argue against upholding "standards" for education or measures to make our communities "safe," or disagree with the need for "family values"?

During the late 1960s, "momentum built within white ethnic neighborhoods to the extent that their concerns and grievances demanded the attention of the society at large" (Ryan 1973, 1). "Partly it [was] a consequence of the growing discontent among white ethnics with their socio-economic position in America, partly it was one facet of the broader movement toward self-definition on behalf of many groups within American society. . . . It is in part a reaction to the social and political upheavals of the 1960s compounded by the inflationary economic spirals which followed" (Ryan 1973, 1). The white ethnic position accepted the civil rights demand for outlawing discrimination, but not if it called for proactive or affirmative measures (Glazer and Moynihan 1963, 17; Omi and Winant 1994, 19). This perspective asserted that, "through hard work, patience and delayed gratification, etc. blacks could carve out their own rightful place in American society" (Omi and Winant 1994, 19) and thereby echoed the culture-of-poverty argument from the perspective of white pan-ethnicity. During this period, ethnicity theory arose as a dominant paradigm. Ethnic identification by whites was constituted in a form of "white backlash" against the social programs that were set up as part of or as a result of the Civil Rights Act (1964), Voters Rights Act (1965), Immigration Act (1965), War on Poverty, and the Welfare Rights and nationalist movements of the 1960s. White ethnics (partially funded by the government as Heritage Societies) asserted that they too, suffered, and should be the recipients of social programs to address inequality in the United States. Rather than the disappearance of ethnicity, there was resurgence and a demand for the recognition and acceptance of white ethnic groups as a political force.

It is ironic that, although the antipoverty and civil rights programs and policies were portrayed as benefiting Blacks and Latinos exclusively, in fact, many white ethnics (particularly women) also benefited. For example, 75 percent of students initially admitted through the Open Admission Policy in the City University of New York were white ethnics who were the first in their family to attend college (Ryan 1973, 164; Lavin, Alba, and Silberstein 1979, 69). Information such as this was muted in the public discourse as the "new ethnicity" movement took strong stands against such programs and demanded resources for their own groups. Emphasis was placed on ethnicity as the primary classification for discussing groups as carriers of culture. These ideas then influenced the discourse about rights, equality, democracy, community self-definition, and resistance.

By the mid-1970s, Moynihan and Glazer had reevaluated some of their own earlier thinking and put forth what is known as a "bootstraps model"

(Omi and Winant 1994, 21). While this model recognized the injustice of slavery and racism, it articulated the idea that successes and failures of specific groups are a result of different norms that they brought to bear in dealing with circumstances they faced. Little else is deemed relevant, including the economic climate, the reigning ideological stance of benign neglect, or the existing social structures within which all groups exist (Omi and Winant 1994, 22). Black, Latino, and Asian ethnic or national categories are not viewed as notable (e.g., whether someone's family is from Haiti or Ethiopia; Peru or the Dominican Republic; China or India), whereas a white ethnic classification is considered significant (Omi and Winant 1994, 22). Ethnicity generally asserts an upward distinction in status, whereas race signifies a downward distinction since whiteness is assumed to be "natural," and not "raced."

In *Ethnic Dilemma, 1964–1982*, Nathan Glazer writes that while the 1960s legislation intended to lead us to a colorblind society, it actually increased color consciousness in the United States and forced institutions to pay an increasingly high level of attention to race and ethnicity (Glazer 1983, 3). He argues that this legislation led to more discrimination and division, not less. This perspective has been a central and underlying presumption of the anti-affirmative action argument that has gained steam over the past twenty years and to the emergence of calls for "colorblindness." Glazer asserted that the laws of the 1960s were the wrong solutions to the problem of discrimination and that the expenditures of the early 1970s were ineffective. His writings signaled another political shift to the right and a further attack on measures intended to equalize resources such as school integration, affirmative action, and various social welfare programs. This trend has continued throughout the past two decades, with continuing consolidation of the conservative agenda articulated, for example, by the Project for a New American Century and parallel polarization of wealth worldwide.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

In the late 1970s, along with critiques that examined the intersection of race, class, and gender, and power and dominance in general, a body of work developed among legal scholars of color, including Kimberle Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, and Derrick Bell. This "1980s generation of liberation scholarship [that] came to be known as 'Critical Race Theory'" (Matsuda et al. 1993, 5) asserts that new discussions about race are needed to address racism as endemic to life in the United States and globally. Collectively, their work is "pragmatic and utopian," seeks to "respond to the immediate needs of the subordinated and oppressed," and involves "both action and reflection" (Matsuda et al. 1993, 3). Critical Race Theorists believe in the privileging of contextual and historical descriptions and attempt to "confront and oppose dominant societal and institutional forces that maintained the structures of racism while professing the goal of dismantling racial discrimination" (Matsuda et al. 1993, 3). This tradition expresses skepticism toward dominant claims of neutrality, colorblindness, and objectivity, insists on context, and is interdisciplinary and eclectic. The basis for their theoretical assertions is the recognition of experiential knowledge: "Critical Race Theory works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression . . . [and] measures progress by a yardstick that looks to fundamental social transformation . . . not just adjustments within the established hierarchies, but a challenge to hierarchy itself" (Matsuda et al. 1993, 6–7).

Over the past decade, these scholars have contributed broadly to the study of social stratification as shaped by inequality based on race. An important aspect of this intellectual movement is an emphasis on race in order to eradicate injustice, not solely as identity politics concerned with the recognition of difference (Ford 1999, 105). This perspective analyzes race and racism through a critique of power and thereby contributed to the formal emergence of whiteness studies because the focus became the system itself and not solely the consequence of systemic patterns. This work is framed in this tradition.

WHITENESS SCHOLARSHIP AND STUDIES

Discussions of the "souls" and "ways" of white folk (Du Bois 1991; Ellison 1970; Hughes 1990) have long been part of the intellectual tradition interrogating the role of race in U.S. and global society. David Roediger's *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White* (1998) documents this rich history. Implicit in these works is the importance of understanding not just how whites view "others" but the very meaning of being "white," as racialized attitudes presume representation of one's self (hooks 1995, 31–50). "Sincere fictions" and ideological constructions lead to self-characterization as a "good person" or "non-racist" or "colorblind," all the while individuals hold beliefs and support positions that presume an assumption of white superiority (Feagin, Vera, and Batur 2001, 186). Racist sentiments are not solely articulated as prejudice; they are also expressed as culturally sanctioned beliefs. A system of self-deception and denial holds these contradictions in place (Wellman 1993, xi, 29) such that "the obsessive denial that race matter(s) was obviously a white creation" (Lazarre 1996, 25).

During the last several decades another body of literature has emerged with whiteness as the central theme. This includes a number of works that shed light on the dynamics of white supremacy and racialization; although they may not have "whiteness" as their focus, they significantly help us theoretically understand the processes that historically and currently underlie white racial construction. Such works provide the framework within which this book is situated.

While much of the scholarship does question and challenge the naturalization of whiteness and the corresponding assumption of privilege, dominance, and hegemony, not all of the literature is directed toward this end. There is no agreement, for example, about whether white racial identity should be deconstructed, reconstructed, or eliminated, or about how changes might take place. Furthermore, much of the literature focuses on identity rather than structural change. The next section of this chapter notes various trends and emphases in current analyses addressing such questions.

LABOR HISTORY AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

Writings about labor history and political economy are among the most significant and substantive contributions to our understanding of whiteness. The works of Theodore Allen and David R. Roediger are especially notable. Allen traces the origin and nature of the "white race" and how this concept was utilized as a means of social control, in *The Invention of the White Race: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (vol. 1, 1994) and *The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America* (vol. 2, 1997). He documents the context within which Bacon's Rebellion occurred, and discusses prior and subsequent periods when ruling-class policies created and reinforced racial oppression, drawing upon analogies from the history of British rule in Ireland. Roediger, on the other hand, provides a framework for understanding the relationship between the economic benefits and social construction of whiteness.

In *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, he traces how, when, and why "being white" became so important to workers included in this designation (Roediger 1999, 5). Ultimately, he argues that whiteness "was a way in which white workers responded to a fear of dependency on wage labor and to the necessities of capitalist work discipline" (Roediger 1999, 13). In other words, "the pleasures of whiteness could function as a 'wage' for white workers . . . status and privileges conferred by race could be used to make up for alienating and exploitative class relationships . . . fashioning identities as 'not slaves' and as 'not blacks'" (Roediger 1999,

13). His analysis provides the historical background for understanding present-day formulations of white identity by showing how racial hierarchy was established and implemented throughout the course of capitalism's development as a world system. He shows how the patterns of social organization discussed here were structured from the very beginning periods of European expansion and then U.S. nation building.

The history of European immigrants as they underwent the process of racialization between the late eighteenth and twentieth centuries is summarized in another notable work, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (1998) by Matthew Frye Jacobson. He particularly focuses on the ambiguity and shifting nature of racial categorization and how it serves divergent political purposes at different times. The book also provides critical background for understanding the current racial order as he documents how the development of pan-ethnic whiteness shifts with the need for labor and/or the political necessities of the elite, to allow the flexibility to incorporate or exclude different groups. Historians provide insight into the complex and sometimes contested development of "pan-ethnic" whiteness in the twentieth century (Roediger 2005) and a nuanced understanding of the emergence of "white" people as an expression of power in the course of history (Painter 2010).

WHITENESS AS IDENTITY

Several works analyze whiteness from the perspective of individual experience, generally exploring how race shapes the lives of a particular group of whites, often counterpoising race and class or race and gender. In *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters* (1993) and *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism* (1997), Ruth Frankenberg draws on life history interviews of women to analyze "the daily experience of racial structuring and the ways race privilege might be crosscut by other axes of difference and inequality" (1993, 1). She concludes that, in order to displace the colonial construction of whiteness as an empty cultural space, we need to analyze the position of whiteness in the social order.

Lorraine Delia Kenny's *Daughters of Suburbia: Growing Up White, Middle Class and Female* (2000) examines the intersection of race, gender, and class, combining "auto-ethnography" with an analysis of high-profile media images of white teenage girls such as Amy Fisher.[25] Kenny focuses on the process of racial identity formation among middle-school girls in a white suburban setting, and how they come to see themselves as the cultural norm. She suggests that whiteness requires silences in order to function, although she primarily focuses on the individual experiences of this particular group of

white teenage girls. She alludes to a "mechanism" that perpetuates racialized patterns, although she doesn't describe it as such.

Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit (1999) by John Hartigan Jr., and *White Trash: Race and Class in America* (1997) by Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz present ethnographies that articulate the relational functioning of dominance and subordination along these two axes. These authors focus on experiences of individuals, particularly poor whites, rather than on structural aspects of relationships; they advocate a positive reconstruction of white identity, rather than a society-wide transformation. They promote the "White Trash Girl" persona—implying that whites, too, can and should be proud of their cultural identity.

Cultural Representations of Whiteness

The most widely recognized critique of whiteness as displayed in popular culture, media, and public representations forms appears in works such as Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992) and bell hooks's "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination" (1995). These groundbreaking writings provide incisive depictions of the meaning of whiteness and its "hidden" centrality within all aspects of modern life. Morrison describes her project as "an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served" (Stowe 1996, 71). In her article hooks describes the amazement of her white students as they discover that "Black people watch white people with a critical 'ethnographic' gaze" (1995, 34). These works follow the long-standing tradition of scholars of color who assert the importance of understanding whiteness.

In *Yurugu: An African-centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (1994), Marimba Ani explores the cultural influences of European-dominated societies on institutions and structures. She describes key elements of European experience and expression that have historically provided the means for imperialistic success, not based on military might but through colonization of people's cultures, religions, aesthetics, notions of identity, and ideology. Ani writes, "European culture is unique in the assertion of political interest" (Ani 1994, 7). She explains this, saying that European thought presumes its own logic, superiority, universalism, and natural state, thereby describing the cultural origins of consciousness and worldview under capitalism that set the stage for global white supremacy. Ani provides a critical analysis of the underlying tenets of mainstream ideology.

Various works explore relationships between white, Asian, and Latino identities, locations, and borders in a racialized society and help interpret the perspectives of research participants. These include, for example, *De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century* (1998), by Elizabeth Martinez, who deconstructs the origin myths of the United States, and *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites? The Asian Ethnic Experience Today* (1998), by Mia Tuan, who points to the subtle and not so subtle ways that Asians are excluded in U.S. society except when they are needed as "model minorities" (Tuan 1998, 161).

Constructions of Whiteness

Documenting legal, economic, and political processes related to the negotiation of whiteness are books such as *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (1996) by Ian F. Haney Lopez, *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (1994) by Virginia R. Dominguez, and *Making Race and Nation* (1998) by Anthony Marx. These works argue that the judicial system functions as a powerful mechanism for the regulation of society and plays a central role in the social construction of race (Lopez 1996, 9). Lopez illustrates the contingent, fluid, and transient nature of whiteness by analyzing immigration cases where people from Hawaii, China, or Burma were excluded, those from Mexico and Armenia were included, and those from Syria, India, and Arabia were sometimes included and sometimes excluded. Dominguez documents how the parameters of white identity are constructed through historical processes of legal classification of white, Black, and Creole identity. Marx compares the histories of South Africa, Brazil, and the United States, explores the significance of racial encoding in state actions, and recognizes the influence that social movements have had historically in challenging established patterns (Marx 1998, 269–81).

Karen Brodkin's *How Jews Became White Folks & What That Says about Race in America* (1998) and Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White* (1995) examine the transformation of particular European immigrant communities that were not initially accepted into white, Anglo-Saxon society. These books document the particularities, opportunities, and trade-offs that specifically Jewish and Irish communities experienced and negotiated as they accepted the status of white pan-ethnicity. Ultimately, however, they articulate different visions: Ignatiev calls for the abolition of whiteness, whereas Brodkin seeks for us to build a multiracial democracy. These are important differences, although both works contribute substantively to our understanding about how whiteness has been produced and reproduced in U.S. society.

In an interesting edited volume of essays from the 30th Annual American Italian Historical Association (AIHA) Conference (1997), the essay that most clearly analyzes Italian American ethnicity through a critique about racialization and whiteness states: "What makes contemporary American society interesting, but not unique, is the simultaneous operation of contradictory myths. These cultural and structural paradoxes emerge from the ongoing dialectical social discourse as each myth calls forth its anti-myth" (Krase 1999, 103).

Whiteness in Pedagogy and Discourse

Interrogating whiteness within pedagogy and discourse are Henry Giroux's "Rewriting the Discourse of Racial Identity: Towards a Pedagogy and Politics of Whiteness" (1997), Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (1995), and Alice McIntyre's *Making Meaning of Whiteness: Exploring Racial Identity with White Teachers* (1997). The authors rightfully target the educational system as a locus where racialized images, beliefs, and ideology are produced and reproduced. They recognize the potential that exists within academia to disrupt patterns of learning that order and rank groups and individuals in a racialized society. Delpit in particular illustrates the dynamics of power in this domain and articulates ways in which positionality determines outlook and success.

Several edited volumes provide interdisciplinary, multilayered analyses about whiteness in local and global settings and allow for multi-vocality. Some emphasize the need to reform whiteness into something positive (*White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America*, Kincheloe et al. 1998), while others more clearly seek to dismantle structures of inequality through a deepened understanding of power and privilege (*The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, Rasmussen et al. 2001). Most include essays that express a range of perspectives such as in *Off White: Readings on Race, Power and Society* (1997), by Fine, Weis, Powell, and Wong. These works analyze racial domination and the consequent formation of white identity; less apparent are the authors' beliefs about how to use whiteness as a theoretical tool to impact structures of institutionalized power.

DECONSTRUCTIONS—WHITE ANTIRACIST STRATEGIES AND CRITIQUES

Providing a framework for my exploration of "cracks in the wall of whiteness" (chapter 6) are several important works that have an explicitly antiracist

focus. Well known to whiteness theorists, Peggy McIntosh's "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack: White Privilege" (1992) has been reprinted extensively because it provides a way to understand how advantages of being white are structured into everyday living. McIntosh identifies "conditions of daily experience that [she] once took for granted, as neutral, normal and universally available" (1998, 100). She says that some of these privileges convey a sense of belonging (from "flesh" colored bandages and "nude" stockings to the dominance of white images in positions of power); other privileges convey protection (such as the presumption of white innocence as opposed to a presumption of Black guilt); still others confer permission to dominate or to not listen to people in less powerful positions. She draws these conclusions through an analysis of gender and heterosexual privilege and dominance and emphasizes the need for a thorough understanding of systems of dominance, in order to reconstruct power on a broader base. In this way, McIntosh makes assumptions of whiteness explicit.

Stephanie M. Wildman takes this notion a step further in *Privilege Revealed: How Invisible Preference Undermines America* (1996) by analyzing the intersection of privilege based on race, gender, sexual orientation, economic wealth, physical ability, and religion, in order to deepen our understanding of systems of privilege that perpetuate the status quo (1996, 5). She asserts that invisible privileges function to maintain hierarchies of oppression and suggests that they should be exposed and challenged.

First published in 1977, David T. Wellman's *Portraits of White Racism* (1993) is based on five case histories and allows us to understand both the personal and the structural bases for racism. Wellman asserts that "racist beliefs are culturally sanctioned, rational responses to struggles over scarce resources" invoked to defend white advantages (1993, 29). While chapters within *White Racism* (2001), by Joe R. Feagin, Hernan Vera, and Pinar Batur, focus on the description of particular racist events that have occurred in the recent history of the United States, the chapter entitled "Sincere Fictions of the White Self" is devoted to an analysis of "personal ideological constructions that reproduce societal mythologies at the individual level" (2001, 186). The authors describe white attitudes about welfare, crime, and affirmative action, analyze the racialized components of these beliefs, and conclude with recommendations for antiracist engagement. Their book is a useful reference to understand everyday thinking.

In the literature interrogating white supremacy and racism are three explicitly activist-oriented antiracist works. Both *Whites Confront Racism: Antiracists and Their Paths to Action* (2001) by Eileen O'Brien and *A Promise and a Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism* (2001) by Becky Thompson document the history of antiracist activists in the United States. O'Brien as-

serts that while the stories of white activists are generally not well known, the knowledge of their existence and practices is integral to an understanding of participatory possibilities for challenging racism (O'Brien 2001, 2, 3). Thompson traces the relationships of these activists to broad social movements led by people of color, nationally and globally. Both articulate their belief that these individuals and movements represent significant possibilities for future challenges to white supremacy.

The New Abolitionists, known for their journal *Race Traitor*, explicitly call for the abolition of "whiteness" defined as a biological and cultural fiction, a club into which certain people are enrolled at birth. They assert that to consider reforming whiteness as a legitimate identity is dangerous because it provides the basis for right-wing, ultraconservative white supremacists to validate a white-power position as a corollary to national and ethnic pride movements, shifting the focus to personal relationships and "getting along" rather than to political struggle. "It is fortunate that in the nineteenth century they had abolitionists instead of diversity consultants; if not, slavery would still exist, and representatives of slaves and slaveholders would be meeting together—to promote mutual understanding and good feeling" (Ignatiev 1998, 4).

EXAMINATIONS OF WHITENESS AROUND THE GLOBE

Inquiries into the meanings of whiteness around the globe have been especially located within media studies, the humanities and social sciences, and the field of education. More recent work has taken place in performative and communications studies and in the examination of nationhood. Discussions do not necessarily link whiteness to systemic and historical patterns of white supremacy nor to capitalism. These works are particularly multidisciplinary and engage a broader critique of European dominance in the global order, either on the local level or the international sphere.

Some draw on broader critiques of globalization from cultural, economic, and political perspectives (e.g. Allen 2001; Bhattacharyya, Gargi, and Small 2002; Gordon 2003; Levine-Rasky 2002; Leonardo 2002). Others reflect how the examination of whiteness and its post-colonial legacies is particularly apparent in recent work by scholars in South Africa (Kinloch 2002; Steyn 2001), Australia, New Zealand (Anderson 2002; Cowlishaw 1999 and 2004; Hage 1997; Moreton-Robinson 2003), Mexico, Latin America, South American and the Caribbean (Davila 2003; Harris 2006; Langfur 2006), and the United Kingdom (Ware and Back 2002; Bonnett 2000; Gillborn 2006). Joost Cote makes the point that "European imperialism spawned settlements of

invasive white communities throughout Asia and Africa . . . the discourse of whiteness transforming a national discourse into a discourse on civilization" (2009, 1). This body of work raises new questions about the relationship of the world capitalist empire as it originated in Europe and developed in the United States, as well as its current manifestations within Asia, Latin and South America, and Africa.

The literature increasingly explores the intersectionality of pan-European supremacy, male supremacy, and the economic order, as well as Christian and heterosexual dominance. These writings examine whiteness as revealed in social patterns and through material evidence. They explore the meaning, implications, and significance of whiteness for the daily lives of ordinary people. Most of the discussions recognize the fluidity of categories and of continuous racial formations and reformulations along with the critical interconnections with other forms of social identity.

These provocative writings provide a better understanding of the "what" and "how" of white supremacy, though perhaps less of the "who" and "how not," spaces of resistance and opposition that represent hope for the future. There is, however, some promise that future work will thread together disparate global analyses of whitenesses past and present, helping to chart possible trajectories for the future.

CONCLUSION

Building upon existing literature and recognizing intellectual debts and forbearers linking everyday white racial consciousness and the mechanisms that reproduce structures of racial inequality, I aim to show the interconnection between economic and political analyses and the lived experiences of ordinary people.

Ethnography Framed in Political, Economic, and Social Theory

Writings about whiteness tend to be either narrative and ethnographic or formally theoretical, addressing issues of legal, political, and social construction of race. Works that examine the experience of "being white" often read as "stories" with weak structural analysis. While engaging, they generally leave the reader with an uncertain sense of the implications of these narratives. This book interweaves the everyday thinking and theoretical context of current events and political transformations during the last three decades within U.S. and global society, although it is framed within the historical social system that spans the last six hundred years.

Emphasis on Economic Explanations for Inequality and Racism

Literature about whiteness does not often discuss the lack of awareness of white people about the factors at work that shape their employment, education, housing, and healthcare opportunities. For example, how did Long Island get to be so segregated? Why are positions of power dictated by whites? Attitudes and beliefs are primarily explained as a consequence of the bombardment of racialized imagery and discourse, particularly from the media. This book explores the implications of this lack of understanding, as expressed through the misperceptions and narratives drawn upon to explain systemic inequality.

While the significant contributions of curricular and co-curricular multiculturalism are not to be negated, they have unfortunately functioned largely to divert our attention from issues of power and subordination that are integrally embedded as forces that shape the possibilities for all people in the United States and globally. Identifying the need to expose and analyze economic and political processes as connected to discourse and consequent beliefs about race is central to my argument about the role of mechanisms in the perpetuation of structural patterns of inequality.

"Mechanisms" for the Reproduction of Patterns of Racial Inequality

Explicitly, how does it happen that many "well-meaning" whites accept mainstream discourse about whether we have achieved racial equality, whether or not individual and collective efforts for change actually can make a difference, and what is the true character of human nature? I emphasize the notion of agency, that is, if people do not believe that they can make a difference and they do not understand the factors shaping their own possibilities, they will be hard-pressed to resist economic, political, and social pressures and more easily succumb to accepting hegemonic arguments for racial and other forms of inequality and injustice. If people believe that it is human nature to stick with "one's own" and to care only for one's immediate circle, the parameters within which they are able to examine, analyze, and determine whether to submit or dissent are structured narrowly and rigidly. The true possibilities for humanity are rendered invisible, and certainly impossible. Yet the inverse can also be true.

Linking Agency and Structure, Everyday Thinking and Institutions, Identifying "Cracks"

At the heart of this book is a firm belief that the everyday thinking of ordinary people integrally relates to the perpetuation of patterns of systemic racial inequality. Therein lies the implicit potential for challenging those patterns

and for constructing a more egalitarian and just world. Linking hegemonic discourse and ideology (as practiced primarily though not exclusively by poor, working-, and middle-class white populations) to the safeguarding of the status quo (as shaped and dictated by the most powerful and dominant sector of global society) provides us with critical knowledge of how an unfair and inhumane system can persist. By understanding the beliefs that underlie support for institutionalized policies and programs and the mechanisms that allow these patterns to be replicated and reproduced, we can take action. This book has explicitly sought "cracks in the wall of whiteness" in order to identify where weaknesses exist within the current racial order. This knowledge strengthens our strategic ability to dismantle the formulations of race that have shaped U.S. and global history over the last six hundred years. Without linking agency to structure, we discuss only chickens or only eggs without ever understanding the inherent relationship between the two.

Understanding everyday thinking and recognizing that social and racial consciousness has a direct relationship to the perpetuation and reproduction of patterns of inequality means that we can intervene to alter the dominant narratives about poverty, privilege, race, gender, and almost all relationships of dominance and subordination. The emphasis here is on agency, for if race has been socially constructed, it can also be socially deconstructed.

> The point of historical studies of racial identities in the working class . . . has never been to mount a facile indictment of white workers as simply racist. Rather it has been and is now to understand how historicized racial identities dramatically shaped what workers could do and dream in their lifetimes and how better deeds and dreams can be made possible in ours. (Roediger 1994, 77)

With this grounding in mind, we turn next to a discussion of the ethnographic study conducted to seek answers to the questions raised above.

THE PLACE AND PEOPLE

This section briefly describes the primary location for the ethnographic research and connects the overall political, social, and economic framework with the findings. For the second edition of this book, Brooklyn College was revisited for a mini-study and research was also conducted at a private liberal arts college in the metropolitan New York area to provide insight about similarities and differences within diverse environments. Where included, data from the "revisit" study are specifically noted.

The student population of Brooklyn College (BC) resembles many multicultural urban centers that have emerged throughout the United States over

the last several decades. This heterogeneous community roughly mirrors the population of the borough and comprises nearly seventeen thousand students from over one hundred nations, speaking over ninety-five languages.[26] The BC campus thus provided opportunities for generalization, access, and comparison. While the research was conducted at this site, the study is not "about BC." These findings could have been generated similarly in any urban area within the United States. I integrated the findings of other studies into the text so that comparisons could be made. The overall dynamics and relationships between individuals and groups are patterned through dominant structures and narratives throughout the nation.

Brooklyn, the Borough

> It may not be generally known that our city is getting to have quite a worldwide reputation.
>
> —Walt Whitman 1862 (Snyder-Grenier 1996, 1)

In Unity, There is Strength (Motto on the 1898 Borough Seal of Brooklyn)[27]

Bedford-Stuyvesant, Canarsie, Bushwick, Bensonhurst, East New York, Flatbush, and Borough Park—these neighborhoods are diverse when viewed together, homogenous when viewed alone. They are culturally rich, yet many of their residents are poor. Brooklyn is often thought to be violent and full of conflict, yet Brooklynites are reputably proud and cooperative, with a strong sense of history and community.[28] Discrepant images are simultaneously conjured up when talking about the borough. While overall demographics depict a multicultural milieu, most areas reflect a concentration of one group. Neighborhood populations vary so greatly that one (Crown Heights) is 2.2 percent white, yet another (Dyker Heights) is 81.8 percent white.[29] In fact, one-third of all neighborhoods have an 80 percent or greater white concentration and another one-third have a 20 percent or less concentration of whites (BC OIR 1999b).

These images of Brooklyn, the place, reflect the incongruity in notions of whiteness and allude to a disjuncture between the idea of a harmonious multicultural setting and a divided reality.[30] It became clear while doing this research that for some whites whose connection to European ancestry may be one or two steps removed, "Brooklyn" also functions as an ethnic identity, as more than one participant self-described as a "Brooklyn-American."

Writings about Brooklyn reflect this fragmentation by generally focusing on one community or another and tend to describe relationships between them as either peaceful and integrated or hostile and separate. Analyses are characterized by an ethnic rather than racial focus and generally depict isolated communities, rather than diverse peoples who interact in public spaces and then retreat to homogenous "homelands." Much of the literature speaks to a history of tension and conflict between groups but generally does not assess the experiences of commonality or difference in the ways they perceive each other or function on a day-to-day basis. In contrast, the works of Roger Sanjek (1998) and Steven Gregory (1998) examine the dynamic history of racial politics in New York City, drawing on ethnographic work conducted in Queens.

Literature about Brooklyn portrays the contradictory images of the borough's identity. Some works focus on the public sphere and patterns of settlement rather than on the particular experiences of the city's people. New York City, as a whole, is characterized as multiethnic and multiracial, and authors speak repeatedly of the city's reputation for tolerance, diversity, and adaptability. One example is *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City* (Binder and Reimers 1995), which presents a detailed examination of the many migrations to New York City since 1524—though little attention was given to the role of New York City as an early port for slave ships, or to the pressures placed upon the native populations once Europeans arrived. Recent discoveries at the Lott House in Brooklyn provide further evidence of the complicity and involvement of Europeans in this area with the slave trade, in contrast to popular notions.[31] By focusing on how diversity works rather than on points of contestation, New York City is analyzed through a "white gaze."

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Brooklyn neighborhood boundaries are defined by race and ethnicity such that a dominant group (or groups) generally characterizes each area. This segregation and corresponding disparities in resources have been a source of historical tension documented by several important works, such as *Canarsie* (Rieder 1985) and *The Closest of Strangers* (Sleeper 1990). Written from a liberal perspective during and after the school decentralization struggle in the late 1960s, both explore the grievances of whites in their relationship with the African American communities. They generally portray racial inequality as if it were due to a mysterious force of history and social tension as a consequence of Black anger.

While the story told here could have taken place in any number of urban institutions in the United States, for purposes of context, I now briefly summarize the recent history of the place where the bulk of this research was conducted.

Brooklyn College, Institutional History

After the Open Admissions Policy was instituted, a relatively large number of faculty was hired to teach the increased number of students. During the

budget crisis of the mid-1970s, however, many faculty lines were lost, with few replacement hires until the late 1990s. The impact on the numbers of faculty was so dramatic that, with retirements, deaths, and people leaving for other jobs, the number of faculty of color is estimated to have dropped approximately 50 percent.[32] Another consequence was that by the 1990s the faculty included mostly those whose first years at the college were during the 1960s and 1970s, an era with a social environment very different from that of the students whose thoughts are represented in this book.

Many Brooklyn College students, along with some faculty and staff, played an active role in struggles both on and off campus. Support for Open Admissions was not, however, necessarily universal, as a professor in the English Department, Tucker Farley, describes: "I remember being shocked because I came to Brooklyn College and CUNY since there was Open Admissions. It was 1971. I was shocked to hear people talking about the 'ineducables.' To me, that translated very much in terms of race."[33]

Professor Farley indicated that, while this was not everyone's perspective, she felt it was a common view among faculty. The struggle for Africana and Puerto Rican Studies was also highly contested. While the activism of students resulted initially in the founding of two institutes that subsequently became departments, substantial and continuous struggles occurred, some that persist to this day. At Brooklyn College, "during the struggle for Black and Puerto Rican Studies, students were physically assaulted by racist whites in the cafeteria because these Black and Puerto Rican students had chosen the Studies program as their major" (Jennings 1985, 10).

Of this period, a faculty member of the department of modern languages, William Sherzer, said: "They were rough years, because the campus had to re-define itself—was it a Jewish college like it always used to be? My white, non-Jewish students were as upset often at the politics of the conservative Jews as the blacks were. . . . [They thought] that Open Admissions was going to change this Jewish part of Brooklyn College that we've always had. And I'm not mentioning this as being anti-Semitic—first of all, I'm Jewish."[34]

Professor Paul Montagna of the sociology department described what he felt was the "moderate, liberal, left" nature of the faculty in their support of ethnic studies: "I am supportive, and I was supportive. My department, we have continued our support whenever there seems to be an issue—we can always be counted upon to sign protest statements or whatever."[35]

Professor Farley went on to speak about a later incident: "I remember sitting in the faculty lounge. There was a man in my department who was reading the newspaper the day the cops had shot a young Black boy in Brooklyn mistaking him for, they said, a man who had committed a crime in the neighborhood. I was just grief-stricken, and shocked and he was too. Then I realized that he was taking the point of view of the policeman, thinking how horrible it was to have been the policeman and I was taking the point of view of the parent, thinking how horrible it was to have a child killed. That just blew my mind."

She asserts that while BC has an institutional image of progressiveness, this type of incident was not unusual throughout the course of her thirty years of teaching. She describes an environment that is outwardly, or by public acclamation, open and liberal in the best sense of the word but also one with many tensions residing beneath the surface.

The political environment and concern for diversity at the college has ranged from very to minimally active, from moderate to progressive, and has fluctuated over time. The assessment of institutional commitment and whether the campus is a friendly environment for all students differs depending on who is asked. Historically, significant frustration has been expressed by various constituencies about the lack of attention to this issue.

A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT THE STUDY

In citing participants' comments, I use descriptions given by the individual. Some people spoke of themselves solely as white; others talked specifically about being foreign-born and others described themselves ethnically or in religious terms but not racially. In a few instances students described themselves as "human" or used an identifier different from what they had used in a previous point in the discussion. The criteria I use are rooted in their self-description. A national or ethnic tag, class origin, or age is included only if the individual presented himself or herself that way. While I recognize that there is tremendous political significance in the terms of identity, for the purposes of this book I rely upon what I saw as the most standard formats.

Where particularly relevant, I note whether a focus group was mixed, all white, or consisted of students, all of color. All statements are from students, unless explicitly stated as a faculty or staff respondent. Participants were told that research was being conducted about the experiences and views of students on the role that race plays in their lives, in the lives of people around them. They were informed that the focus was particularly on developing an understanding of white students' experiences. All names are pseudonyms except where individuals granted explicit and written permission.

Many students remarked that they have rarely, if ever, engaged in discussion about these topics. If they had, they said it was with people from their own racial or ethnic group. Several students commented that they felt uncomfortable and awkward because the questions often made them reflect

on assumptions of which they were not conscious but decidedly incorporated into everyday thinking and living. Repeatedly, the experience of the focus groups was described as one in which they could hear the perspectives and experiences of students from different backgrounds about sensitive and controversial issues and without concern for penalization from faculty members who might judge what they said. Most students indicated that they had never been in any environment in which they felt they could interact, speak, and listen openly about these issues.

Participant observation of campus activities provided insight into the meaning and tone of interactions between students. These included, for example, community events, such as the taping of a radio program on immigration with several student panelists. In other cases these were campus meetings. I also conducted interviews with seven faculty members who had been at the college for the last thirty years, and I researched archival materials about movements for access, diversity, and self-determination at the college. This material provided background for understanding the college environment, its students, and the ways that various issues have been addressed on campus over time.

SUMMARY

As noted earlier in this chapter, despite a public emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity, the on-campus social and political lives of students are generally segregated. Students enter college with assumptions about racial and ethnic identities, having commonly attended high schools within their own communities.[36] These assumptions are sometimes challenged by the experience of working together in community service projects, classes, or student activities, but they often form invisible lenses that shape interaction.

Conversations often dissipate when differences of opinion emerge. Tensions run deep beneath the surface, as frequently perceived realities diverge between whites and people of color. Whites may try to understand these differences but often blame nationalist leanings of people of color, culture, or even human nature for the tension. This study aimed to document these beliefs and provide an analysis of the implications of general patterns in everyday interactions.

There are several issues that I would like to clarify about the material in this book: the use of a black–white paradigm, the meaning I ascribe to the phrases "ordinary people," "whites," and "everyday thinking," the implicit potential for misconstruing intent or reading things into what someone says, the use of categories (including racial categories) to describe patterns of

thinking, and the role that my own identity, racial and otherwise, played as I conducted the research.

Du Bois states, "the concept of race is a group of contradictory forces, facts and tendencies" (1970, 133). Categories shift and populations redefine themselves; census classification is highly contested territory. This project primarily involved reflection upon the everyday perceptions and thinking of those people in the United States defined as white. Because of the particular history of this nation, and because often, although not always, Black and white appear most starkly as poles, there are times when I do not explicitly discuss beliefs and perceptions related to Latino, Asian, native, and mixed populations. Chapter 2 briefly summarizes some of the particularly significant findings related to these groups. However, as whites' attitudes and beliefs are frequently most glaring in relationship to Blacks, the frame of reference is often set in black/white terms (Martinez 1999, 127–29). "In this country as well as in many others, unfortunately, blackness has come to symbolize the social bottom" (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994) and a host of related characteristics (as quoted in Harrison 1998, 612). The legacy of slavery in the United States played a critical role in shaping the notion of race and in its ongoing impact on relationships between groups, therefore providing additional rationale for utilizing a dichotomous framework. While generalizing about patterns found in the beliefs expressed by whites provides useful points for reflection, it is not to convey that all whites share the same beliefs. This terminology refers to the patterning of thinking, beliefs, or experience of whites as a group.

This stands as an acknowledged oversimplification, for there are many relationships of power and dominance that complicate the consequences of a racialized organization of society and are, in and of themselves, critical sites for study. These include but are not limited to immigration status, language, gender, and class, national, and religious affiliation. By analyzing white people's understanding of the everyday experience of race in U.S. society, I hope to provide insight that may be used in theorizing about other forms of inequality. Where possible, I note ways that I believe these other factors influence the perspectives described; however, the focus of this book is on the way that racialized thinking affects beliefs.

The phrase "ordinary people" is used throughout this book to refer broadly to the millions of people who live and work in the United States but who are not in political positions, and/or members of the powerful elite who legislate, determine, and influence policies that structure society. The use of "everyday" thinking, experiences, perceptions, and "forms of whiteness" refers to interactions, beliefs, and actions that occur routinely in daily life.[37]

There is of course in any project the potential for misconstruing the meaning of someone's statements. I have attempted to withhold comment and

analysis until after the reader first has the opportunity to reflect upon them. However, "as racism is organized through discursive patterns of signification and representation, it must be investigated through the analysis of discourse" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 4). "Racism can be the unintended consequence of everyday discourses and practices that perpetuate and reinforce an oppressive structure of power" although this is "not to argue that racism is a simple matter of linguistic practice" (Harrison 1998, 611). For the purpose of this book, I analyze discourse as it "institutes, solidifies, changes, creates and reproduces social formation" (Harrison 1998, 611). In this light, it becomes apparent that racialized thinking occurs not just among whites, but also throughout the society at large.

As language conveys meaning, discussions about race are contested because the very notion itself is one born of struggles about power, privilege, and profit (Baker 2001). I selected the categories for race and ethnicity on the survey because these appeared to be most frequently used in other recent survey materials. In retrospect, I would have separated U.S. and foreign-born for Latinos and Asians, although I chose not to do so because of the smaller percentages of the overall BC population that they represent. I regret this, however, as it limits the comparisons that can be drawn between foreign- and native-born participants.

The term "racialization" is increasingly being used as a means to describe a process in contrast to essentialized categories (Darder and Torres 1998). I also use this term to articulate social meanings of race as opposed to biological and immutable notions, a means to deconstruct relationships of power. While I certainly recognize the multiplicity and the simultaneity of other factors,[38] this project particularly examines the way whites racialize both themselves and everyone else, and how this translates into everyday practice.

A final issue is that of my own identity. At the time of the original study I had been employed at BC for ten years. Despite my specific formal duties, my reputation on campus, I believe, was one of student advocate, counselor, and educator. Throughout this time I actively participated in campus life. All of this, I suggest, functioned in my favor to provide a setting where students felt "safe" to speak. I was conscious of the dynamics of power in my relationships with students and made an explicit effort to acknowledge and elicit concerns so that they might be addressed. I believe my whiteness allowed white students to speak more freely than they might have with a person of color, presuming perhaps that I shared their worldview. My age allowed enough distance to avoid feelings of peer competition.

It is my deepest hope that, by listening closely to the voices of our young people, we might discover opportunities for reconstructing a public understanding of the role of race, today. Organized by issue, the next four chapters

provide ethnographic material upon which to reflect. It is my belief that institutional structures are reinforced and can be challenged by the everyday thinking of ordinary folks. I hope this material provides insight about their attitudes and about the possibilities for improving our effectiveness in educating our youth about civic responsibility and the importance of socially conscious leadership, broadly understood to be the millennial goals for academia.