

## **Introductory note:**

This book offered a framework in which to view the racial conflict engulfing the United States throughout the 1960s and beyond. A beginning scholar of ordinary human potential could best do this through an edited volume drawing on the collective wisdom of more than 50 authors with introductions drawing out what was important about sub-areas involving: a) general theoretical perspectives on conflict b) social structure and conflict c) ideology and strategy d) the dynamics of conflict and e) the consequences of conflict. The book was widely used in courses in the 1970s.

– Gary T. Marx  
February 11, 2019

**RACIAL CONFLICT**  
**TENSION AND CHANGE**  
**IN AMERICAN SOCIETY**

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## INTRODUCTION

*"Freedom Is a Constant Struggle"—Masthead of Sun Flower County, Mississippi Freedom Newspaper*

ALTHOUGH greatly overstated, Disraeli's reported comment that "all is race, there is no other truth" would seem to be even more appropriate in twentieth-century America than in nineteenth-century England. Almost wherever one looks race impinges itself upon the American conscience. The articles collected here reflect perhaps the most dramatic aspect of race relations: conflict. I have chosen to focus on this theme not because conflict is the all, or necessarily the most, important aspect of intergroup relations, but because it is highly significant, rather neglected, and offers a vehicle for considering a number of important areas including social change, inequality, and ideology.

The field of race relations is blessed, or cursed, with an abundance of textbook readers. For the most part they cast a wide net. In the pursuit of variety, and no doubt course adoptions, they usually consider the most diverse materials on a wide array of racial, ethnic, and religious groups. Or in a more recent trend, they focus only on blacks in an effort to capture the black experience. A student may learn a considerable amount from texts which (with sections that are usually tenuously linked) draw on various disciplines to deal with the most varied questions posed by race relations or which are unified by a discussion of only blacks, rather than of both blacks and whites and the interaction between them. Yet the student is not left with a basic framework for analyzing the social world or with a set of integrated questions; nor is he or she left with much of a feeling for the continuity of social structure and process.

The aim of this book is rather more delimited and focused. As the title suggests, it is concerned with racial conflict and social change as they involve both blacks and whites. Widespread racial change and an increase in domestic conflict are among the most salient features of contemporary American life. Though the exact links between conflict and change are not always clear and may vary considerably depending on the context and the level of analysis involved, a crucial factor has been the challenge from

What is *racial conflict*? Put most simply, it is conflict between groups that consider each other racially distinct. The boundaries of the group in question and one's sense of identity with it are determined by racial criteria, as popularly defined.<sup>1</sup>

This of course begs the question of what conflict is. For our purposes *conflict* can be broadly defined as a self-conscious group struggle for resources perceived as scarce and/or values that are taken to be incompatible. A distinction is sometimes made in the literature between "competition" and "conflict." "Competition" is seen to involve struggle over values or scarce resources in a framework of established rules, which limit what opponents can do to each other, with the main objective being the scarcity or desired values, whereas "conflict" is seen to be less bound in by rules and to involve efforts to neutralize, injure, or eliminate one's rivals.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is important to stress the social and cultural character of groups defined along racial lines. In American society race is more a social than a biological category. Anyone with any visible African ancestry is classified as Negro. In Brazil it is almost the opposite. Any European ancestry tends to exclude one from being classified as Negro. A large portion of American "Negroes" have just as much European ancestry as they do African and many "whites," particularly in the South have an appreciable degree of African ancestry. Even the term "race" is scientifically problematic. There is little agreement among physical anthropologists about just what race is, what gene pools should define it, or even how many races there are. For a useful discussion summarizing much of the relevant literature, see G. Simpson and M. Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), chap. 2. Yet such scientific issues aside, if people impute meaning to racial categories, even though their definition is culturally relative, varying from one society to the next, the social analyst must deal with social definitions.

<sup>2</sup> For some conceptual discussions of conflict, see A. Schneider and G. Marx "Violent Inter-group Conflict in American Society," in *American Social Problems*, (ed.) J. Douglas, (New York: Random House, forthcoming); C. Fink, "Some Conceptual Difficulties in the Theory of Social Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Reso-*

lution 12, no. 4; M. Deutsch, "Conflicts Productive and Destructive," *Journal of Social Issues* 15, no. 1; A. Rapoport, *Fights, Games, and Debates* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1960); L. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York: Free Press, 1954); R. Mack and R. Snyder, "The Analysis of Social Conflict—Toward an Overview and Synthesis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (June 1957); T. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); R. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1959).

<sup>3</sup> However, such a definition is rather well-suited to the actions of some southern whites in their defense of the status quo. In the 1970's it is increasingly coming to fit the activities of some black protest groups as well.

violent or nonviolent and may or may not involve efforts to injure and destroy the opponent (beyond whatever losses he may suffer if his opponent gains his goals).<sup>4</sup>

The readings in this book deal primarily with groups organized, at least partly, for the pursuit of ends which are incompatible. Prejudice, discrimination, racial etiquette, and inequality are of interest primarily as they become defined as issues around which group struggle takes place, though a very important question is: Under what conditions does the struggle for equal opportunity, dignity, and redistribution of power and income occur, as against strains being ignored, unrecognized, or resulting in displaced hostility toward oneself, other members of one's group, or giving rise to an individualistic and idiosyncratic resistance?

In contemporary American society when we think of racial conflict, we tend to think of challenge to the color line from a subordinate black, Puerto Rican, or Mexican group and reaction on the part of the dominant white group. However, another important type of racial conflict, particularly historically, has been that initiated by whites in establishing the color line and in using prejudice as a tool to further their own ends. Still another common type of racially or ethnically linked conflict in American society has been between more or less equally subordinate minority groups as they struggle in direct competition for the meager resources available to them, in a milieu where they have learned the racism of the larger culture and may displace aggression onto each other. A particularly

interesting and neglected type of conflict has been that within minority groups. Material is presented on each of these conflicts, though because of its direct relevance and current research interests, most attention is given to efforts that challenge the color line. Many of the issues, concepts, and theories apply equally well to other forms of racial conflict.

Struggle over scarce resources and discrepant values may take many forms. A large proportion of social struggle in America is highly regularized, fairly tightly bound in by rules, occurs within a framework of traditional legal standards, and is seen as legitimate by most members of society.

One of the clearest examples of such institutionalized means of struggle is electoral politics. Labor/management disputes resolved through collective bargaining are another. A third area where groups may pursue incompatible claims is the legal system. Still other means are through lobbying, letter writing, or peaceful petitioning. Such conflict is sometimes referred to as "working within the system."

Yet there are other forms of conflict that at least initially may be considered illegal, which can involve threats, coercion, force, and disruption. A relatively powerless and impoverished minority group may find that the negative power to disrupt is the strongest resource it has.

For a group with heightened aspirations and intense grievances, operating within the traditional framework may be seen as slow, cumbersome, and ineffectual. When traditional means are ineffective and serve only to perpetuate the status quo, strong pressure may exist for conflict to be carried out outside of normal channels. Playing by the rules of the game (which may mean other people's rules) sometimes means that one can't play the game.

<sup>4</sup>The presence of conflict bounded by rules, and whether or not one is out to hurt his opponent are logically somewhat independent, although empirically the presence of rules, for functional reasons of self-interest, usually tends to limit at least to some degree what groups do to each other.



This reader gives particular attention to some of the less institutionalized kinds of conflict: demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts, confrontations, and civil disorders. It is important to realize that such tactics may occur simultaneously with efforts carried on within customary channels. Indeed over time a given tactic such as a labor union strike or sit-in may move from being defined as illegal to legal. The ends sought by a conflict group may be seen as illegitimate, as well as the means it uses.

Two kinds of articles are presented here: general theoretical material on conflict and focused, detailed material on actual conflict situations. Beyond gathering together in an orderly way some of the more readable and important materials on conflict and race, this approach permits an assessment of the extent to which the theories can help us gain a deeper understanding of specific case studies and it adds some substance to otherwise rather abstract analytic theories.

The need for a reader such as this became apparent to me as a confused graduate student, preparing for examinations and being pulled back and forth, between abstract, nonsubstantive, general considerations of conflict and concrete, largely atheoretical descriptions of real situations of racial conflict. It was originally hoped to show how a general theory of social conflict could unify and shed light on a particular case of racial conflict. As my reading broadened, my ambitiousness narrowed when it became clear that we are far from a theory of social conflict, if by theory one means a tightly related set of testable propositions of sufficient generality. What we have instead are a number of useful concepts, the specification of some important analytic issues and questions, some middle-range theories, some empirical

generalizations, and a view of society which stresses the scarcity of desired resources, competing values and belief systems, the imperfect integration of social structure and culture, and the imperfect nature of socialization, all of which give rise to a conflict potential.

This reader is organized around a number of questions that can be asked about any type of social conflict, as well as some questions that are unique to race conflict and American society: Why do societies have a potential for conflict? What are the main institutional areas within which conflict occurs? What are some of the main types of racial conflict? What affects the form conflict takes? What kinds of social situations make it likely that organized conflict will appear? How is racial conflict distributed in time and place, and what are some of its main correlates and antecedents? What is the role of ideas in mobilizing people to action and in justifying their behavior? What are the implications of different strategies? What kinds of individuals are likely to become active in social conflict situations, and what are some of the things that happen to them in the process? What affects the course of a given conflict? What terminates a given conflict? What are the consequences of conflict for the individual and for society? When do the actions of organized protest groups bring about change? Repression? Both or neither? Just how important is conflict to change?

One of the luxuries of an academic tradition that, in some ways for the better and in others for the worse, seems to be dying out in American social science, is the posing of questions and the raising of issues for their own sake. To begin to understand a field one must know what the questions are. This volume hardly does justice to the questions posed above, though some

areas, such as the documentation of inequality in various institutional spheres, are handled far better than others. However, the body of literature included here, it is hoped, contains among the best answers we have that are readily accessible to students.

In general, I started with a set of questions; let this inform the articles to be included, rather than letting the materials suggest the questions.

In putting together such a volume out of existing materials rather than commissioning new materials, one runs into problems of completeness and quality. Important gaps exist and some areas are not treated in sufficient depth. Yet perhaps this very fact can inspire needed studies.

The book is divided into five parts, which roughly correspond to the questions posed above. These parts are organized around various analytic areas and relate logically to each other. They tend to parallel the actual form of a given instance of racial conflict. Thus we move from documenting the potential for realistic conflict to a consideration of what situations are conducive to the appearance of overt conflict, to the role of ideas in mobilizing people, to the actual occurrence of the conflict, and, finally, to the consequences of conflict.

Part I, "General Theoretical Perspectives on Conflict," includes abstract discussions of conflict in society. It offers a view of society as having built-in scarcities and contradictions. Conflict over these scarcities and value differences is seen as a fundamental social process. The essence of race conflict lies here. This level of analysis can be separated from personality factors such as hostility or prejudice. Some types of conflict are specified and the functions of conflict are explored.

The next part, "Social Structure and Racial Conflict," is a less abstract con-

sideration of how social organization affects racial conflict. It is divided into two sections. Section A deals with scarce resources and institutionalized inequality. It considers some of the various things that conflict revolves around, such as political power, money, status, cultural definitions, etc. It does this by studies documenting the poverty and powerlessness of blacks relative to whites. These factors form the basis for realistic conflict. Whether, in fact, conflict occurs depends upon the type of community involved and how people come to define their situation.

Conflict is not all of one kind, nor do all racially stratified societies have an equal likelihood of conflict. Certain social situations are much more conducive to the occurrence of overt conflict than others are. Section B of this part considers antecedents and correlates of conflict. Some of these are at the community level, such as how pluralistic the society is. Others look to the historical nature of the initial contact between racial groups; still others center on the economic and political context, or consider the importance of demographic changes and other disruptions as they bear on the likelihood of racial conflict.

Given a potential for conflict, and historical conditions and a community structure conducive to its emergence, consideration is next given in Part III, "Ideology and Strategy," to the role ideas play in preparing people for action and in indicating what lines of behavior are appropriate and why.<sup>5</sup> In this part rather than presenting articles analyzing the role of ideology, the participants

<sup>5</sup> This is not necessarily to imply that objective strains and deprivation always give rise to ideologies of change. It is almost axiomatic among social scientists to note that what counts is not so much objective conditions but how people define them. However, there is no doubt often a reciprocal relationship between ideology and social structure.

speak for themselves. Included are statements by black and white nationalists, moderates and liberals, ranging from the Black Panthers to Martin Luther King and Senator Bilbo of Mississippi to President Johnson. Several articles analyzing strategy are also included.

Given scarce resources, a conducive milieu, and ideas which justify and even demand conflict, Part IV, "The Dynamics of Conflict," considers actual conflict situations. It is divided into parts: social processes and case studies.

The racial conflicts we are concerned with have a dynamic quality to them, though for some purposes they can be analyzed statically. In the social process section, articles are presented which attempt to catch the expressive, emergent quality of such conflict. A disagreement over a minor issue with little emotional involvement on the part of those concerned broadens to include the very basis of the group's consensus and participants come to hate each other. A confrontation that initially involves only a few demonstrators expands to include an entire community, as a result of indiscriminate police action. A group that was previously seen in a favorable or neutral light gradually becomes negatively defined. Although at a very concrete level every instance of conflict is different, the articles in this section attempt to capture certain ideal-typical patterns of development.

The introduction to the case study section raises a large number of questions and offers propositions relevant to understanding the emergence, form, course, and consequences of conflict. These help structure our observations of conflict situations and offer a framework for analysis. Up to this point the student has been exposed to many general ideas about conflict. He or she is now presented with descriptions and

analysis of actual race conflict situations. For example, one case is a disagreement on a university campus, another a controversy over schools; still another deals with the emergence of a community police patrol, another with conflict over passage of antidiscrimination legislation, and another with a rent strike. Hopefully it will be possible for the student to apply some of the perspectives, concepts, and hypotheses presented in this part, and earlier throughout the book, to the case studies, as well as to the conflicts (of a racial nature or otherwise) likely to be found on the campus or the larger community.

The most effective learning is surely that which a person does for him- or herself. By being offered broad concepts, general theoretical perspectives, and various propositions, on the one hand, and substantive accounts, on the other, the student is hopefully challenged to bring the two together and come to appreciate the interplay of theory and fact.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps he or she will also gain some of the joy of discovery, not to mention the increase in knowledge, which can come from being able to suddenly order seemingly unrelated social phenomena, or to see what at first seemed to be an idiosyncratic pattern of development as common to a certain type of conflict, or to be able to make reasoned predictions about a future course of events.

Part V, "Consequences of Conflict," poses a number of questions about conflict and change and considers the implications of racial conflict for society and the individual.

This organization deals with many of the basic aspects of racial conflict and seems to flow fairly naturally out

<sup>6</sup> For a useful discussion of the interdependence of theory and empirical research, see R. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1957), chaps. 2, 3.

of the real world.<sup>7</sup> It permits us to look at American racial conflict at a very specific microscopic level and yet offers a minimal organizational framework for a few of the many separate studies on various aspects of racial conflict and the civil rights movement and counter movement.

The criteria for including articles was no doubt far less rational than one might hope, yet other factors being equal, articles have been included that (1) seemed useful in trying to cope with one or more of the questions raised above and which could be generalized to other types of conflict; (2) were clearly written and not so technical or esoteric as to overwhelm the average undergraduate, nor so superficial as to insult him or her; and (3) were current and had not been reprinted elsewhere.

This is not intended to be a reader about blacks any more than it is a reader about whites; rather, it considers a phenomenon intricately involving both groups. There is a tendency in some popular discussion and research to assume that because in certain ways the situation of blacks is unique, it is in all ways unique. This sometimes leads to too narrow a focus only on specific black materials rather than an equivalent concern with more general phenomena, concepts, and perspectives applicable to a much wider array of groups. The same might be said of a focus only on American, rather than worldwide, racial conflict.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Though it is not argued that analytic elements such as resource scarcity, a conducive social milieu and ideology necessarily causally affect each other in the order they are presented here, they are interdependent and jointly affect the nature of the conflict. Conflict, once it emerges, can, of course, also have an affect on the way an ideology develops or a social milieu changes.

<sup>8</sup> For some books offering a comparative international perspective, see M. Tumin, *Comparative Perspectives on Race Relations* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969); R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations* (New

In viewing only the specific we are in danger of losing sight of the possible existence of a broader underlying structure and the universality of much of human experience. The serious sins of omission and distortion of the past should not now lead to a similar imbalance, though here the need for political and psychological change may clash with the needs of social science. Hopefully, the student will take from these readings some sense of the essential elements of social conflict, whether it be conflict between whites and blacks, conflict within the black or white group, between blacks and Puerto Ricans, or conflict involving different social classes and religious groups.

For most purposes racial conflict can be usefully conceived of as simply one aspect of the broader phenomena of social conflict. What is most important for sociological understanding is conflict, not race, though racial struggles, where the essential humanity of the opposition can be denied, seem to involve a more violent and macabre potential than strictly political or economic struggles. Racial struggles also seem to have a greater sexual component.

It is true also that in recent decades racial and ethnic conflicts have greatly increased in frequency, partly replacing the religious conflict of earlier years. The conflicts of Hindus and Moslems in India, Malays and Chinese in Singapore, French and British in Quebec, Catholic and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Israelis and Arabs in the Middle East, Ibos and Hausas in Nigeria, and any of dozens of other situations, clearly indicate that the United States is not

York: Random House, 1970); T. Shibusaki and K. Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification, a Comparative Approach* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); R. Segal, *The Race War* (New York: Viking Press, 1967).

alone in having problems of intergroup relations. With the decline of colonialism and the rise of nationalism, ethnic and racial problems have joined class and generational problems as a major source of world conflict within, as well as between, countries. Ethnic tensions are probably more in evidence today than at any other time in human history. Such conflicts are certainly deserving of attention, but not primarily because of the presence of unique conflict elements.

## PART ONE

# GENERAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT

TAKING a broad historical and anthropological perspective, Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris argue that minority groups, as we understand them, are a relatively new phenomenon in human history. Their emergence is seen to be dependent on the formation of the nation-state five thousand years ago. This in turn depended on the development of an agricultural surplus and the emergence of cities. The development of the state meant a form of social organization by which culturally and physically different groups sharing a given geographical area could be bound into the same social and administrative unit.

The expansion of Europe beginning in the sixteenth century was an event having profound significance for world ethnic relations. Since then more than seventy million people have left Europe, carrying their culture, technology, diseases, and domination to diverse parts of the world. The origin of a particular minority is often related to migration and the expansion of national states.

Lewis Coser offers a broad overview of social conflict. He notes that conflict has creative as well as destructive components. Conflict is viewed as a basic part of social organization. The intensity of conflict, its means—violent or nonviolent—and its consequences are seen to depend on the kind of social structure in which it appears. Here we must consider factors such as whether conflict occurs in a tightly or loosely integrated setting, whether dissent is encouraged, whether the ideology of conflict involves supra-individual ends, and whether the conflict occurs within a broad framework of consensus or is over this very consensus.

Ralf Dahrendorf contrasts two images of society—one focuses on integration and the other on coercion. One stresses the importance of shared values and social stability, whereas the other stresses the importance of force and the ubiquity of change and conflict. An understanding of society requires attention to the interaction of stability and change, integration and conflict, and consensus and coercion. However, to explain the formation of conflict groups,

Dahrendorf stresses the coercion perspective. He then goes on to consider one important element of social organization which creates a potential for conflict groups: authority relations. The fact that authority and power are not equally distributed serves as a basis around which conflict may take place. Although Dahrendorf explicitly restricts himself to class conflict, much of his discussion has a broader relevance.

Jessie Bernard contrasts some psychological and sociological approaches to conflict. She argues that an objective conflict of group interests underlies much intergroup discord. The clear grounds for such realistic conflict are presented in Part IIA. To understand social conflict it is necessary to look beyond individual subjective feelings of hostility, stereotypes, prejudice, misunderstandings, and lack of knowledge about an outgroup, to the kinds of relations that exist between groups. It is here that Bernard locates the source of group conflict.

Looking at objective group relations of domination and subordination leads to consideration of what groups profit from the status quo and the link between this and ideologies of prejudice. To clearly make her point, Bernard is somewhat polemical. As later articles indicate, misperception, ignorance, stereotypes, and personality needs may have an important bearing on conflict. Rhetoric may greatly overstate the extent of actual incompatibility between two groups. Yet, Bernard calls attention to an important area for analysis.

The large number of variables that figure in any given instance of conflict and a degree of independence between them mean that most researchers work on only one level of analysis. For many purposes this is sufficient. For example, we can ask about the historical origins of a stereo-

type without trying to determine what kinds of people currently hold the stereotype, or we can look at the personality characteristics of activists without necessarily considering the consequences of different conflict strategies. But ultimately the larger the number of factors that are considered and related to each other, the greater will be our understanding.

The final article by Earl Raab and Seymour Martin Lipset does not discuss conflict directly; rather it offers a useful discussion of prejudice in attitudes and behavior and summarizes much empirical research. In considering concepts that are crucial to an understanding of racial cooperation and antagonism, they stress the importance of the social situation in producing discriminatory behavior, as against the role played by attitudes within the person. Their development of the concept of the "prejudiced society," which shows how thoroughly ingrained and mutually supportive customary patterns of prejudice often are, leads nicely into the articles in Part II, which documents many of the basic sources of racial struggle.

### 1 *The Development of the Nation-State and the Formation of Minorities\**

C. WAGLEY and H. HARRIS

With the knowledge provided by archaeology, ethnography, and written history, it is clear that human societies have progressively expanded in size, in complexity, and in territorial scope as man has extended and perfected his technological control over his environ-

\*[C. Wagley and H. Harris, "The Development of the Nation-State and the Formation of Minorities," in *Minorities in the New World* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 240-243. By permission of Columbia University Press]

ment. For nearly fifty thousand years our species lived in small wandering bands limited in size by their precarious methods of subsistence. During all this time (and much more, if one considers human species other than *Homo sapiens*) the necessity of hunting for food with inefficient weapons, or of gathering it with ineffective instruments, kept the population sparse. It was not until about ten thousand years ago that man first became a food producer—an agriculturist and a breeder of animals. This “food-producing revolution,” to use V. Gordon Childe’s term, occurred independently at least once in the old world and at least once in the New World. From the earliest centers, a knowledge of food-producing techniques spread rapidly over most of the globe until a large proportion of all human societies lived by food production, yet in isolated areas and in more inhospitable environments man continued to live by hunting and gathering. With a secure food supply furnished from his gardens and from his domestic animals, there was for the first time a sedentary life in villages. But these village societies were in one important sense as “primitive” as the remaining nomadic hunting and gathering societies. “Throughout both Paleolithic and Neolithic times each little group was largely self-contained and self-supporting, as the surviving primitive societies, whether hunters or growers of vegetable and animal food, are largely self-contained and self-supporting.<sup>1</sup> During all of this time there were no minority groups.

About five thousand years ago a second great “revolution” gave birth to mankind’s first cities, to great public

works—such as irrigation systems and land reclamation projects—writing, standards of weights and measures, the beginnings of science, foreign trade, and to specialized labor of all descriptions. This “urban revolution” seems to have first occurred in the Middle East, and at a later date to have spread elsewhere in the Old World. Again the “urban revolution” took place independently in the New World, where such peoples as the Aztec of Mexico, the Maya of Yucatan, and the Inca of highland South America developed their own indigenous civilizations. For the present purposes, the most important feature of this second great change in human history is that it was associated with the growth of a new form of social organization, namely, what we today call the state. In broadest perspective, it was the formation of state societies which made the existence of minority groups possible. Primitive societies are stateless societies. Although a primitive tribe may have considerable formal political organization, such as tribal councils or a chieftain vested with relatively strong authority, social order is achieved by stressing the obligations and rights due to kinsmen by descent or by marriage. It is therefore characteristic that the various systems of classifying kin among primitive peoples have a greater extension than those used by so-called civilized peoples. In primitive societies an individual often has hundreds of “relatives,” including individuals only distantly or even fictitiously related (i.e., all my fellow clan members may be my “brothers”). An individual’s world in primitive societies is thus populated largely by “relatives,” all of whom speak the same language, practice the same customs, and belong to the same physical stock. In the small band and villages typical of the primitive world, the use of ridicule, noncooperation, and os-

<sup>1</sup>R. Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformation*, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1953, p. 7. In the Old World the hunting and gathering period and the early food-producing period are known respectively as the Paleolithic and the Neolithic periods.



tracism, reinforced by common bonds of culture, is usually sufficient to insure conformity to the "unwritten law." Coercion, external compulsion, and legal procedure, although not entirely absent, are seldom necessary to maintain internal order (Linton, p. 109). Primitive tribes usually have a definite idea of their own territory, and they resist invasion and trespass with force; but the emphasis of their social organization is on "our people," no matter where they live, and not upon the territorial unit. Primitive social organization thus contains no provisions for incorporating into a single social unit groups of individuals who are not related by descent or by marriage, who follow different customs, who stress distinctive values, and who, in sum, are an alien people.

Only with the development of the state did human societies become equipped with a form of social organization which could bind masses of culturally and physically heterogeneous "strangers" into a single social entity. Whereas primitive peoples derive their cohesion largely from a common culture and from kinship and other kinds of personal ties, state societies are held together largely by the existence of a central political authority which claims a monopoly of coercive power over all persons within a given territory. Theoretically, with a sufficiently strong development of the apparatus of government, a state society can extend law and order over limitless subgroups of strangers who neither speak the same language, worship the same gods, nor strive for the same values.

Yet the growth of the state form of organization did not entirely replace the principles by which unity is achieved among primitive peoples. On the contrary, if a thoroughgoing replacement had indeed taken place, minorities, as we know them today, would not exist. In reality, many of the subgroups have

continued to regard themselves as distinctive units within the total society, not because they inhabit the same territory and are subject to the same apparatus of government, but because they share cultural traits different from others and reckon themselves, in a sense, as kinsmen by descent. Moreover, certain of these subgroups, especially the more numerous and more powerful ones, have tended to act as if the population of their state society was like the population of a primitive tribe; have tended to act as if the state society to which they belong ideally ought to consist of their own physical and cultural type; and as if the state were merely the territorial expression of their own people or "nation." Thus, from the persistence of primitive principles of social organization there emerges that strange contradiction of terms known as the "national state." It is the prevalence of this contradiction which guarantees the proliferation of minority situations throughout the modern world.

Of course, there is no absolute reason why a state society cannot also be a nation in the above sense. But the contradiction involved is an historical rather than a logical one. Neither history nor ethnography can provide more than a mere handful of examples of state societies which have consisted solely of racially and culturally homogeneous elements. It need scarcely be said that throughout recorded history the territorial limits of states have been in ceaseless flux, thereby insuring the heterogeneity of their populations. Boundary changes resulting from wars, revolutions, confederations, and conferences have occurred with such frequency as to leave no time for the growth of homogeneous national states. Moreover, the same technological revolution which broke the insularity of the primitive bands and villages and led to the rise of state societies brought with it ever-

increasing opportunities for large-scale population shifts. Certainly there is no society in the world today where state and nation may be said to coincide, except as a convenient fiction for novelists and politicians.

And yet, especially during the last few centuries, many conscious and unconscious efforts have been made to achieve the ideal of a national state. In the process, the cultural traditions, the language, and physical type of one of the groups of a state society are proposed as the national language, the national culture, and the national physical type. Usually this dominant or "national" way of life is that of the numerical majority, and the strangers—the minority members—form smaller cultural or racial enclaves. But sometimes a handful of people have, through their superior economic, political, or military power, been able to impose their cultural and physical "ideal" of nationhood on the rest of the society. . . .

While the ancient world had known empires of great extent—such as the Roman, Chinese, Mongol, and Inca—with the growth of the postfeudal European states, empires of unprecedented proportions came to be formed. By the sixteenth century, the revolutionary development of gunpowder weapons, maneuverable sailing vessels, and navigational devices gave to the European states a marked technological superiority over most of the world's societies. With this new equipment the European states were able to overcome hitherto undreamed-of distances for the purposes of state expansion. Within a few hundred years, Africa, North and South America, India, southeast Asia, parts of China, central and northeastern Asia, Indonesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, and Australia were to become, with varying degrees of permanency, subject to European governments. Colonists were sent into many of these areas to establish permanent settlements and

to rule over the indigenous populations. But with the waxing and waning of imperial fortunes and with the growth of movements for independence, the political control of these areas shifted from one state society to another, sometimes with bewildering frequency. Thus, in addition to minorities consisting of conquered indigenous peoples, such as the Indians of Mexico and Brazil, the expansion of European states also created a somewhat smaller number of minorities consisting of European colonists or their descendants whose governments lost dominion over the areas they had formerly controlled. The French in Canada are such a minority. . . .

Although slavery is an ancient institution, found even among primitive peoples, the colossal scale on which the New World colonists and their descendants employed slave labor was quite unique. After the Europeans had decimated or driven out the scanty aboriginal populations who inhabited the southern portions of the English colonies, the Antilles, and the coast of Brazil, they found themselves in possession of great tracts of fertile virgin lands. These areas could be made to grow valuable commodities for which the European climate was unsuited; all that was needed was labor to clear the forests and do the work in the fields. Unable to call upon a dense aboriginal population, as the Spanish were able to do, the lowland planters sought to meet their labor requirements by using the population of another continent. They set up trading stations along the African coast and bartered rum, cloth, and other articles of European and American manufacture for human beings. Encouraged by the avarice of the European traders, the Africans raided deep into the continent for men, women, and children who because they belonged to stranger tribes could be delivered to the traders without qualms.

There thus grew up one of the greatest forced transfers of people known in human history. How many people were killed in the African raids by which slaves were captured and how many more died while being transported across the sea under unspeakable conditions will probably never be known with any accuracy.

Among the several forms of migration responsible for the origin of many New World minorities, slavery involved the greatest amount of compulsion and brutality. But there are many other migrant groups in the New World who were to a certain extent "forced" into their trip across the sea. These migrations were prompted by a complex variety of motives; some resulted from various shades and degrees of compulsion other than the extreme represented by the slave trade. Some groups, like the Irish, migrated to escape the threat of imminent death by starvation; others, like the Huguenots and the Quakers, were forced to leave because of religious persecution. Still others, like many of the Germans, hoped for relief from political persecution. Many of the immigrants chose to become indentured laborers in the New World rather than inmates of debtors' prisons in their homelands; untold thousands were recruited by the agents of shipping companies under false pretenses; thousands of others came to avoid serving in European armies. As the economy of the United States and other New World areas shifted toward industrialism, a vast new market for wage laborers grew up, thereby providing an outlet for impoverished, landless, excess populations all over the world. Upon arrival in their new homes, the migrants assumed a variety of statuses fully as diverse as the motives which had prompted their voyages across the sea. Some, as indentured laborers and miserably paid factory workers, lived and worked under conditions not too

far removed from the hardships and indignities of slavery. Others found freedom and security, as homesteaders, skilled craftsmen, and merchants. It was Europe, torn by wars, her soils depleted, and with masses of unemployed or marginal workers crowding her cities, which made the greatest contribution to the labor-hungry countries across the sea. Indeed, all of these motives, movements, and results add up to what Robert Park has called the "European diaspora," unquestionably the greatest migratory movement the world has ever seen. . . .

Certain generalizations have already emerged from our analysis of minority groups. First, the appearance of minority groups in the long history of human society is fairly recent and seems to date from the emergence of the state as a form of sociopolitical organization some five thousand years ago. Second, the origin of specific minority groups is always associated closely with the formation and expansion of state organizations or with migration from one state to another. As Louis Wirth once succinctly wrote: "The genesis of minorities must therefore be sought in the fact that territory, political authority, people, and culture only rarely coincide". . . .

## 2 *Some Sociological Aspects of Conflict\**

LEWIS COSER

Social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values or claims to status,

\*[*Some Sociological Aspects of Conflict*] by L. Coser, Reprinted with permission of the publisher from *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, David L. Sills, Editor. Volume 3, pages 232-236, Copyright © 1968 by Crowell Collier and Macmillan, Inc.]

<sup>2</sup>Louis Wirth, "The Problem of Minority Groups," in Ralph Linton, ed., *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1945, p. 365.

power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Such conflicts may take place between individuals, between collectivities, or between individuals and collectivities. Intergroup as well as intragroup conflicts are perennial features of social life.

Conflict is an important element of social interaction. Far from being always a "negative" factor that "tears apart," social conflict may contribute in many ways to the maintenance of groups and collectivities as well as to the cementing of interpersonal relations.

Nineteenth-century sociology paid much attention to social conflict. In all social thought derived from Hegel, particularly in Marxian thought, conflict is the key explanatory variable. The same is the case with social thinkers directly or indirectly inspired by social Darwinism, such as Herbert Spencer. Gustav Ratzenhofer, Ludwig Gumplowicz, and William Graham Sumner. The struggle for power and influence is one of the themes of Pareto's theories, as well as those of Mosca, Michels, and Sorel. Similarly, in the classical tradition in German sociology, from Tönnies to Simmel and Weber, conflict was considered a major social phenomenon. Weber, for example, insisted that "conflict cannot be excluded from social life. . . . 'Peace' is nothing more than a change in the form of the conflict or in the antagonists or in the objects of the conflict, or finally in the chances of selection" ([1904-1917] 1949, pp. 26-27). Simmel, to whom we owe a classical analysis of various forms of conflict, insisted that "conflict is a form of sociation" and that "a certain amount of discord, inner divergence, and outer controversy, is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together" ([1908] 1955, pp. 17-18).

Similarly, the fathers of American sociology saw in conflict an inherent and ineradicable component of social structures. Most of them agreed with Robert Park that "only where there is conflict is behavior conscious and self-conscious; only here are the conditions for rational conduct" (1924, p. 578).

In a more recent period, the functions of conflict and the study of conflict phenomena were neglected by American sociologists. If conflict was discussed at all, attention was paid mainly to its dissociative aspects. The stress on the need for common values and harmony led a number of social theorists, from Lloyd Warner to Talcott Parsons, to consider conflict a kind of sickness of the body social. Within the last decade, however, a number of theorists opposing the prevailing harmony model have endeavored, partly under the influence of Marx and Simmel, to develop a conflict model of society. The works of Jessie Bernard (1957), Lewis Coser (1956), Ralf Dahrendorf (1957), and Max Gluckman (1956) illustrate this approach.

### THE OBJECTIVE BASES OF CONFLICT

The objective bases of social conflict must be sharply separated from subjective elements. Failure to do so results in excessively psychologistic explanations, which cannot do justice to the structure of conflict or to the situations that give rise to it. Such objective bases for contentions vary widely. Conflicts may break out over the distribution of a great variety of scarce values and goods, such as income, status, power, dominion over territory, or ecological position. Such occasions for conflict behavior need to be analyzed separately from dispositions and attitudes such as hostility, aggressiveness, *ressentiment*, hatred, and the like. In certain types of conflicts, such

## SECTION A

# SCARCE RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONALIZED INEQUALITY: THE BASIS FOR REALISTIC CONFLICT

THE articles in this section are concerned with some of the basic scarcities, practices, and differing values and beliefs which can generate conflict.

In the last part it was argued that certain of society's resources are inherently scarce. Here this concept is documented for particular kinds of resources and institutional areas by contrasting whites with blacks.

Laymen as well as supposed specialists often err in their view of racial conflict. For the concerned laymen race tension may be seen to stem from ignorance, a lack of communication, moral sickness and ill will, or psychological aberrations of activists, rather than being seen as a "natural" consequence of a social stratification system.

On the other hand, some presumably hard-headed, "realistic" sociologists often err in the other direction.<sup>1</sup> They may deny the presence of irrational hostility, ignorance, misperception, and nonrealistic conflict, choosing instead to see all intergroup tension as irreconcilable and stemming from a fundamental group struggle after inherently scarce and indivisible resources that can only end in bloodshed. They may ignore or deny the possibility of cooperation across racial lines in addition to denying that race is only one component of humanity's complex identity which includes factors such as sex, age, class, and region as well as institutional and ideological components.

<sup>1</sup>In a sense this represents an advance over the 1950's when the view many sociologists held of conflict more closely approximated that of the laymen sketched above.

Be that as it may, this part, and indeed the entire book, emphasizes the rational aspects of the conflict process, though it is not limited to this.

That blacks and other poor groups are challenging the society suggests that they want something they don't have. That this challenge meets with resistance suggests that some groups and individuals gain from the racial status quo. The question of who gains in what ways from the American pattern of race relations has been too little studied by American social scientists (as has the question of what it costs).

The articles in this part deal with white advantage and black disadvantage. These advantages, by and large, are not random or idiosyncratic, rather they are "institutionalized" and a part of the normal way of doing society's business.

Although in particular detail the range of things over which social groups can be in conflict is enormous, at a more abstract level much conflict can be seen to stem around inequality and disagreement over the distribution of three scarce social resources noted by Max Weber: class, status, and power.<sup>2</sup> Inequality with respect to these factors is found in all industrial societies. However, the degree of inequality and the extent to which it is related to ascribed characteristics such as race or sex vary appreciably. Stripped to its skeletal form, much of American racial conflict lies in the struggle for these resources.

<sup>2</sup>M. Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1946).

How are power and authority distributed? Who is dominant, and who is subordinate? What spheres of activity are influenced? Who will lead? If there is an election, how are candidates chosen? Who can vote? How are electoral boundaries drawn? Who will be appointed to positions of political power? Which groups and interests have the most behind the scenes influence on decision making? What means are used to control subordinates?

Similar questions can be asked about almost any voluntary or involuntary organization such as: schools, welfare and police departments, churches, factories, labor unions, private clubs, charities, etc. Who has the power? Who has authority to make and enforce the rules? Which groups benefit or are hurt the most by this?

With respect to questions of social class and economics: How is material property distributed? Who owns what? What are an individual's chances in the marketplace? How do the actions of the government affect the above? What kinds of people will fill what jobs? Who will be promoted? How much or how little will they be paid? What criteria are used to determine membership in labor unions? Will pay for the same job vary depending on ascribed characteristics? What are the constraints and limitations placed on the behavior of merchants and employers or customers and employees?

As the earlier article by Dahrendorf implied, authority is not something restricted to elections and government. In this sense many of the above economic issues are subordinate to questions of power and authority.<sup>3</sup> To ask about hiring practices and salaries in

a southern textile mill or membership criteria in a northern craft union is, in an important sense, to deal with questions of power and authority. It is in this sense that Dahrendorf argued that much conflict at bottom revolves around issues of authority. However, this is less direct and pronounced in the case of disagreement over status issues.

Here we ask: What attributes of individuals and groups are highly valued in the society? How do various life conditions affect the honor an individual receives? How are various class, national, religious, ethnic and racial groups, and life styles ranked in terms of their desirability? Who gives deference to whom? What special privileges are associated with a high status ranking, or degradations with a lowly one, and what are the symbolic and ritualized practices which go along with these? How are status, prestige, and honor distributed in the society?

Social status and the evaluations placed on one's major group affiliations are of course partly determined by the distribution of income and power. Yet, at least in the short run, status has a meaning independent of these.

Status involves an important and often neglected component of American racial struggle. The issue often goes far beyond squalor to questions of sovereignty and dignity. This helps explain how sometimes issues which may seem trivial from the perspective of the dominant group come to be of great importance to the minority group member. Struggle and assertion, as ceremonial and even ritualized acts which communicate a symbolic meaning regarding a group's conception of itself, may be as important as actually gaining one's concrete ends. Compromise often seems more difficult in issues where fundamental questions of honor are involved. Moral legiti-

<sup>3</sup> At a more abstract level even differences of belief and value conflicts may be seen as a struggle over the scarce resources of power, in such cases, the power to enforce one's definition of the world on others.

mations may play a greater role, giving such struggles a more bitter and perhaps irrational character than those involving economic issues.<sup>4</sup>

Concretely demanding status and dignity and a reversal of traditional societal evaluations that may be related to its history and firmly embedded in a group's culture and psyche is rather more difficult than gaining the right to vote or an end to discrimination by a particular employer, which can be effected by agreements and laws. Yet the struggle for status may be seen in an attack on particular incidents of a racially demeaning character and in the attack on traditional racial insults or etiquette such as: enforced segregation, calling blacks "boy" or "girl" or always by their first names, spelling "Negro" with a small "N," the use of racial epithets, and the kind of deference expected of blacks by southern etiquette. These are at issue precisely because they symbolically reaffirm the relative status positions of whites and blacks. When such practices are challenged, they make manifest the underlying status structure.

In the American racial context when differences in life styles, cultural standards, and valued symbols are not allowed expression they offer a potential for conflict. Unlike the struggle for scarce resources such as status or money, where as one group gains, another must lose, demands for pluralism, tolerance of social variation, and the end to demeaning restrictions on cultural expression do not so clearly mean losses for whites.

Protest over such issues may more often meet with success because the cost to whites in any direct sense is relatively slight and they may be consistent with American values of indi-

vidualism and liberty. Among examples of such conflict are recent black protests over the refusal of various employers, schools, and the armed services to permit the wearing of Afro hair styles or clothes, the playing of soul music, and the serving of soul food; the refusal to make Malcolm X's birthday a school holiday; the lily-white nature of Miss America beauty contests; and interpretations of American and world history offered in schools.

Another important source of conflict stems from the advocacy of incompatible beliefs and values rather than direct disagreement about how power, money, and status will be distributed, though these of course may underlie or be affected by such conflicts. This has been an important source of conflict throughout world history. Holy wars are a good example.

Though some of the conflicts that the Muslims and Black Panthers have been involved in are an exception, in recent decades most American racial conflict, at least in the North, has not been highly ideological and has stemmed more from the struggle over scarce resources and the demands to change certain social practices. Still it should be noted that this may give rise to competing belief systems such as those that stress that positions in schools, welfare and police departments should be filled by those representatives of the community they serve, rather than filled on the basis of presumed (and sometimes questioned) abstract criteria of merit, theoretically regardless of race, though actually such universalistic standards often serve to effectively rule out blacks, given a cumulative heritage of disadvantage. The failure to meaningfully change distribution patterns of income and power seems to be leading to an increase in conflict related to income

<sup>4</sup>For example, see J. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1963).

patible beliefs, as an ever larger number of determined blacks come to question the legitimacy of the system itself and to deny that it is in any way binding on them. Examples are the refusal to be drafted or salute the flag and urban guerrilla activities. This has major implications for conflict resolution. A dispute over hiring can be negotiated, but what is there to negotiate over, short of the overthrow of the system, when the legitimacy of the very social order itself is denied? Here the ends sought shift from reforming and modifying existing institutions to a revolutionary effort to create wholly new institutions.

The articles in this section include discussions of schools, welfare, housing, unions, merchants, political representation, income and occupation, and police practices. They use statistical data, institutional analysis, and journalistic descriptions in considering the entire nation, various regions and cities, and particular incidents. But the essential point in all of them is documenting and/or describing institutionalized inequality and practices that are capable of generating challenge and conflict from blacks.

Robert Blauner offers a conceptual framework for approaching black inequality and subordination. His emphasis on colonialism as a process permits him to note many parallels between the situation of American blacks and colonial people's in Africa and Asia. Inequality and problems in the area of education, welfare, and housing are considered by the excerpt from the report of the Kerner commission.

Harold M. Baron, by a careful analysis of the number of blacks holding high offices in government and industry in Chicago, reveals the extent of black powerlessness.

Herbert Hill considers the racial

practices of some businesses and organized labor, and documents appreciable economic inequality and discrimination against blacks.

David Caplovitz's empirical study reveals some of the many ways in which unscrupulous merchants may take advantage of the low income consumer.

Art Goldberg and Gene Marine in "The Killing of George Baskett and the Acquittal of Officer O'Brien" describe an encounter between a white policeman and a black citizen.

Rather than focusing directly on black disprivilege, the article by Norval Glenn considers some of the gains that whites receive from black subordination, particularly in the South.

Although many of the facts documented here may not be surprising to the politically concerned college student, it is well to keep in mind that most white Americans seem unaware of them. For example, the July 1968 Gallup poll found only 1 percent of whites believing that blacks are treated "badly," while 75 percent felt "Negroes are treated the same as whites."

Some of the ways in which the nature of the issue affects the conflict are considered in the introduction to Part IV, Section B, yet several important points can be noted here. One of the things that makes racial conflict so prevalent and so difficult to resolve relative to union conflicts, or conflicts over floridation, is the coalescence of such a large number of grievances around skin color. Of course, skin color is often incidental, but because of its presence and visibility things easily come to be defined as racial issues, even though to the outside observer they may sometimes seem to be class, rural-urban, or generational issues. The large number of issues involved and the presence of a large number of varied conflict groups may make



bargaining and negotiation and eventual resolution more difficult.

## 6 *Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt\**

ROBERT BLAUNER

It is becoming almost fashionable to analyze American racial conflict today in terms of the colonial analogy. I shall argue in this paper that the utility of this perspective depends upon a distinction between colonization as a process and colonialism as a social, economic, and political system. It is the experience of colonization that Afro-Americans share with many of the nonwhite people of the world. But this subjugation has taken place in a societal context that differs in important respects from the situation of "classical colonialism." . . . [S]ome major developments in black protest—the urban riots, cultural nationalism, and the movement for ghetto control—[can be seen] as collective responses to colonized status. Viewing our domestic situation as a special form of

colonization outside a context of a colonial system will help explain some of the dilemmas and ambiguities within these movements.

The present crisis in American life has brought about changes in social perspectives and the questioning of long accepted frameworks. Intellectuals and social scientists have been forced by the pressure of events to look at old definitions of the character of our society, the role of racism, and the workings of basic institutions. The depth and volatility of contemporary racial conflict challenge sociologists in particular to question the adequacy of theoretical models by which we have explained American race relations in the past.

For a long time the distinctiveness of the Negro situation among the ethnic minorities was placed in terms of color, and the systematic discrimination that follows from our deepseated racial prejudices. This was sometimes called the caste theory, and while provocative, it missed essential and dynamic features of American race relations. In the past ten years there has been a tendency to view Afro-Americans as another ethnic group not basically different in experience from previous ethnics and whose "immigration" condition in the North would in time follow their upward course. The inadequacy of this model is now clear—even the Kerner report devotes a chapter to criticizing this analogy. A more recent (though hardly new) approach views the essence of racial subordination in economic class terms: black people as an underclass are to a degree specially exploited and to a degree economically dispensable in an automating society. Important as are economic factors, the power of race and racism in America cannot be sufficiently explained through class analysis. Into this theory vacuum steps the model

\*[Reprinted from *Social Problems*, vol. 16, no. 4, Spring 1969, pp. 393-408 by permission of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. This is a revised version of a paper delivered at the University of California Centennial Program, "Studies in Violence," Los Angeles, June 1, 1968. For criticisms and ideas that have improved an earlier draft, I am indebted to Robert Wood, Lincoln Bergman, and Gary Marx. As a good colonialist I have probably restated (read; stolen) more ideas from the writings of Kenneth Clark, Stokely Carmichael, Frantz Fanon, and especially such contributors to the Black Panther Party (Oakland) newspaper as Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver, and Kathleen Cleaver than I have appropriately credited or generated myself. In self-defense I should state that I began working somewhat independently on a colonial analysis of American race relations in the fall of 1965.]

of internal colonialism. Problematic and imprecise as it is, it gives hope of becoming a framework that can integrate the insights of caste and racism, ethnicity, culture, and economic exploitation into an overall conceptual scheme. At the same time, the danger of the colonial model is the imposition of an artificial analogy which might keep us from facing up to the fact (to quote Harold Cruse, 1968) that "the American black and white social phenomenon is a uniquely new world thing (p. 214)."

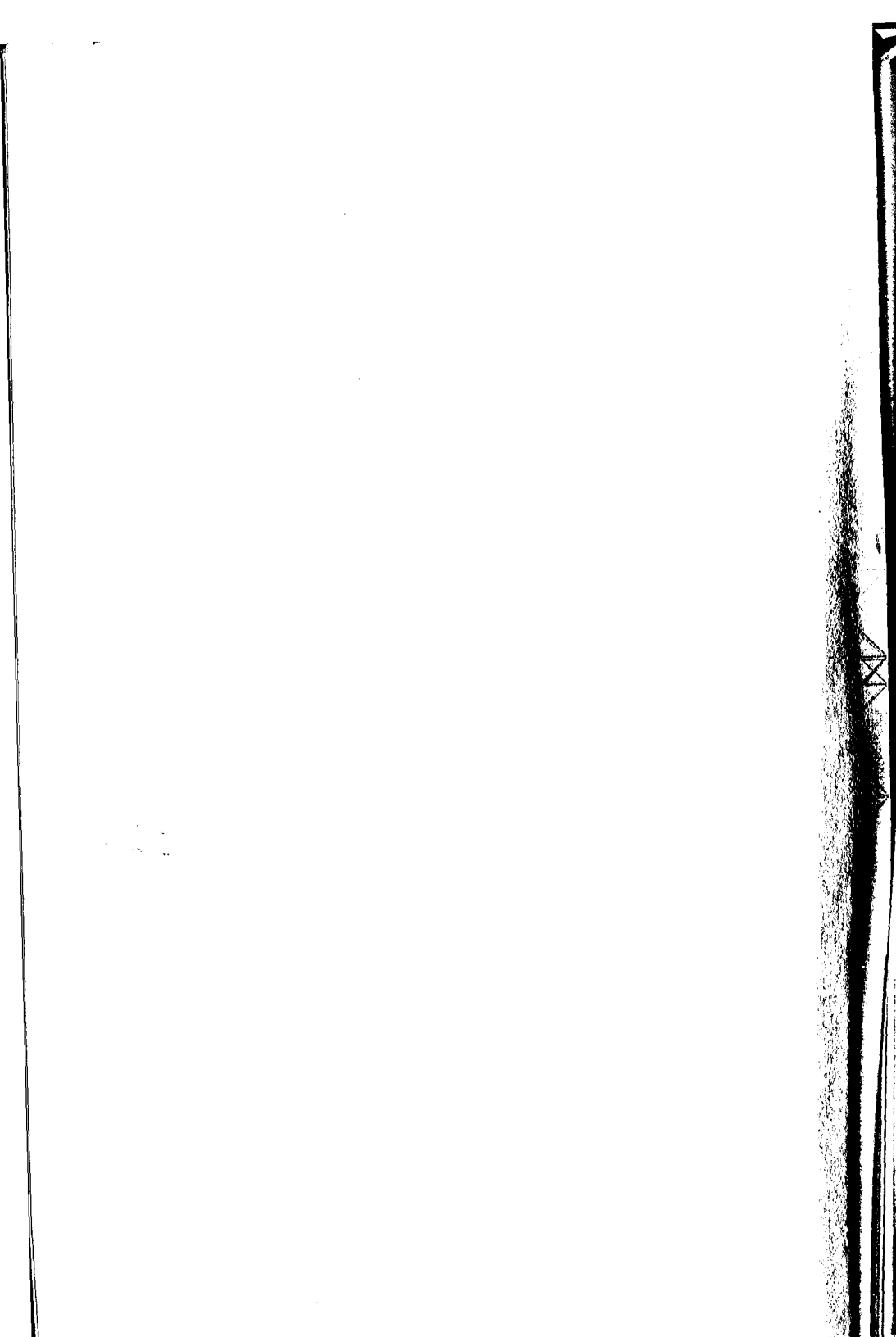
During the late 1950's, identification with African nations and other colonial or formerly colonized peoples grew in importance among black militants.<sup>1</sup> As a result the United States was increasingly seen as a colonial power and the concept of domestic colonialism was introduced into the political analysis and rhetoric of militant nationalists. During the same period black social theorists began developing this frame of reference for explaining American realities. As early as 1962, Cruse characterized race relations in this country as "domestic colonialism."<sup>2</sup> Three years later in *Dark Ghetto*, Kenneth Clark (1965) demonstrated how the political, economic, and social structure of Harlem was essentially that of a colony. Finally in 1967, a full-blown elaboration of "internal colonialism" provided the theoretical framework for Carmichael and Hamilton's widely read *Black Power* (1967). The following year the colonial analogy gained currency and new "respectability" when Senator McCarthy habit-

ually referred to black Americans as a colonized people during his campaign. While the rhetoric of internal colonialism was catching on, other social scientists began to raise questions about its appropriateness as a scheme of analysis.

The colonial analysis has been rejected as obscurantist and misleading by scholars who point to the significant differences in history and social-political conditions between our domestic patterns and what took place in Africa and India. Colonialism traditionally refers to the establishment of domination over a geographically external political unit, most often inhabited by people of a different race and culture, where this domination is political and economic, and the colony exists subordinated to, and dependent upon, the mother country. Typically the colonizers exploit the land, the raw materials, the labor, and other resources of the colonized nation; in addition a formal recognition is given to the difference in power, autonomy, and political status, and various agencies are set up to maintain this subordination. Seemingly the analogy must be stretched beyond usefulness if the American version is to be forced into this model. For here we are talking about group relations within a society; the mother country-colony separation in geography is absent. Though whites certainly colonized the territory of the original Americans, internal colonization of Afro-Americans did not involve the settlement of whites in any land that was unequivocally black. And unlike the colonial situation, there has been no formal recognition of differing power since slavery was abolished outside the South. Classic colonialism involved the control and exploitation of the majority of a nation by a minority of outsiders. Whereas in America the people who are oppressed were them-

<sup>1</sup>Nationalism, including an orientation toward Africa, is no new development. It has been a constant tendency within Afro-American politics. See Cruse (1968a, especially Chaps. 5-7).

<sup>2</sup>This was six years before the publication of *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1968b), which brought Cruse into prominence. Thus the 1962 article was not widely read until its reprinting in Cruse (1968a).



## SECTION B

### ANTECEDENTS AND CORRELATES OF RACIAL CONFLICT

THE articles in the preceding section have documented some factors which create a potential for conflict. Whether or not it occurs depends on the social setting and how people come to define their situation. A degree of institutionalized inequality is a constant feature of most societies; yet the mere fact of inequality, or differences in belief systems, does not in itself result in the appearance of organized conflict groups.

The articles in this section consider some conditions that increase the likelihood of conflict and some factors that affect the form it takes. Unlike the general theoretical articles in Part I, this material deals explicitly with racial conflict, though in several cases (such as Breed's discussion of the effect of pluralism on conflict) propositions are offered which presumably would also hold for nonracial conflict as well. It is important in thinking about a phenomenon such as racial conflict to look for more general propositions and patterns which apply to international, class, generational, or inter-personal conflict as well.

Considering all the diverse forms of racial and ethnic conflict, there have been relatively few comparable efforts to measure how its different forms are interrelated and distributed in terms of time, place, institution, and the nature of participants. We don't even have very good measures for getting at the degree of racial conflict in a given area. In the United States most attention has been given to the distribution of slave revolts, lynchings, sit-ins, demonstrations, riots, the attitudes of black and white population, and elections or court cases where race is

a salient issue. Attention could also be given to the degree of competition for jobs and housing and interracial fights, assaults, and crime. One measurement problem is the diverse number of phenomena that can be considered instances of racial conflict and the fact that inequality as such is not equivalent to conflict. Another is the variability with respect to factors such as intensity and duration that may exist even among substantively similar conflict phenomena.

If we had an adequate mapping of how different kinds of conflict were distributed, we could more easily make inferences about what comes before it and what goes along with it, and in this way begin to deal with the conditions which are necessary and sufficient for the occurrence of various kinds of racial conflict.

The logic of inquiry followed by many of the articles in this section is to start with some basic pattern of variation and seek to explain it: for example, the greater questioning of segregation in the North than in the South, the greater questioning of segregation today than in other time periods, differences in racial conflict patterns in industrial and nonindustrial societies, or the difference in protest orientation between religious and nonreligious blacks.

Warren Breed's article is a good example of the sociological level of analysis. It does not deal directly with the individual, with historical development, or with cultural traditions. Rather, it considers an aspect of group structure: the degree of pluralism.

The South, having fewer organizations and fewer individuals and interests

represented in the political process, is seen as less pluralistic than the North. This affects the likelihood of conflict occurring. In the South, most of the groups and institutions that do exist are organized around the value of white supremacy. A single party system, the relative absence of labor unions, and a white population, overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, lead to greater control by a traditional elite and make it much more difficult for issues of a controversial nature to enter the public arena than is the case in the North with its more diverse groups. In such a closed and monolithic system, successful change, particularly in the beginning, is partly dependent on forces outside the system, such as actions of the federal government, nonindigenous activists, and national businesses or churches.

Stanley Lieberman, rather than looking at the nature of current group structure, focuses on the form of the initial historical contact between the dominant and minority group. He shows how this factor may greatly condition the subsequent patterns of race relations and conflict. He identifies two basic patterns of contact: those where a native population is made subordinate by a migrant group, as in black-white relations in South Africa, and those where a migrant population is made subordinate in the country to which it moves, as in the case of blacks or Japanese in the United States. The former is more likely to see acrimonious conflict of a nationalist variety, whereas in the latter situation emphasis is more likely to be put on inclusion and assimilation.

Pierre Van Den Berghe argues that, regardless of the always unique factors in a given ethnic contact situation, attention to very broad political and economic factors can tell us a considerable amount about the nature of intergroup relations. Considering such

factors, he identifies two types of racial systems: paternalistic and competitive. These correspond broadly to the distinction between rural-nonindustrial and urban-industrial societies. Racial patterns in these two systems are contrasted in terms of a number of variables such as etiquette, forms of aggression, segregation, and stereotypes. Competitive systems, such as our own society, are marked by much greater overt racial conflict and antagonism than are paternalistic systems such as nineteenth-century colonial regimes.

Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan ask: What are some of the conditions under which an already established color line breaks down? What leads an ethnic group to actively challenge institutionalized inequality? Using a wide range of historical and comparative material, they note the importance of technological innovations, demographic shifts, wars, conquest, and the diffusion of new ideas which upset customary adjustments and lead to a questioning of the status quo.

The changes that Shibutani and Kwan look at often lead a minority to actively question its subordinate position. Their challenge then leads to response from the dominant group. Conflict is a reciprocal process where contending groups interact with each other and respond to the actual and expected moves of their opponents. Much recent American research has gone into minority group protest and violence. Yet of equal or greater historical significance has been the conflict and violence initiated by those with power against minority racial, ethnic, and religious groups. Sometimes this is in establishing the color line, sometimes when minority groups rise to question it, but very often it is as a scapegoating device which may force mass indignation away from its basic source and/or aid in the exploitation

of the minority. The article by George Simpson and Milton Yinger focuses on the latter type of dominant group initiated conflict. They note that ideas of prejudice and attacks on minority groups are often a tool in the struggle for scarce resources. Racial oppression is more likely when it is economically profitable for the dominant group. Attacks on minorities and scapegoating are also seen to be more likely during periods of economic depression and general social upheaval when anxiety and frustration may be more pronounced.

The article by James A. Geschwender looks at a particular question at one point in time. What accounts for the emergence of the contemporary civil rights movement? Five hypotheses are presented and then considered in light of data contrasting the economic condition of whites and blacks. These hypotheses deal with objective "structural" conditions that involve the position of whites and blacks in relation to each other. The easy assumption that the greater the inequality, the greater the overt conflict does not seem to hold. Changes in objective conditions are seen to cause feelings of relative deprivation on the part of blacks, which in turn increases the likelihood of challenges to the status quo.

Here we see assumptions being made about the connection between objective social conditions, such as the relative position of groups to each other or over time, and the perceptions and attitudes of particular individuals. Although the relationship is by no means one to one, particular social conditions are likely to give rise to certain individual attitudes.

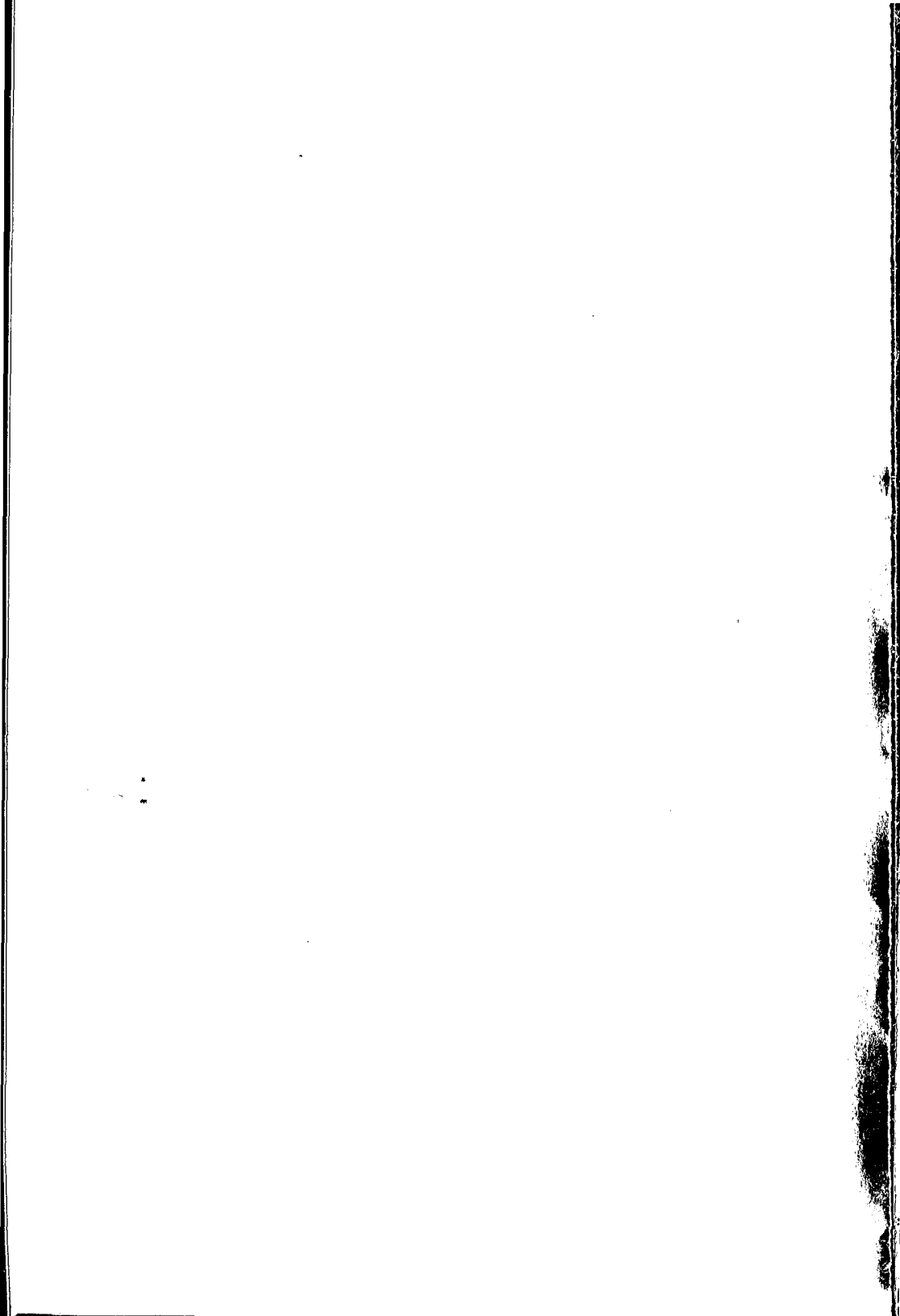
This brings us to another level at which the correlates of conflict involvement may be considered: that of the individual and his or her feelings and perception. Here one studies the demo-

graphic, social, and psychological characteristics of particular people. In the article on religion and protest I ask how the social institution of religion affects individual black protest attitudes and note that it generally has an inhibiting effect. Further analysis of this data elsewhere reveals that a protest orientation is more likely among those who are better-educated, more-involved in voluntary organizations, and who have a positive self-image, high morale, and a sophisticated world view.<sup>1</sup>

However, the mere holding of ideas or an ideology that calls forth conflict action is not sufficient. For such attitudes to lead to activism an individual must first be "available" and in a position to undertake the often considerable hardships and risks involved. This partly explains the greater involvement of the young, those with few, if any, familial responsibilities, and those not in occupations that would subject them to sanctioning for their involvement.

Furthermore, individuals who hold attitudes that are conducive to conflict action and are "available" for action are more likely to actually become involved when they are in communities with certain characteristics. In the South, for example, during the beginning phases of the civil rights movement, other factors being equal, black protest was more likely in relatively urbanized communities, those with a higher socioeconomic level, those where organizations such as the NAACP were viable before the beginning of the current struggle and where a Negro college was located, and those where blacks were a relatively smaller percentage of the population. These factors, in turn, no doubt act back on the nature of the attitudes an individual holds.

<sup>1</sup> G. Marx, *Protest and Prejudice* (New York: Harper & Row, Torchbook edition, 1969).



## PART THREE

# IDEOLOGY AND STRATEGY

A STRICT sociological definition of "ideology" would be a relatively authoritative, closed, and explicit belief system which commands obedience from adherents, covers a wide range of situations, and is organized around one or a few preeminent values such as salvation or equality.<sup>1</sup> Among examples of well-developed ideologies are early Christianity and communism. In this part ideology is used in a much more general sense to refer to the body of ideas people bring with them to racial conflict. Unlike other articles in the book which tend to be analytical or descriptive accounts by outside observers, the first eight articles in this section are statements of conflict positions by those actively involved. They vary from black nationalist to white supremacist.

Ideology, by serving as a cognitive map and a source of values and direction, may help people order a confused, frustrated, and crisis-filled world in a fashion meaningful to them. Ideologies tend to simplify and often to distort what may be highly complex, multiply determined social phenomena, though in so doing they may enable a large number of people to account for difficulties they face. The significance of an ideology does not lie in how objectively or fairly it portrays the world. Sometimes it is only through exaggerated claims and grandiose rhetoric that people are moved to action. Ideology may have a strong effect on people's behavior, leading them to actions on behalf of their cause that they would not normally take. This is particularly true to the extent that the ideology comes to have a sacred quality to it. Courage and the motivation to act may be greatly enhanced by the belief that one is unselfishly acting for his or her group on behalf of ultimately right principles. Such justifications also may define the relationship of means and ends for the activist and ease any doubts he or she may have about acting in the name of a broader social group when he or she lacks a formal mandate from that group to act on its behalf.

<sup>1</sup>For a general discussion of ideology, see the articles by E. Shils and H. M. Johnson in the *International Encyclopaedia of Social Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 7: 66-85. See also the classic discussion by Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, 1955); N. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), chap. 5; and the articles by Bendix, Geertz, and Converse in D. Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: Free Press, 1964).



Domination, inequality, and scarce resources do not necessarily give rise to organized group conflict. India and South Africa, with much stronger caste systems and much greater inequality, have relatively little overt conflict, compared with the United States. This is partly explained by the absence of a belief-legitimizing struggle. Most members of the dominant group, and many of the subordinate group, take the latter to be inferior or polluted and thus do not come to actively question their lower status position, though there are also fewer constraints on repression in those countries.

It is only when people come to define their position as unjust and illegitimate that conflict challenging the color line emerges (assuming a conducive social setting). In defining their position in this way they make assumptions about the nature of the social world, what's wrong with it (or threatens it), how it got that way, what it should be like and why, through what means it can and must be changed, and predictions about what the future is likely to hold.

Intellectuals may play an important role here in developing and systematizing a critique of the society and in raising a concrete disagreement or conflict of interest between separate individuals not identifying themselves as part of a larger social category, to the level of perhaps more bitter struggle over broader values and ultimate principles, between more cohesive and self-conscious social groups.

Though even given the presence of an ideology, its importance in motivating, sustaining, and directing conflict actions varies considerably among individuals and situations.<sup>2</sup> And once

conflict has begun, events often are too diverse and fast moving for rigid pre-programmed ideologies. As the conflict evolves, new justifications and interpretations may emerge, as well as the elaboration of old ones.

Most of the statements presented in this section are arguments for particular strategies, or attempts to justify the status quo or to legitimate the need for change, rather than being fully developed ideologies.

Much of the civil rights movement between 1954-1967 consisted of what Shils has called a "program" rather than a fully developed ideology.<sup>3</sup> A program takes seriously certain of the values of the society and seeks their fulfillment within the existing order. It accepts much of the prevailing institutional and value systems, although it strongly rejects one sector. The thrust of the ideas dominant in the civil rights movement at this time was for the full inclusion of blacks and the realization of the American dream. American values of democracy, freedom, equal protection of the laws, and equal opportunity as expressed in the constitution and the Judeo-Christian heritage serve to legitimate and even call forth struggle. In this sense black demands were relatively conservative, seeking not to overthrow, but to share in the American promise.

The relative absence until recently of well-developed ideologies in the context of American racial conflict has permitted flexibility in strategies and tactics and has made possible bargaining and negotiations. Much racial conflict during recent decades has tended to occur within a framework of some consensus (at least at a national level), rather than to be over the very basis of this consensus.

Partly as a result of a more pragmatic ethos, ideology has traditionally played

<sup>2</sup> There is often a tendency by the outside observer to impute disinterested ideological motivations to activists whose positions he agrees with and to explain the behavior of those he disagrees with in terms of personal pathology or oppor-

tunism, denying them even the dignity of a misguided ideological motivation.

<sup>3</sup> Shils, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

a less important role in American struggles than is the case in Europe. Even for many American activists there tend to exist reformist sentiments involving a gut feeling that something is wrong and that action of some type is required, rather than a clearly articulated, all-encompassing worldview regarding the problem, though this may be changing as the student and black movements, once scornful of traditional rigid ideologies that did not seem to apply to American society, now seek models in the third world.

There are of course numerous dimensions by which ideologies can be classified and many types of ideology, such as revolutionary versus reform, those that stress active involvement versus passive withdrawal, and those that hope to recreate some golden age in the past versus those oriented toward a utopian future. Many of the questions raised elsewhere (Parts IIA and IVA) about the nature of the issue involved in the conflict can also be seen as questions about ideology. Among some additional questions useful to understanding and comparing ideologies involved in conflict situations are the following:

What are the intellectual and historical sources of the ideology?

How is the ideology affected by the social milieu in which it appears?

How has the ideology evolved and what leads to changes in it?

What social conditions are conducive to the emergence of ideologies?

What kinds of legitimations and symbols does it draw upon?

How highly systematized and explicit is it?

How absolutist is it?

How important is the ideology in structuring day-to-day conflict action?

To what degree are its claims subject to objective validation by outside observers?

How are inconsistencies and uncomfortable facts dealt with?

To what degree is the ideology a self-serving device for a manipulative elite, as is often the case with scapegoating?

What assumptions about the relationship between means and ends does it make?

What is the time table for proposed changes?

How important are the actions of adherents seen to be in obtaining the changes desired?

What social and psychological characteristics do people who come to hold the ideology have?

If the ideology contains marked distortions, how is it that some people nevertheless come to accept it?

What role do intellectuals play in defining the issues and developing the belief system?

What role is played by a charismatic leader in spreading the ideology?

## THE ARTICLES

Martin Luther King explains his philosophy of nonviolence and argues for its superiority over violent means in bringing about change. Certain features common to many ideological statements may be seen here, such as the religious (as well as pragmatic) justification of both means and ends, the moral obligation to resist tyranny and join the struggle ("to accept passively an unjust system is to cooperate with that system"), the belief that suffering and self-sacrifice will be rewarded by victory ("unearned suffering is redemptive") and that in the future his cause will indeed triumph ("the universe is on the side of justice"). Of particular interest is King's observation that non-violent resistance may serve to bring about change without the ever-deepening spiral of conflict and hostility (considered later in Part IVA by James Coleman) that is seen to characterize violent struggle.

This excerpt is taken from *Stride toward Freedom* which tells the story of the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott which gave national prominence to, and helped further, the then emerging direct action phase of the civil rights movement. Even though there have been rapid changes on the civil rights front since King wrote these words and his tragic death, his courage, vision,

ethical sense, and insights have a timeless quality of heroic proportions. Appearing as a charismatic leader, at a particular time in history when social conditions were conducive, he inspired a national and international revolution on behalf of human rights and helped unite diverse segments of the black movement as well as bridge the gap between an angry black constituency and a moderate white majority, some of whose leaders were willing to listen.<sup>4</sup>

In "What We Want" Stokely Carmichael discusses the concept of black power which as a leader of SNCC he helped develop.<sup>5</sup> He stresses the importance of blacks defining and doing things for themselves and involving people more in the decisions which effect them. Although denying that black power is synonymous with separation, he offers a critique of integration as a solution because it is seen to ignore the problems of poorer blacks and to devalue blackness. Color is a significant factor in American society and cannot be ignored. American ghettos are seen as colonies suffering from the same domination faced by people of color in "the third world.

As some of the articles in Part IV will suggest, conflict and disagreement within racial groups may be more pronounced than between them. In "Black Power' and Coalition Politics" we see evidence of this as Bayard Rustin, coordinator of the 1963 March on Washington and a major civil rights strategist, takes a much more critical perspective to the idea of black power than does Carmichael. He argues that it isolates blacks from potential allies, encourages antiblack forces, focuses attention

away from racial injustice, and is primarily rhetoric without a concrete program for action.

In this book of readings our primary interest is how ideas affect social conflict, yet one can also raise the reverse question of how conflict effects ideas. Here Rustin's observation is instructive: the rise of the black power movement and the stress on the need to build a strong black community emerged partly out of despair over the failure to obtain meaningful integration in the face of great struggle and sacrifice. There are historical parallels here to the inward turn taken by the black movement during the time of Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey.

The statement by Huey P. Newton, a leader of the Black Panther Party, locates the source of American racial problems in the structure of the economy and argues that racism cannot be eliminated until capitalism is. Newton argues that the government lacks legitimacy because it fails to meet the people's needs. It therefore must be replaced. Blacks as well as whites are seen to be lacking in freedom. Until freedom is achieved, he predicts that the country will suffer chaos, revolt, and eventually revolution. Panther ideology is constantly evolving; its eclectic nature is a good example of the diverse sources from which an ideology may draw. For example, among others it shows the influence of Malcolm X, Marxism, Maoism, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, and Al Fatah. Many of the ends sought by the Panthers in the ten-point statement included here, such as freedom, justice, peace, full employment, education, decent housing, and an end to police brutality are consistent with at least one interpretation of the American value system (indeed the United States constitution is drawn upon to justify demands). Like most statements of an ideological

<sup>4</sup>For a useful discussion of King's role in the civil rights movement, see: A. Meier, "On the Role of Martin Luther King," *New Politics* (Winter 1965), pp. 52-59.

<sup>5</sup>For example, see S. Carmichael and C. Hamilton, *Black Power and the Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, 1967).

nature, the concrete form and the mechanisms which will bring them about are not specified.

A classic statement of the virulently racist southern white position may be seen in the speech by Senator Bilbo to the Mississippi legislature. Though delivered in 1944 and dated in parts, it nevertheless illustrates many of the basic arguments for maintaining racial separation. Although in an age when crude racism is on the decline, some of these concepts are often disguised or not openly acknowledged. His remarks were inspired by a pending anti-poll tax bill and new black demands for equal treatment growing out of World War II. His argument for racial separation rests upon scientifically untenable assertions about the purity and superiority of the "blood" of the "white race" (itself a highly heterogeneous group). He wrongly asserts that culture and life styles are determined by race, and thus that segregation is necessary to prevent intermarriage.

Less blatantly racist, although also serving to justify the southern status quo, is the statement by Richard Morpheu in the aftermath of the crisis triggered by the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi.<sup>6</sup> Unlike Bilbo, he does not seek to justify segregation by referring to an erroneous, even comical (if its consequences were not so tragic), interpretation of world history; nor does he locate the superiority of his group in its reproductive organs. Rather he seeks justifica-

tion in the guarantee to the states of powers not explicitly granted to the United States government by the constitution. The Supreme Court and the preponderant weight of judicial opinion in the last thirty years reject this opinion by arguing that segregation and discrimination clearly fall within the province of the United States government as a result of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the constitution. It is interesting to observe Morpheu seeking legitimation in the same symbols and valued words such as the "constitution," "democratic process," and "freedom" as do civil rights activists.

The very abstractness of the values, a lack of consistency between them (e.g., the value of equality may clash with the value of liberty), and the absence of a firm link between values and the concrete ways they are implemented help account for similar references to American values. Though the very abstractness and ambiguity of values may be necessary given the variety of specific social situations and may aid in integration among diverse groups, it also ensures that most conflict groups can find some way of legitimating their claims and will have sincere feelings of self-righteousness.

John W. Gardner, former secretary of health, education, and welfare and head of the Urban Coalition, takes a position held by many moderates and liberals. He asks for social reform, yet requests those he sees as rightfully indignant over American problems to always work responsibly and reasonably within the confines of the system that produced and produces these problems and which up to now has been unable to solve them. He is particularly critical of coercive demonstrations. Gardner also argues that solving social problems is a very difficult and gradual process, and he rejects the view that

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller collection of segregationist writings from which these two statements are taken, see I. Newby, ed., *The Development of Segregationist Thought* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1968). For compilations of black protest thought, see H. Brotz, ed., *Negro Social and Political Thought 1850-1920* (New York: Basic Books, 1966); and F. Broderick and A. Meier, eds., *Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

people are essentially good but made corrupt by faulty social institutions.

President Johnson's commencement address at Howard University is an example of what could be called the mid-sixties' enlightened-optimistic-establishment position. It implies that with a little effort racial justice will gradually be achieved. It holds a melting pot-assimilationist image of the American ethnic experience and looks forward to the day when the "only difference between whites and Negroes is skin color." President Johnson also sees "the courts, the congress, the president, and most of the people" as allies of racial progress. Public opinion polls and election results tell a rather different story. From a national leader seeking broad consensus, this plea to end racial inequality is designed to appeal to diverse groups. Thus he argues that we must go beyond merely providing equality of opportunity since "freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying now you're free to go where you want and do as you desire." But at the same time he locates a major cause of racial problems within the black community itself, particularly in what he sees as the breakdown of the black family.<sup>7</sup>

It is well to note that President Johnson did more for civil rights than any president this century. Yet in this speech which stresses the need to end racial injustice and asks Americans to have an "understanding heart," there is remarkably little in the way of concrete policy recommendations, other than mention of the voting rights bill and a call for a conference, though it is rich in vague references (which help perform a consensus and integrative function) to "justice," "freedom," "opportunity," "equality," and "the Great Society."

<sup>7</sup>For consideration of some of the implications of this, see C. Rainwater and W. Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1967).

Many aspects of an ideology are essentially statements of value, asserting that one form of social organization is preferable to another, or predictions about the future, yet other aspects such as explanations for current problems, or assertions about the consequences of various strategies, are more in the realm of fact and hence more subject to objective analysis. The last three articles in this section, rather than being calls to action or discussions of particular viewpoints, seek to analyze strategies for change.

Merton Deutsch asks: "What can a powerless group do to gain its ends?" He specifies tactics likely to elicit cooperation as well as resistance from the dominant group.

James Q. Wilson looks at a similar question in considering strategies of protest available specifically to blacks. He considers how these bear upon the different kinds of demands, issues, and goals likely to be raised by blacks. His argument should be considered in light of the kinds of institutionalized inequality discussed in Part IIA.

James W. Vander Zanden attempts to analyze the degree of success obtained by the method of nonviolent resistance in the South. He suggests that for the southern black, nonviolent resistance helped mediate between the traditional role of accommodation and the hostility felt toward southern racial patterns.

## 20

### *Nonviolent Resistance\**

MARTIN L. KING

. . . In this period of social change, the Negro must come to see that there is

\*[Abridgement of pp. 102-103, 104, 106-107, 211-222, 223-224 in *Stride Toward Freedom*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. Copyright © 1958 by Martin Luther King, Jr. By permission of Harper and Row Publishers, Inc. and Joan Daves. The following passage does not follow the strict chronological order of the original. It has been taken from pp. 172-174, 81-83, and 174-184 as indicated by asterisks in the text.]

much he himself can do about his plight. He may be uneducated or poverty-stricken, but these handicaps must not prevent him from seeing that he has within his being the power to alter his fate. The Negro can take direct action against injustice without waiting for the government to act or a majority to agree with him or a court to rule in his favor.

Oppressed people deal with their oppression in three characteristic ways. One way is acquiescence: the oppressed resign themselves to their doom. They tacitly adjust themselves to oppression, and thereby become conditioned to it. In every movement toward freedom some of the oppressed prefer to remain oppressed. Almost 2,800 years ago Moses set out to lead the children of Israel from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the promised land. He soon discovered that slaves do not always welcome their deliverers. They become accustomed to being slaves. They would rather bear those ills they have, as Shakespeare pointed out, than flee to others that they know not of. They prefer the "fleshpots of Egypt" to the ordeals of emancipation.

There is such a thing as the freedom of exhaustion. Some people are so worn down by the yoke of oppression that they give up. A few years ago in the slum areas of Atlanta, a Negro guitarist used to sing almost daily: "Ben down so long that down don't bother me." This is the type of negative freedom and resignation that often engulfs the life of the oppressed.

But this is not the way out. To accept passively an unjust system is to cooperate with that system; thereby the oppressed become as evil as the oppressor. Noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. The oppressed must never allow the conscience of the oppressor to slumber. Religion reminds every man that he is his brother's keeper. To accept injustice or segregation pas-

sively is to say to the oppressor that his actions are morally right. It is a way of allowing his conscience to fall asleep. At this moment the oppressed fails to be his brother's keeper. So acquiescence — while often the easier way — is not the moral way. It is the way of the coward. The Negro cannot win the respect of his oppressor by acquiescing; he merely increases the oppressor's arrogance and contempt. Acquiescence is interpreted as proof of the Negro's inferiority. The Negro cannot win the respect of the white people of the South or the peoples of the world if he is willing to sell the future of his children for his personal and immediate comfort and safety.

A second way that oppressed people sometimes deal with oppression is to resort to physical violence and corroding hatred. Violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem; it merely creates new and more complicated ones.

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers. A voice echoes through time saying to every potential Peter, "Put up your sword." History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations that failed to follow this command.

If the American Negro and other

**PART FOUR**  
**THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT**

## SECTION A

### SOCIAL PROCESSES

ALTHOUGH conflicts may be very much affected by the ideology and kind of milieu and structure in which they occur, there is nevertheless often a sense of constant movement, change, and development over time as participants interact with each other. The organization of the conflict groups, the characteristics of activists, tactics, the conception a group has of itself and its opponents, and the intensity and extensiveness of the struggle may be in constant flux as the conflict develops over time.

In looking at ideology and the characteristics of activists or communities, we are usually cutting into social life at just one point in time and acting as if it were static. For some purposes this is adequate, yet it is also important to take a broad perspective and consider the developmental aspects of the conflict over time. When this is done, we are dealing with social process and our focus is on the often fluid, emergent, and shifting character of the conflict. It is with such dynamics that this section is concerned.

James Coleman's article on "The Dynamics of Controversy" is a superb example of this approach. The closer we look at conflict, or any social situation, the more complex and varied are the patterns we can uncover. Yet in abstractly considering a large number of cases, it is often possible to discover reoccurring themes and a limited number of typical patterns of development. One of the most interesting and important of these, because of its potential for extreme divisiveness, is considered by Coleman: community conflict which becomes polarized and relatively unrestrained. In such conflicts, where a

disagreement between two groups eventually expands to include almost the entire community divided into warring camps, certain changes may regularly be observed. The basic issue in contention may shift from a specific grievance to a more generalized critique, new issues sometimes unrelated to the original one may emerge, and mere disagreements between people may give rise to intense feelings of antagonism. The very important point is made that "once set in motion, hostility can sustain conflict unaided by disagreement about particular issues." The conflict may continue after its initial cause is removed. Here unrealistic conflict becomes intertwined with realistic conflict.<sup>1</sup> It is this fusion which makes some conflicts so hard to resolve. As polarization develops, changes appear in social organization, there is increased reliance on informal communication, and the "vicious circles" and "runaway processes" characteristic of some conflicts may emerge. Coleman identifies a "Gresham's law of conflict" whereby moderate leaders are replaced by those less willing to negotiate and the emphasis shifts from winning to ruining the opponent.

Also taking a broad perspective that covers the entire course of the struggle, James H. Laue presents a model of civil rights change through conflict, abstracted from numerous southern communities during the early 1960's. He observes a pattern that moves from challenge by blacks, a period of overt community conflict leading to a crisis, the involvement of elements of the white power structure in negotiation to

<sup>1</sup>For discussion of these important concepts, see D. L. Coser, pp. 14-20 of this volume.



the emergence of some change. An important element in the changes that did emerge was a shift in the perceived self-interest of local whites with power; they may not like desegregation, but they like losing business, disruption, and bad publicity even less. More important was the fact that southern protests occurred within a national context essentially sympathetic to their ends. The richness and variability of any given instance of conflict is only partly described by such a model. A given conflict can stop at any stage, stages can be skipped, and such a model applies more clearly in the South than the North. Nevertheless it offers a framework for dealing with the developmental and social process aspects of a certain type of conflict.

The same thing is true of the article by John Spiegel, which deals with conflicts on college campuses. Spiegel identifies a pattern of development that characterizes many struggles and he gives a clear feeling of how a conflict evolves over time.

Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan consider a question which deals with cultural symbols and people's subjective perceptions: What kinds of conceptions of themselves and their opponents are people in conflict situations likely to construct and what are the implications of this? They observe that "contrast conceptions" may emerge in which one's own group is seen as noble and self-sacrificing, while the opponent becomes the personification of everything evil. This is made even easier when the difference between groups is seen as racial and genetic. Through selective perception, only those things consistent with their prior images may be perceived. A social process may be seen in the buildup of these conceptions as the conflict goes on. Such conceptions aid in drawing group boundaries and are one means by which solidarity

and cohesion within a conflict group are increased. They also are conducive to self-sacrifice and permit an ethical dualism, whereby any means can be used to subdue an opponent seen as beyond the pale of the human community. They are conducive to unrealistic conflict and an exaggeration of the actual extent of disagreement between groups. Though the rhetoric of contrast conceptions may sometimes substitute for actual conflict, it may also inhibit compromise and negotiation. Such conceptions are one aspect of the polarization process also considered by Coleman.

The last two articles in this section consider civil disorders that emerged in ghetto areas in 1964 and reached a high point during the summer of 1967. Louis G. Goldberg analyzes twenty-three civil disorders that occurred during 1967. This is a useful article because it attempts to deal with types of ghetto riot, rather than treating all riots as if they were the same.<sup>2</sup> Among types of riot noted are general social upheavals, political confrontations, expressive rampages, and those that seem to emerge in self-defense or are initiated by overly eager control forces anticipating a riot. Some ghetto uprisings may take on the character of a competitive game, in which youth attempt to humiliate the police.

Police are an important source of interracial conflict. Elements of unrealistic conflict, exaggeration, stereotyping, and scapegoating may be present on both sides. More clearly than is the case with many issues, struggles involving the police indicate how the authority relations stressed by Dahrendorf can be a major generator of conflict. The un-

<sup>2</sup>Variation in types of riot are also discussed in G. Marx, "Riots," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1970, reprinted in P. Rose, *Study of Society* (New York: Random House, 1970); and G. Marx, "Issueless Riots," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1970.

pleasant task given police of enforcing rules through coercion and force is bound to generate some opposition, particularly by those who are disadvantaged as a result of the social arrangements that police power maintains.

Conflicts with the police have involved disagreements over the enforcement of rules, particular instances of police brutality, a fight to gain or keep civilian review boards, efforts to change police employment and operating procedures, and demands for more and better policing. A large proportion of riots initially involved a police incident. In other racial conflict situations, even where police are not involved directly in the issue, they tend to become involved, and usually on a side against those protesting. This is a natural consequence of their being called out to keep the peace, regulate picket lines, or arrest those sitting-in or engaged in civil disorders.

In "Civil Disorder and the Agents of Social Control" I examine police behavior in ghetto riots. Here the dynamic and emergent quality of conflict can again be seen. The course and form of a riot involves elements that cannot very well be predicted by a consideration of static pre-riot variables such as the size of the economic gap between blacks and whites or the degree of pluralism in a community. Rather, attention must be directed to the interaction that occurs between controllers and rioters. The selection considers various ways in which police have been ineffective and even contributed to the disorders. Yet even when police behavior has been exemplary, this has not always stopped the disorders. For many blacks, police have become symbols of an oppressive white society. By the mere act of trying to maintain law and order, however fairly and impartially, they are also seen as maintaining the status quo.

## 31

*The Dynamics of Controversy\**

JAMES COLEMAN

The most striking fact about the development and growth of community controversies is the similarity they exhibit despite diverse underlying sources and different kinds of precipitating incidents. Once the controversies have begun, they resemble each other remarkably. Were it not for these similarities, Machiavelli could never have written his guide to warfare, and none of the other numerous works on conflict, dispute, and controversy would have been possible.<sup>1</sup> It is the peculiarity of social controversy that it sets in motion its own dynamics; these tend to carry it forward in a path which bears little relation to its beginnings. An examination of these dynamics will occupy the attention of this chapter.

One caution is necessary: we do not mean to suggest that nothing can be done about community controversy once it begins. To the contrary, the dynamics of controversy *can* be interrupted and diverted—either by conscious action or by existing conditions in the community. As a result, although the same dynamic tendencies of controversy are found in every case, the actual development in particular cases may differ widely. In the discussion be-

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<sup>1</sup>The one man who emphasized particularly the possibility of abstracting principles of conflict from particular situations of conflict is Georg Simmel, who wrote several essays on the subject. Unfortunately, Simmel never got around to writing a comprehensive theory of conflict, though he did set down a number of insights into particular aspects. See G. Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Intergroup Affiliations*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1955. Lewis Coser has brought together the best of Simmel's insights and elaborated on them. L. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1956.

low, the unrestrained dynamic tendencies will be discussed. . . .\*

### CHANGES IN ISSUES

The issues which provide the initial basis of response in a controversy undergo great transformations as the controversy develops. Three fundamental transformations appear to take place.

#### Specific to general

First, specific issues give way to *general* ones. In Scarsdale, the school's critics began by attacking books in the school library; soon they focused on the whole educational philosophy. In Mason City, Iowa, where a city-manager plan was abandoned, the campaign against the plan started with a letter to the newspaper from a local carpenter complaining that the creek overflowed into his home. This soon snowballed, gathering other specific complaints, and then gave way to the general charge that the council and manager were dominated by local business interests and had no concern for the workingman.

Most of the controversies examined show a similar pattern. (Even those that do not are helpful, for they suggest just why the pattern *does* exist in so many cases. Political controversies, for example, exhibit the pattern much less than do disputes based primarily on differing values or economic interests. The Athens, Tennessee, political fight began with the same basic issue it ended with—political control of the community (Key, 1950). Other political struggles in which there is little popular involvement show a similar restriction to the initial issue.)

It seems that movement from specific to general issues occurs whenever there are deep cleavages of values or interests in the community which re-

quire a spark to set them off—usually a specific incident representing only a small part of the underlying difference. In contrast, those disputes which appear not to be generated by deep cleavages running through the community as a whole, but are rather power struggles within the community, do not show the shift from specific to general. To be sure, they may come to involve the entire community, but no profound fundamental difference comes out.

This first shift in the nature of the issues, then, uncovers the fundamental differences which set the stage for a precipitating incident in the first place.

#### New and different issues

Another frequent change in the issues of the dispute is the emergence of quite *new and different* issues, unrelated to the original ones. In the Pasadena school controversy, the initial issue was an increased school budget and a consequent increased tax rate. This soon became only one issue of many; ideological issues concerning "progressive education," and other issues, specific as well as general, arose. In another case, a controversy which began as a personal power struggle between a school superintendent and a principal shifted to a conflict involving general educational principles when the community as a whole entered in (Warner et al., 1949, p. 201-204). A study of the adoption of the city-manager plan in fifty cities (Stone, Price, and Stone, 1940, p. 34-38) shows that in one group of cities, designated by the authors "machine-ridden," the controversy grew to include ethnic, religious, political, and ideological differences. Political campaigns generally, in fact, show this tendency: issues multiply rapidly as the campaign increases in intensity.

There are two different sources for this diversification of issues. One is in a sense "involuntary"; issues which

\*[Elsewhere in his book Coleman discusses situational restraints on controversy.]

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## SECTION B

# CASE STUDIES: THE ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT

CAREFUL attention to the material presented thus far will have suggested a number of the factors that are important to consider in analyzing the emergence, form, course, and consequences of racial conflict. Among important ways in which conflict situations differ from each other are their context, the characteristics of involved groups and individuals, the nature of the issue, and the means used. In approaching any given conflict certain questions should be asked, though answers may often be limited or difficult to come by. Among a large number of questions that might be asked and which may help sensitize us to factors most relevant for sociological understanding are the following:

### *Group Structure*

What sources of cleavage beyond racial group serve to divide the involved groups, such as social class position, age, region, sex, religion, or ideology? Or, conversely, what characteristics do combatants have in common?

Is the dispute generated by deep cleavages in the community or relatively superficial ones?

Are the parties to the conflict tightly or loosely integrated into the dominant institutions and organizations of the society? What is the class base of the involved leaders and followers?

Are the involved groups internally homogeneous and subject to the control of a strong leader, or is each group internally fragmented?

Does the conflict occur within a close-knit communal group or between formally organized voluntary associations?

Is the conflict between a dominant and subordinate group, two more or less equally subordinate groups, or within one of these?

Is the conflict between two private groups or a private group and the government?

Are there strong disinterested third parties present who wish to see the conflict resolved?

Are there other third-party groups with needed resources that can be drawn to the side of the less powerful group?

Is a central power structure with the capability of decisive action present?

Are there mechanisms present such as courts or boards of appeal which can channel and limit the conflict?

Is the conflict of a face-to-face nature or mediated through third parties?

What lines of communication exist between involved groups?

How many clearly distinct groups are a party to the controversy?

How many other minority groups are there in the community in question?

What proportion of the population belongs to the minority community?

What proportion of the minority and dominant group becomes involved in the conflict?

### *The Issue*

How great is the felt gain to the dominant group and cost to the minority? What proportion of each group feels strongly affected by the issue?

How clearly defined are the goals of the involved groups? How clearly can responsibility be fixed for the situation that a group finds intolerable? Does the goal sought have a specific or diffuse character?

What is the relative mix of realistic and nonrealistic conflict elements? Is the degree of emotional involvement around the conflict high or low?

How consistent are the goals of the minority group with the dominant values of the society?

Does the conflict occur within a broad framework of consensus, or is it over the very basis of consensus?

Do the involved groups disagree about one issue or a large number of issues?

Is the issue one of a "zero sum nature" whereby if one group gets its way the other group must lose totally, or does the issue involve the possibility of negotiation and partial gains for each group?

Is the group initiating the conflict seeking to veto a decision, or does it seek some new direction for policy?

Is the issue one which can be shown to directly benefit more people than just the

minority—such as all the poor, all people with children, everyone in a given region, etc.?

Within the minority group, is it an issue that affects all members more or less equally (denial of right to vote or sit anywhere on the bus), primarily the poor (inferior schools, union discrimination), or primarily the rich (discrimination by country clubs and expensive hotels)?

Is the conflict initiated because the minority group is questioning the racial status quo, or because the dominant group through attacks and exploitation seeks new gains, to maintain the status quo, or even to restore a declining color line?

Within that institutional setting does the conflict occur—schools, universities, factories, retail merchants, unions, police, churches, welfare and housing bureaucracies, legislative or judicial bodies?

What is the substantive nature of the issue? Are issues of class, status, or power most clearly involved? How close does the issue come to involving social interaction between blacks and whites at an equal status level?

Does the conflict primarily involve a struggle after scarce resources, the clash of divergent beliefs, or an effort to directly injure one's opponent?

#### *Tactics*

What kind of resources does the less powerful group have access to beyond its ability to disrupt? How easily can it organize itself for conflict action and how great are the risks it faces in so doing?

What are a group's traditions regarding the use of violence and working outside the system?

To what extent is the conflict bound in by rules, and are the means used seen as legitimate by members of the dominant society?

What conflict means are used: elections, the courts, lobbying, strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts, riots, guerrilla warfare?

Is there a division of labor among the leadership, with charismatic- and bureaucratic-task-oriented roles performed by different people?

Are followers motivated to carry on the struggle primarily by ideology or by concrete material rewards?

Have dramatic and symbolic events occurred which groups can capitalize on to inspire followers and gain needed support through the mass media?

What images does a group hold of itself and its opponents at various stages of the conflict?

How are conflict actions labeled by various interested parties (e.g., as justified protest, crime)?

To what extent is a life cycle model of breakdown, chaotic disruption and mass unrest, organized protest, social change and the disappearance of protest present, as against continued conflict and intermittent disruption?

If the conflict terminates, what form does it take and what is responsible: complete victory for one side, compromise resulting in partial gains for each side, stalemate and truce, fatigue when one or both sides give up or withdraw, arbitration, the shifting of attention to other issues, repression of the weaker group, attack by some third party which binds previous antagonists together?

Does the conflict stop with the immediate issue at hand, or does it also result in setting up new mechanisms for resolving future disputes?

The above questions were not chosen at random. Rather they deal with many of the elements of conflict emphasized in the theoretical literature. Given answers to some of the above questions, the empirical case of interest can be considered in light of various propositions about conflict.

Through considering a number of such empirical cases, it is possible to offer support or cast doubt on a given hypothesis. Listed below are some theoretical propositions about how conflict elements affect each other. They make predictions about conflict's form, intensity, patterns of development, and consequences. By offering a limited but still systematic framework, they help explain conflict and give unity at a more general level to a number of discrete phenomena. They may also help structure our observations of conflict situations.

The following are among a large number of available propositions which receive some support from impressionistic observations and occasionally the systematic collection of data. It should be stressed that these are by no means

iron laws, but merely hypotheses that seem reasonable and may help in understanding conflict.<sup>1</sup> Implicit in them is the condition "all other things being equal." These propositions focus primarily on factors affecting conflict once it emerges, rather than on those affecting the likelihood of its occurrence as in Part IIB. In most cases hypotheses already offered in the text such as in the articles by Coleman, Laue, Breed, or Coser are not repeated. In observing particular current examples of racial, or other kinds of conflict, an effort should be made to apply these propositions as well as to ask the questions just mentioned.

## PROPOSITIONS

### *Forms and Patterns of Development*

*To the extent that major sources of social differentiation (such as class, race, religion, territory) overlap rather than criss-cross*

*each other, conflict is likely to be more intense. A society faces maximum likelihood of massive conflict (or of political disruption) when the various lines of differentiation of values, interests, and collectivity memberships coincide among the same population aggregates (R. Williams, 1969).*

*Group conflicts are at their strongest, are most likely to develop and least likely to be dissipated, when no internal conflict is felt within the person (J. Coleman).*

*Periods of intense conflict are more likely when prolonged periods of rising expectations and gratifications are followed by short periods of sharp reversal (Davies).<sup>2</sup>*

*The intensity of conflict accompanying social change is likely to be greatest when the change is extensive, occurs suddenly, and when those implementing the change circumvent public opinion and work outside existing institutions (Suchman et al.).<sup>3</sup>*

*The greater the conflict between dominant and minority group, the lesser the conflict within these groups.*

*The greater the conflicts between racial and ethnic groups, the lesser the class and religious conflicts, and vice versa.*

*Among the members of any dominant group the greatest incidence of conflict behavior toward a given minority will be found among those classes which are most vulnerable to competition from the minority (R. Williams, 1947).*

*The larger the number of parties, the more difficult it will be to discover a common solution in which all parties can achieve at least some gain over previous power positions (Mack and Snyder).*

<sup>1</sup>For more comprehensive inventories see R. Williams, *The Reduction of Inter-group Tensions* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947); R. Mack and R. Snyder, "The Analysis of Social Conflict—Toward an Overview and Synthesis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (June 1957); B. Berelson and G. Steiner, *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1964); M. Sherif, *In Common Predicament*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966); H. Blalock, Jr., *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1967); L. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York: Free Press 1954), and *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict*, (New York: Free Press, 1967); W. Gamson, *Power and Discontent*, (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1969); C. Fink, "Some Conceptual Difficulties in the Theory of Social Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 12, no. 4; M. Deutsch, "Conflicts: Productive and Destructive," *Journal of Social Issues* 25, no. 1; R. Williams, "Conflict and Social Order: Some Complex Propositions for Sociologists Who Live in Interesting Times," unpublished paper, 1969; R. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Palo Alto: Stanford Univ. Press, 1959); and the additional articles in footnote 2 of the Introduction.

<sup>2</sup>J. Davis, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review* (February 1962).

<sup>3</sup>E. Suchman et al., *Desegregation: Some Propositions and Research Suggestions* (New York, Anti-Defamation League, 1958).

*There is a persistent tendency to reduce multiple-party conflict to two-party conflict via coalitions and blocs (Mack and Snyder).*

*The larger the number of issues on which a group is divided, the more prolonged and intense the conflict (Deutsch).*

*The more loosely connected and separable the issues, the easier the conflict will be to resolve, particularly if opponents value issues differentially (Deutsch).*

*Small conflicts are easier to resolve than large ones. Conflict is enlarged by dealing with it as a conflict between big rather than small units (as a conflict between two individuals of different races or as a racial conflict), as a conflict over a large substantive issue rather than a small one (over "being treated fairly or being treated unfairly at a particular occasion"), as a conflict over a principle rather than the application of a principle, as a conflict whose solution establishes large rather than small substantive or procedural precedents (Deutsch).*

*Escalation of conflict will be more likely and more rapid when one or more of the contending groups lacks a hierarchy of power and authority or a clear structure of representation. Escalation in demands and in resort to obstruction and force is favored by:*

- 1 multiple contenders for leadership
- 2 rapid turnover of both leaders and followers
- 3 lack of definiteness in powers, rights duties, and privileges of spokesmen, organizers, representatives

*(R. Williams, 1969)*

*Collectivities whose members lack multiple responsible involvements and commitments in the major activities of the community or society are likely to be extreme in their demands and tactics in disputes (R. Williams, 1969).*

*In the absence of a superordinate source of constraint, conflicts often are subject to escalation in severity or ferocity . . . a tendency for increasingly drastic means to drive out the less drastic, resulting in the sovereignty of the least moral participant (R. Williams, 1969).*

*Violent conflict is more likely when the government, or another third party, is unable or unwilling to intervene.*

*The greater the resources a group has to use in its struggle, the less likely that it will publicly use means seen as questionable by the dominant segments of the society.*

*Conflict is likely to be more intense in close-knit groups and in those organized in a rigid way (Coser, 1956).*

*Conflicts are likely to be more intense and more violent to the degree that the struggle is waged for the sake of superindividual rather than personal ends (Coser, 1956).*

*The greater the absence of conditions which allow groups to develop organizations to struggle for goals through established channels, the greater the likelihood of violent conflict (Dahrendorf).*

*Conflict is likely to be bound in by rules when the following are present: institutional forms such as collective bargaining and adjudicative systems; roles such as mediators, conciliators, referees, judges, and policemen; norms stressing "fairness" and "nonviolence"; and specific rules for conducting negotiations (Deutsch).*

*Adherence to rules limiting conflict is more likely when (1) rules are known, unambiguous, consistent, and unbiased; (2) the other side adheres to the rules; (3) violations are quickly known by significant others; (4) there is significant social approval for adherence and significant social disapproval for violation; (5) adherence to the rules has been rewarding while uncontrolled conflict has been costly in the past; and (6) one would like to be able to employ the rules in future conflicts (Deutsch).*



### Outcome

In a society such as the contemporary United States, the challenges of relatively powerless groups are likely to meet with the greatest degree of success to the extent that:

- 1 Their demands can be seen as consistent with the broader values of the society.
- 2 They can gain the support of more powerful third parties and/or show how their demands will benefit other groups as well.
- 3 Their demands are concrete and focused.
- 4 The more clearly they can fix responsibility for the situation they are protesting (e.g., protest against an urban renewal project as compared to protest over inadequate housing).
- 5 Pressure is brought to bear on the responsible party, and there is minimum discomfort to those not responsible.
- 6 They adopt new techniques which authorities have not had experience dealing with.
- 7 Neutral third parties are present who have an interest in restoring harmony.
- 8 The powerless group is willing to negotiate, and its demands do not have a zero-sum quality.
- 9 Their demands involve a request for acceptance of social diversity, equal treatment, or inclusion, rather than domination over, or change in the practices of, the dominant group towards itself, or fundamental redistributions of income and power.
- 10 The powerless group seeks to veto a proposed policy rather than to see a new policy implemented.
- 11 The further a demand is from involving equal social status contact with whites (e.g., greater resistance to residential and school integration than a demand for improving black schools and building new low income housing in a black area).
- 12 The less the perceived cost to white society.
- 13 The lower the status of the white group most likely to be hurt by the challenge.
- 14 The minority population is large enough to organize itself for conflict but not large enough to be perceived as a serious threat to the dominant group.

The following case studies report a small number of racial conflict situations. The case studies presented here vary considerably from each other with respect to region (North, South, rural,

urban), institutional area where the struggle occurs (the legislature, the schools, the police, the economy, the streets), the means (voting, lobbying, boycotts, sit-ins, persuasion, threats, violence), and the groups involved (minority versus majority or within these groups), and outcome. However in each instance many of the same analytic areas can be identified: some scarcity of resources or the clash of beliefs, varying mixtures of realistic and nonrealistic conflict, ideas which justify struggle, social conditions which operate to encourage or inhibit it and push the struggle in one direction or another, and interaction among participants and the development of the conflict over time.

In the 1950's and middle 1960's, schools were almost always a locus for conflict as they were one of the most visible of segregated American institutions. The 1954 Supreme Court decision and the actions of the federal government in the South legitimated the struggle for integrated schools. However as appreciable resistance was met and schools in the North became more, rather than less, segregated, the black community increasingly turned inward, and school controversies began to emerge over the issue of community control of schools and demands for a black curriculum.

Given the presence of large numbers of young people who can rather easily be mobilized for action on one side or the other, and the school's crucial role of socializing the young and transmitting basic values and worldviews, it is not surprising that school controversies have often been intense and prolonged.

R. Crain, in his discussion of a San Francisco school controversy, cites many of the basic elements—such as school officials who see themselves alone as possessing the technical expertise needed to make complex school

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In the 1950's and middle 1960's, schools were almost always a locus for conflict as they were one of the most visible of segregated American institutions. The 1954 Supreme Court decision and the actions of the federal government in the South legitimated the struggle for integrated schools. However as appreciable resistance was met and schools in the North became more, rather than less, segregated, the black community increasingly turned inward, and school controversies began to emerge over the issue of community control of schools and demands for a black curriculum.

Given the presence of large numbers of young people who can rather easily be mobilized for action on one side or the other, and the school's crucial role of socializing the young and transmitting basic values and worldviews, it is not surprising that school controversies have often been intense and prolonged.

R. Crain, in his discussion of a San Francisco school controversy, cites many of the basic elements—such as school officials who see themselves alone as possessing the technical expertise needed to make complex school

decisions; splits within the minority community and the large number (nine) of civil rights groups that school officials had to deal with at one time or another; the use of a law suit, threats, and disruption to force negotiations; the importance of the role of misunderstanding; the reflexive emergence of an anti-integration citizens group; the appointment of a study committee; the emergence of newer issues; and the role of third parties. As the conflict escalated it became very confusing and more difficult to understand. The NAACP appears to have switched its position from goals of a status nature involving symbolic affirmation of the principle of nondiscrimination to goals of a welfare nature such as the building of new essentially segregated schools in ghetto areas. There is some tension between full integration and the development of a strong ethnic power base.

Michael Lipsky considers the 1963 and 1964 Harlem rent strikes led by Jesse Gray by examining some of the constraints faced by low income protesters.<sup>4</sup> Although the rent strike resulted in some marginal changes, it failed to obtain its fundamental goal. Protest by low income groups is seen as an unreliable political tactic, particularly in the long run, although it may be useful in raising issues. Such protest groups are at a competitive disadvantage in terms of skill and resources relative to the powerful groups they challenge. A protest leader also must try and appeal to diverse groups

<sup>4</sup>The issue of substandard housing or exorbitant rents involved in a rent strike or exploitation by merchants and employers are, in a strict sense, class rather than racial issues. The white poor and other low status minorities face many of the same problems as blacks. However, because the landlords, merchants, and employers are usually white and blacks are more likely to be renters, customers, and employees, such issues in fact come to be defined as racial issues. Racial factors are, of course, also relevant in accounting for the development of this consistent pattern of racial subordination.

such as his own grassroots supporters, the mass media, interested third parties, and those who have the power to give him what he wants. For example, to hold his followers he must often be militant, particularly if he can offer them few tangible rewards, yet this may alienate third parties whose support is vital. On the other hand, if his need for militant rhetoric and the demands of the press for newsworthy material do not prevent him from communicating his willingness to negotiate, the subsequent need to bargain and compromise may alienate many of his followers.

The article by Howard Hubbard contrasts the success of civil rights protest in Birmingham with its failure in Albany, Georgia. Though Martin Luther King was prominently involved in both struggles, they had very different consequences. A crucial factor is seen to be the different tactics adopted by police. In Birmingham, unlike Albany, the conflict occurred in a context where violence was perpetrated by authorities. Here dramatic incidents and the creation of martyrs and symbols are seen to be important to the mobilization of mass support. This also indicates the emergent character of the conflict and how the results, depending on the nature of the interaction between opponents, can often not be predicted.

Rita James Simon and James W. Carey consider the controversy that developed around an incident of alleged discrimination against black athletes at the University of Illinois. They indicate some of the confusion that is often present in conflict situations, which even subsequent investigation by the researchers could not untangle. They show the important role the mass media has in turning a minor charge into a dramatic conflict and how some men come to play stylized roles. In noting intragroup con-

flict between the NAACP and the black athletes they suggest the importance of a personal vendetta between two leaders, feelings of superiority on the part of the NAACP, the interest of the latter in finding an issue that would call attention to the general situation of blacks on the campus, and the dependence of black athletes on white coaches and the athletic association. The specific incident that triggered the dispute was the vehicle for a consideration of more general issues involving blacks on the campus. From the perspective of the blacks the ending of the conflict seems rather unsuccessful; it simply dropped out of sight. Perhaps because blacks took no coercive action, little change emerged.

Most of the articles in this book take a rather tough-minded perspective to human society. In Dahrendorf's term, they emphasize the coercive side of society, focusing on power, pressure, force, and division. However, as Dahrendorf also notes, there is a consensus or integration side of society as well. Leon Mayhew emphasizes this side by showing how shared values of an abstract nature can be used by a group to obtain social change. He examines the history of the passage of a full employment practices bill in Massachusetts and considers the interplay between formal laws, unwritten values, and organized interest groups. He makes the important point that "the civil rights lobby did not prevail simply because it was organized; it prevailed because it was organized to express and enhance community values." He shows the importance of creating the appearance of a broad base of public support and the crucial importance of support from powerful third parties who offer needed resources and help legitimate the claims of the minority. In the interest of self-determination and community building, the importance of coalitions is now

underplayed by some segments of the black movement. This article stresses the role of law in bringing about change. Though its impact may not be felt immediately and uniformly and its effect is easily exaggerated, it has a symbolic meaning, helps legitimate demands for change in policy, and if strong enforcement agencies are set up, can have an important effect on behavior.

The case study by Harold A. Nelson deals not so much with a single direct clash involving particular demands but with the emergence and consequences of an informal black police organization. There are some interesting parallels here to the Black Panthers, who emerged in a similar fashion, and to the white organization started by Tony Imperiale in Newark. The emergence of such groups in the face of a situation defined as unsatisfying is wholly consistent with an American frontier, self-help ethos. If schools and police in low income areas are seen as unsatisfactory and impossible to change, then do not change them but create your own. There are of course great problems with obtaining the resources needed to do this, and there may be much resistance from the traditional institutions.

The emergence of the Defenders, the group described by Nelson, led to important changes on the part of police and the cessation of white harassment of blacks. The mere threat of their presence was sufficient for change without physical conflict actually occurring. This illustrates a subtle point about conflict: the winner does not necessarily win because he physically or financially destroys his opponent; rather he gains his desired end through threatening to do so and making it clear that he means business. To a weaker or outflanked opponent this may be sufficient for change. The role of threats, assessment of the opponent's strengths,

how serious he is, and how far he will go to gain his ends are important parts of the conflict process.<sup>5</sup>

Yet the emergence of such parapolic groups does not always have the positive ending described by Nelson. Struggles over police issues may be particularly intense because they involve coercion and direct physical controls over people. For one thing such groups may help to sharpen conflict by organizing a previously unorganized group. The chance of violent clashes with the police or organized ideological opponents may be greatly increased. Even if this isn't the case, applying the perspective of Dahrendorf, many of the problems facing police stem from the mere exercise of authority. A conflict potential is inherent in this kind of relationship no matter who exercises authority.<sup>6</sup> There are also interesting questions about who controls this new group of controllers who have emerged to control the excesses of the old controllers.

In the evolution of the black struggle from working primarily in the courts in the 1950's to the nonviolent direct action of the early 1960's to spontaneous ghetto violence in the last half of the 1960's, a progression toward ever increasing militancy may be seen. If one were to apply a rigid evolutionary model, the next step would clearly seem to be from mass violent unrest to planned uprisings and guerrilla warfare. Many observers of all political persuasions see this coming. Already there are isolated guerrilla-like attacks on police, firemen, and other officials servicing ghetto communities, as well as attacks on

courts, schools, and downtown business areas.

Martin Oppenheimer asks a hard question: What are the real prospects for organized mass violence and guerrilla warfare in the urban black ghetto? In a useful historical review, he notes a number of problems that urban insurgency movements face, including the lack of a logistical base and territorial isolation. More difficult for the government to deal with is a revolutionary underground that includes terrorism, sabotage, and perhaps small mobile guerrilla bands. The threat of violence and an occasional attack initially may be relevant to some change. However as attacks escalate and fear spreads, the ultimate consequence, according to Oppenheimer, is likely to be the suspension of the Constitution, an American police state, and the turning of ghettos into concentration camps, though such repression for some might have the consequence of furthering the will to insurrection.

Racially linked conflict is currently too often conceived of in terms of a homogeneous black group challenging the traditional forms of social stratification in a monolithic, white-dominated society. To be sure this is currently the most newsworthy form of race conflict. But such challenges meet with response and generate resistance. The white counterprotest is a crucial and all too neglected phenomenon, as is variation and conflict within the white community between different regional, religious, ethnic, class, ideological, and age groups. Equally of interest is conflict within the minority community. Many of the articles in this section touch on these types of conflict as well, particularly the articles by Walker and Rogers on blacks and by Skolnick and Goldberger on whites.

That American blacks, coming from different parts of Africa with different

<sup>5</sup> T. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

<sup>6</sup> A consideration of the issues raised by such groups may be found in G. Marx and D. Archer, "Citizen Involvement in the Law Enforcement Process: The Case of Community Police Patrols" (Paper presented at 1970 meetings of American Political Science Association, Los Angeles, Calif.).

cultures, languages, and tribal attachments, were forged into an ethnic group by their American experience, has, according to many observers, led to a lesser degree of solidarity and unity than among ethnic groups such as the Italians, Irish, or Greeks who have a very different American experience. The encouragement by powerful whites of division within the black group, going back to the distinction between house and field slaves, and the few meager resources available to blacks have been a source of much intragroup competition and rivalry. One theme of the black movement is, of course, black unity.

Contrary to the assumption often made that a powerless minority must maintain unity and solidarity if it is to be effective, Jack L. Walker, in analyzing a controversy over discriminatory hiring in Atlanta, observes certain benefits in disunity. He argues that it may help, rather than hinder, social change by inspiring the competing groups to greater efforts and by making moderate leaders more acceptable (by contrast to radicals) to those with power. In this instance student protest leaders forced a crisis through direct action techniques. However, conservative black leaders, accepting the student goals but not their means, were crucial to the emergence of negotiations. The protest of the students is seen to occur in a "righteous vacuum," necessitating the help of conservative black leaders who are seen as reliable and responsible by whites. Some of the conflict dynamics noted by Coleman may be observed in this article.

However in another example, Ray Rogers examines a conflict between the Black Panthers and a black group known as "US," which has anything but the positive consequences observed in Atlanta. He describes the conflict between the groups that resulted in two killings on the UCLA campus. These

groups are somewhat similar in terms of the social basis of their support and overall ideology, though one identifies with cultural nationalism and the other with political nationalism. The conflict involved a power struggle over who would control resources on the UCLA campus and in the Los Angeles black community. The Panthers have accused US of being a police-front organization. Here we see that one of the consequences of the slight loosening up of white-controlled purse strings for Office of Economic Opportunity projects, increased foundation grants, black studies programs, and the like has been an increase in conflict within the minority community (and between them as well as the struggles among blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Indians in various parts of the country indicate). Apparently benign ameliorative efforts may have the consequence of a divide and rule strategy, particularly when funding is still relatively low.

The remaining four articles in this section focus more on actual conflict groups than particular instances of conflict. In a historical sense appreciably more violent conflict has come from those who felt threatened by a challenged status quo than by those who challenge it. Here we again see interaction whereby a move by one group leads to counter moves by another.

Skolnick examines the counterprotest activities of southern groups such as the Klan and the National States Rights Party. He considers the history of the Klan, its social base, its relationship to those with power, and its changing nature. He suggests that the hostility of the marginal and economically insecure Klansmen partly stems from a sense of impotence and competition with blacks. The Klan has been encouraged by the fact that local authorities were often ambivalent about them,

if not highly cooperative. As the article by Nelson suggests, to many blacks there seemed slight difference between the Klan and law enforcement officials. According to one of Skolnick's informants, "the establishment fears war between the races less than an alliance between them." Here intergroup conflict between those with many of the same problems of poverty and powerlessness may help perpetuate the very system that disadvantages both.

Contemporary violent white counterprotest is certainly not limited to the South. As blacks have made some gains, used what a majority of the population sees as questionable means, and received much publicity, and as politicians have begun to make use of the law and order theme, the deep resentment toward blacks on the part of many urban, working class, white ethnic groups from Southern and Eastern Europe has become apparent. Ironically these groups, who as immigrants were themselves earlier victims of prejudice and nativism on the part of the predominantly Anglo-Saxon Protestant Klan, American Protective Association, and Know-Nothings have come to show some of the same attitudes and behavior. In dealing with their racism and counterprotest, it is important to understand the strains, tensions, and fears that affect their behavior. An important generator of conflict on the part of lower status whites is competition, or the fear of it, from blacks. Robert Wood, a former secretary of HUD, writes:

*Let us consider the working American—the average white ethnic male:*

*He is the ordinary employee in factory and in office. Twenty million strong, he forms the bulk of the nation's working force. He makes five to ten thousand dollars a year; has a wife and two children; owns a house in town—between the ghetto and the suburbs, or perhaps in a low-cost subdivision*

*on the urban fringe; and he owes plenty in installment debts on his car and appliances.*

*The average white working man has no capital, no stocks, no real estate holdings except for his home to leave his children. Despite the gains hammered out by his union, his job security is far from complete. Layoffs, reductions, automation, and plant relocation remain the invisible witches at every christening. He finds his tax burden is heavy; his neighborhood services, poor; his national image, tarnished; and his political clout, diminishing . . . one comes to understand his tension in the face of the aspiring black minority. He notes his place on the lower rungs of the economic ladder. He sees the movement of black families as a threat to his home values. He reads about rising crime rates in city streets and feels this is a direct challenge to his family. He thinks the busing of his children to unfamiliar and perhaps inferior schools will blight their chance for a sound education. He sees only one destination for the minority movement—his job.*

Paul Goldberger in his discussion of Newark's North Ward Citizens' Committee founded by Tony Imperiale observes many of these themes. There are interesting parallels between this group and the "Defenders" studied by Nelson. Of particular interest is the "hot line" between Imperiale's office and LeRoi Jones's Spirit House in the black central ward.

Inga Powell Bell offers a sociological analysis of a southern CORE chapter in the early 1960's. She considers the organizational structure of CORE, the social characteristics of activists, the relationship of the group to whites, to various other Negro groups, and to the Negro community in general. A small number of individuals united by strong primary group ties were often sufficient for successful direct action. She contrasts these CORE members with older, more conservative leaders who



work through institutionalized political channels.

Harry Edwards specifically deals with variation in the black community by seeking to delineate major types of activism among black college students, a group in many ways in the vanguard of the black and more general student movements. Based on his participation in, and research on, the black student movement, he discusses the philosophies held by different types of students, their background characteristics, and the roles they may play at different stages in a given struggle.

Many of the articles included here stress the importance of coalitions, allies, and interested third parties to the success of a minority group struggle. One of the ironies of efforts to abolish a color line is that success is rarely obtained without considerable cooperation from some members of the dominant group and in spite of the efforts of some members of the minority group, though to be sure the former situation may involve considerable tension, as the withdrawal of whites from SNCC and CORE in 1966 indicated.

In "Majority Involvement in Minority Movements," Michael Useem and I examine the relationship between dominant and subordinate group activists in the civil rights, abolitionist, and untouchable movements. Here we focus on common sources of conflict internal to these movements. Three sources of conflict are identified. The first two involve elements of realistic conflict: ideological differences and the struggle over power within the organization. The third tends to involve "unrealistic" conflict elements of a subjective nature such as displaced aggression, suspicion, and stereotyping. Some of the dissension may be seen as an example of Cosser's observation that conflict, when it emerges, is likely to be particularly intense in close-knit groups. Out of the

observation that similar conflict themes appear in these diverse movements, scientific generalizations and propositions about such movements may emerge.

### 37

## *Conflict and School Desegregation in San Francisco\**

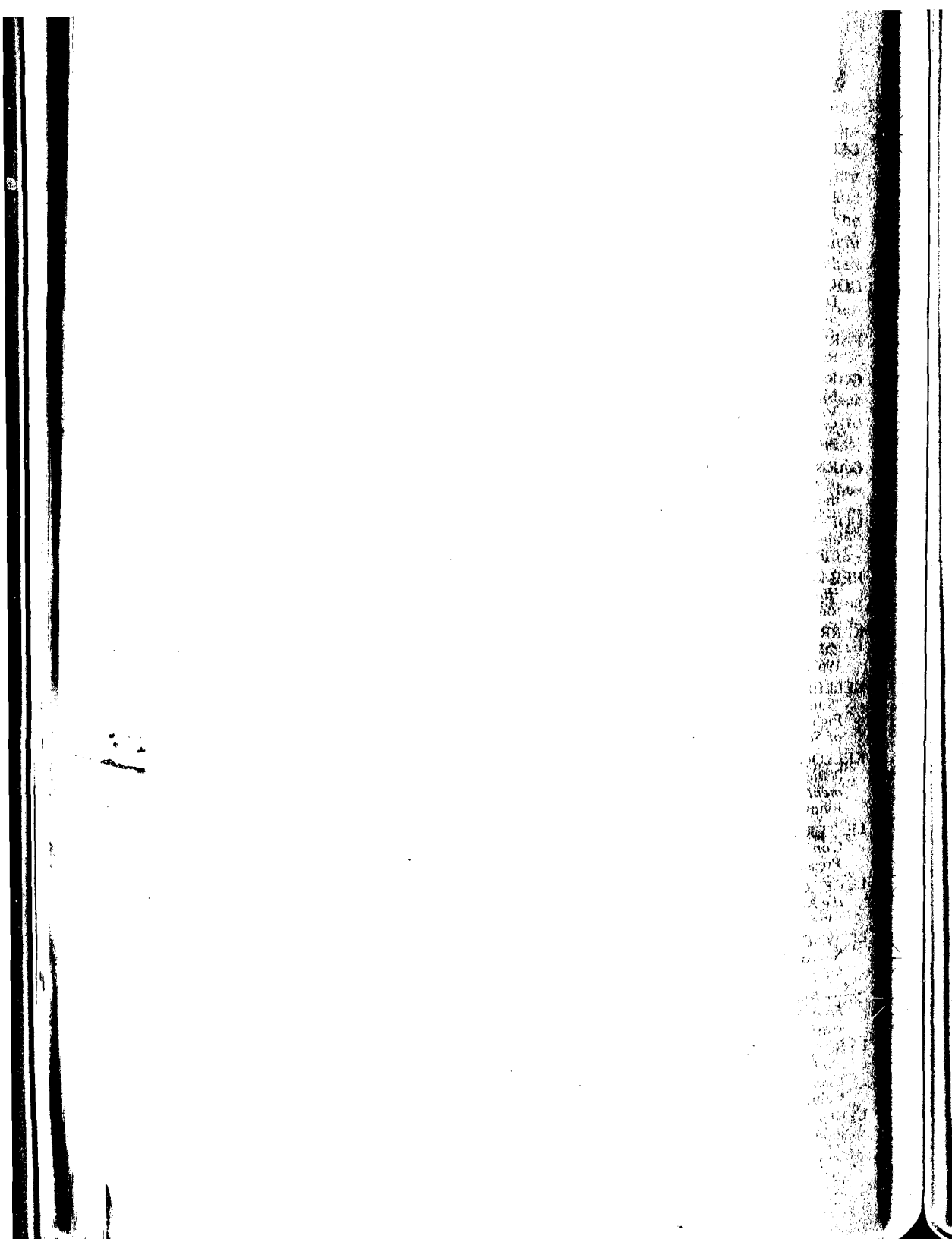
R. CRAIN

In the other cities we have seen how concern over a particular school can escalate into a full-scale assault on de facto segregation (Baltimore and Newark are examples). In both these cases, the rejection of the specific demands led to increased pressure for more general solutions. In San Francisco we see an unusual reversal of this pattern; a specific demand was made and it was more or less met by the school board without reducing any of the pressure for a more general solution. San Francisco is in some ways our most important case, for it points out better than any other city that there is no necessary relation between the actual number of students in integrated schools, or the school's willingness to take concrete steps to integrate schools, and the ability of the school system to avoid conflict.

From the beginning, the San Francisco schools and the civil rights leaders were poles apart in ideology. Like the Bay City movement, San Francisco's civil rights leaders wanted to talk about de facto segregation in the abstract; the school administration would have no part of such a discussion.

At the January 1962 school board meeting, two white liberals, Mrs. Beverly Axelrod, representing CORE, and

\*[Reprinted from Robert L. Crain, *The Politics of School Desegregation* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1969). Copyright © 1968 by National Opinion Research Center. Reprinted by permission of the author and Aldine-Atherton Publishing Company.]



## PART FIVE

# CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT

ONE of the important ideas developed by Karl Marx and held by many social analysts and activists (not necessarily always dissimilar groups) is the role of conflict in generating change. Implicit in many of the articles read thus far is the notion that parts of society are in a tension with each other and out of their clash emerges a new order, although perhaps one containing different contradictions. The case studies suggest that change often does follow a challenge.

One of the main themes in the current sociology of conflict is an emphasis on its unrecognized positive functions. In the face of the preponderant view that conflict is uniformly a bad thing, such an emphasis is a helpful corrective. Yet if applied too dogmatically, it can inhibit understanding and lead to unrealistic assessments. Although Frederick Douglass' stirring words, "power concedes nothing without a demand, it never did and it never will . . . men may not get all they pay for in this world, but they must certainly pay for all they get," cannot help but stir strong feelings in those aware of American society's many failings, the link between protest and change is by no means always perfect.

A particularly important question for those concerned with racial injustice in American society has to do with the consequences of current racial conflict. What is the link between conflict and change? How much can it accomplish? What are its limits? How much has conflict accomplished? What changes have there been in the distribution of scarce resources and the means by which these are distributed? Beyond the issue of change, what other functions or consequences of conflict may we observe?

To talk about the consequences of conflict we must first specify the level at which we wish to look: the society as a whole, the dominant group, the minority group, the world community, various institutions, the values of the society, or the individual personality. Consequences will not necessarily be uniform either within or between these units.

What are the consequences for the entire society? Does the conflict bind the antagonists together and serve to activate shared moral values of equality and brotherhood, or does it lead to polarization? Does it lead to redistribution of

desired resources and new ways of allocating scarce goods? As role models, what effect has the black questioning of traditional social forms, the demand for dignity and participation, and direct action tactics had on other groups in American society, or indeed the world? One need only look here at the liberation movements of other ethnic minority groups, students, women, homosexuals, and the antiwar movement to get some sense of this.

As the social order is questioned by blacks, does the dominant group experience an increased sense of cohesion? Are white groups which were previously somewhat beyond the pale, such as Italians and Jews, suddenly more acceptable? Or does the dominant group become internally fragmented as its various parts take different sides in the racial struggle?

Among the most interesting of consequences are those for the minority group. Whatever its effect in redistributing resources or on legislative programs, recent racial conflict has had an important effect on the personality and on the internal organization of various black communities. That black demands for change have often fallen far short of their goals does not mean that conflict has been insignificant. The very fact of struggle may change the way a group thinks of itself and the nature of its interaction with others. At the personality level, the struggle for equal rights has had an important effect on black self-image and feelings of pride. The civil rights struggle and the more recent black power movement seem to have greatly increased feelings of unity and solidarity among blacks and have given rise to numerous black advancement organizations. Here we see how external conflict and what may be perceived as a common enemy may bind a group together. On the other hand, as several of the case studies suggested,

as the group meets with some success, internal conflict and competition may greatly increase as new resources become available. An increase in frustration over failure to obtain its goals may have similar consequences. It is also possible that to protest and not be successful may reinforce feelings of powerlessness, apathy, and despair.

Within which institutional areas does conflict first lead to change? Does resistance to change increase as the psychological closeness of whites to blacks increases, as Gunnar Myrdal suggested? Do conflict-created changes in one institutional area such as the law or the economy reverberate throughout the system and lead to changes in other areas, without conflict necessarily occurring there? For example, a successful fair housing campaign may mean not only better housing but an increase in black economic position, as individuals move closer to jobs not available in the inner city. Or better jobs for blacks gained through a boycott may also mean an increase in status.

Even within the same institutional area a demonstration or a riot that produced change in one community, through a spinoff effect, was sometimes able to produce like changes in other communities, without any overt conflict having occurred. By the mere fact of raising issues and making well-publicized demands, awareness of the problem may be increased and the behavior of others not directly involved in the controversy affected. The 1960's and 1970's are clearly periods of heightened consciousness regarding racial inequality. Much change, often unnoticed, has emerged from this awareness triggered by conflicts and specific demands elsewhere. Here the threat of conflict, whether real or imagined, and sometimes a resurgence of conscience have brought about change. A reverse effect may also be noted—increased efforts at

repression in response to fear of expected conflict.

We lack satisfactory answers to most of the above questions. Recent social analysts have tended to stay away from them—perhaps because change may be looked at on so many levels, and there appears to be much variation between place and time with respect to the conflict-change link. It is often difficult to sort out correlation from causality. As will be suggested, even where conflict and change are found together they may both be produced by some third factor. There may also be a time lag. Thus a given demonstration may set changes in motion which don't surface for several years.

There can be little doubt that some major changes have occurred, particularly in our legal and political structures, and in the South. The nation has in principle, through its legal system, Congress, and the executive, committed itself to equal treatment of all its citizens. The Supreme Court in the school desegregation case of 1954 and other decisions since then, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, various state and local laws, numerous executive orders, and even an occasional show of force have declared *de jure* segregation and discrimination to be illegal.

Formal, legally sanctioned segregation and the elaborate system of etiquette that supported the caste system are clearly on the retreat. In the South transportation facilities, lunch counters, libraries, playgrounds, hotels, restaurants, universities, and some schools have been desegregated. There has also been noticeable desegregation in some small and moderately sized northern communities. Many changes at a symbolic level have occurred such as spelling "Negro" with a capital "N" and addressing blacks as "Mr." or "Miss."

There has also been a pronounced redistribution of power in many parts of

the country. The national political parties at least now endorse the idea of equal rights. The power of the national government relative to the states has increased. Change is quite visible in the area of political participation, particularly in the South. In 1964 about two million southern blacks were registered to vote. Only four years later, with population size remaining constant, this figure increased to three million. In 1969 the number of blacks holding elected office in the South was almost four hundred, an increase of more than one-half over the number just a year before. The number of blacks elected mayors, city councilmen, school board members, and the like is increasing steadily, if not necessarily dramatically, as is the number of blacks in appointive positions.

The educational and economic position of blacks has improved greatly, particularly in an absolute sense.<sup>1</sup> Though quantity is not equivalent to quality of education, the gap in median years of education completed between young blacks and whites is one-half a year. Between 1960 and 1966, the percent of nonwhite males completing high school increased from 36 to 53, and the proportion of black youth completing college almost doubled. Between 1940 and 1968, black income increased from \$3.5 billion a year to \$32 billion. In 1959, 55 percent of nonwhite families were below the poverty level as defined by the government; in 1967, the number was approximately 35 percent. In 1966, 23 percent of nonwhite families had incomes over \$7,000 (in the North this

<sup>1</sup> For example, see Urban America, Inc. and the Urban Coalition, *One Year Later* (New York: Praeger, 1969); *Social and Economic Conditions of Negroes in the United States*, U.S. Dept. of Labor (October 1967); N. Glazer, "America's Race Paradox," *Encounter* (October 1968); and Gary Marx, "Perspectives on Racism" in M. Wertheimer et al., *Confrontation: Psychology and the Problems of Today* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1970).

figure was 38 percent), as compared with only 9 percent in 1956, using dollars of the same value. Though relative to the even greater improvements in the position of whites these changes are much less impressive. The most important measure for conflict and felt deprivation is the position of blacks relative to whites.<sup>2</sup>

One area where the decline of racism is perhaps most clearly documented is at the attitudinal level. In interview situations, the proportion of whites accepting crude stereotypes, believing in innate racial differences, and supporting segregation has consistently declined.<sup>3</sup>

If the nation has not yet seen a shift in its priorities from the arms race and the space race to the human race or mobilized its resources to attack poverty and racism the way it potentially could, there have nevertheless been sizable

increases in expenditures for manpower programs, education, health, and welfare. For example, according to the Kerner Commission,

*Federal expenditures for manpower development and training have increased from less than \$60 million in 1963 to \$1.6 billion in 1968. The president has proposed a further increase to \$2.1 billion in 1969.*

*Federal expenditures for education, training, and related services have increased from \$4.7 billion in fiscal 1964 to \$12.3 billion in fiscal 1969.*

*Direct federal expenditures for housing and community development have increased from \$600 million in fiscal 1964 to nearly \$3 billion in fiscal 1969.*

Public institutions including the schools, police, and welfare organizations have undertaken agonizing reappraisals of their agency's effectiveness, with some changes of policy. Efforts have been undertaken to recruit new minority group employees and upgrade old ones, as well as to sensitize the agency to the problems faced by blacks.

In the private sector as well, there are countless new and often unheralded (and unfortunately all too often unsuccessful) programs—for example, efforts by business to provide new training and jobs. Blacks are no longer so invisible in the mass media and are shown in a fuller range of roles, from judges in soap operas, to the beer drinkers, cigarette smokers, denture and girdle wearers, and body-odor-stomach-ache-headache

<sup>2</sup> Comparisons between blacks and whites tell a very different story. Approximately 35 percent of blacks, against 10 percent of whites, have income below the poverty level. Although non-white unemployment rates are half of what they previously were, they still are consistently two to four times as high as those of whites. In some urban areas the rate for young non-white males is 40 percent, with many more underemployed or working full time for below-subsistence pay. About one in three experienced black workers was out of work some time in 1968. A black has one-third as much chance of completing college, and if he does, he can expect to earn less than a white with only a high school diploma. A black baby has a three times greater chance of dying in infancy than a white baby: if he survives, he can expect to live seven years less than his white counterpart. In 1967, blacks were 11 percent of the population, yet had only 1 percent of the seats in Congress and 1.5 percent of all elected offices. In some ways the gap between whites and blacks is increasing. The gap between the death rates for white and nonwhite infants increased from 66 percent in 1950 to 90 percent in 1964. In 1967 black median income, though higher than ever before, had decreased from a previous high of 57 percent of white median income to 53 percent.

<sup>3</sup> In 1942 more than half the whites questioned in a national poll expressed a belief in innate racial learning differences. By 1968, a national CBS poll found only 14 percent of whites agree-

ing that "white babies usually have more natural intelligence than black babies," though twice as many had no opinion. In 1942 only 30 percent of a national sample felt that whites and blacks should go to the same schools; in 1956 it was 61 percent, and in 1965, 67 percent; in the same period those who said that they would not object to a black neighbor of their social class rose from 35 percent to 64 percent and those who favored integrated seating on buses rose from 44 percent to 78 percent. See P. Sheatsley, "White Attitudes toward the Negro," *Daedalus* (Winter 1966), pp. 217-238.

sufferers who populate the plastic world of American advertising. More subtle changes such as the way minorities are treated in school textbooks may also be noted.

It is of course probably impossible to sort out precisely what role conflict, or the threat of it, has played in facilitating these changes. There is no single reason for the various advances that have occurred. Increases in the gross national product and migration out of the South and to cities (as industrialization spread and agriculture declined) until recently were important factors in the improved educational, economic, and political situation of blacks.<sup>4</sup>

The increased power of the federal government relative to that of the states and the greater integration of the South into the national life are also relevant to the changes that have occurred. One factor encouraging change from the top has been the new significance American color problems gained as nations of Asia and Africa emerged from colonial rule. It became difficult to expound American ideals in the cold war, while denying them so thoroughly in practices at home. Moral appeals to conscience and shared values stressing equality and brotherhood have also played some role,<sup>5</sup> though for political reasons the goodwill of a benevolent elite is often overstressed. However, as blacks took to the streets and engaged in

nonviolent direct action (in the early 1960's), the momentum of change increased noticeably, though as this gave way to violent outbursts the tempo of change has slowed noticeably and many losses have occurred.

In a very general sense both racial conflict and changes in race relations may stem from the same broader phenomena such as changes in technology, urbanization, or the spread of new ideas. Some of the changes in the position of blacks are consistent with broader trends that have been occurring in the last several centuries in industrialized countries, as certain value themes such as universal rather than particular standards of judgment come into greater prominence and ascriptive bases of solidarity such as race, religion, and ethnicity decline,<sup>6</sup> with a concomitant emphasis on a more rational use of human resources.

The impersonality, anonymity, and mobility of large urban areas that tend to go along with industrialization make it difficult to maintain an elaborate caste system. The rise of the idea of citizenship and the extension of political, economic, and welfare rights had led to the partial inclusion of many previously excluded lower status groups. As new resources of lower status groups mix with their new aspirations and a sense of relative deprivation, protest emerges which in turn generates further change. Although conflict may speed up a given change, certain changes may have a dynamic of their own that transcend (and make easier) the actions of conflict groups demanding inclusion.

If change may come from sources other than conflict, it is not true that conflict always leads to change.<sup>7</sup> In an

<sup>4</sup>Ironically an important impetus to this migration was the greater demand for black labor during World Wars I and II and the Korean War. Blacks have made their greatest economic gains relative to whites during periods of war. This is certainly not an argument for continuing wars, but indicates what full mobilization of national resources and their more rational use can accomplish. If the same concerted efforts that characterized the society in wartime were directed at the equally insidious enemies of racism, poverty, and indifference, significant progress could be made.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. G. Myrdal's stress on the contradiction in the American value system, G. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harpers).

<sup>6</sup>T. Parsons, "Full Citizenship for the Negro American? A Sociological Problem," *Daedalus* (Fall 1965).

<sup>7</sup>The importance one gives to conflict in bringing about change also depends on the causal model adopted to explain the current position of

age where the gap between our ideals and our practices is so apparent, it is painful to acknowledge that human institutions may change rather slowly. One can decry it or welcome it, depending on his or her political perspective and interests, yet, as Robert Nisbet has observed, "persistence and fixity are very powerful realities. . . . Habit, custom, adaptation even to the absurd and potentially lethal use and wont, and sheer inertia are . . . strongly built into the socialization process."<sup>8</sup> There are as well powerful vested interests which often oppose change. Yet social change does occur. An awareness of its complexities and sources of resistance is certainly no justification for not seeking it. However, realistic expectations are likely to lead to more effective strategies and less likely to lead to frustration, with its potential for apathy and withdrawal from the struggle or wanton violence.

It is easy to overemphasize the benefits from recent violent confrontations. There may be a diminishing returns effect. An initial disruption may have a communications function, and in the chaos concessions may be granted. Then, as authorities learn to cope with such actions, they may stop listening. Even though riots have visibly and forcefully brought the problem of unequal opportunities to national atten-

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blacks in America. If problems are seen to stem largely from the self-conscious actions of a racist elite, then struggle will be seen as essential. If however emphasis is placed on what are seen as internal weaknesses of the black community—its family structure, lack of education, training and competitive work habits (factors generally acknowledged to have come about as a result of *past* oppression)—then the main task will be seen as building up the black community rather than struggling with white opponents, though even here conflict may be involved in the struggle over the resources needed to do this.

<sup>8</sup>R. Nisbet, *The Social Bond* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 307.

tion, they have not resulted in appreciable change.

Perhaps nothing can do so in a fundamentally conservative country where almost 90 percent of the inhabitants are white and there are certain gains for them in having a large black underclass. One of the tragedies of American race relations is that when blacks work within the system and play the game according to the traditional rules, they may get rather little. Yet when blacks operate outside the system and disrupt it, they do not necessarily have any better results. At the national level, following the riots of 1967, Congress did not significantly increase expenditures for domestic programs; some appropriations were even reduced. It did, however, pass an antiriot bill. Partly in response to black and student demonstrations, the late 1960's saw a shift to the right politically in numerous state and local elections. That 20 percent of the American population seriously considered voting for George Wallace in the 1968 election is not insignificant.

Under some conditions, conflict initiated by the minority group may lead to a hardening of attitudes, retrenchment, and repression or may have no effect. Among some factors crucial to the outcome of protest action seem to be (1) the type of demand and goals, (2) the means adopted, (3) the context of the protest including the extent of mass mobilization, and (4) response of authorities to the actual protest.

The protest actions that have met with the most success have been non-violent southern demonstrations against segregation. The seemingly greater effectiveness of southern than northern black protest appears to be related to the fact that the goals sought by southern blacks were consistent with the broader moral values of the society. Southern protestors were demonstrat-



ing on behalf of rights seen as legitimate by the nation at large. Demands for the legally and morally well-established right to vote or attend a public university are very different from the demands for community control, preferential treatment, reparations, or abstract dignity that often characterize recent northern racial conflict. Also relevant is the concrete, less costly, and more easily granted nature of many southern demands.

With the help of the national media and using nonviolent means, southern demonstrators turned police into the aggressors, and martyrs were created. Confrontations involving aggressive violence by demonstrators are likely to arouse very different sentiments in the community at large. Beyond these factors the greater complexity of northern industrial centers and the more diffuse and insulated nature of their power structures may make them less vulnerable to direct protest action.

The articles in this last section touch on some of the themes considered above. Joseph S. Himes, writing about the early 1960's before ghetto violence appeared, asks whether organized conflict initiated by blacks makes any contribution to, or has any positive consequences for, the functioning of the larger American society. He observes that such conflict may alter the social structure, increase interracial communication, increase solidarity and affirm ultimate values of American society, and have an important identity function for blacks. His article is a useful summary of many of the positive aspects of conflict.

One of the functions of conflict is its potential for binding a group together. The article by Fredric Solomon et al. observes an unintended or latent consequence of conflict—that during periods of organized nonviolent protest

there may be a decline in crimes of violence by blacks. There are some parallels here to the argument of black psychiatrist Franz Fanon writing about the colonial struggle in Algeria against the French.<sup>9</sup> He stated that through struggle the native gains a sense of manhood and channels his energy in the direction of attacking oppression rather than in the direction of crime or intragroup attacks.

Irving Howe takes a more questioning approach to the positive functions of conflict if it is carried out through confrontation tactics likely to alienate a majority of the population. Although such tactics may bring about change, they may also lead to backlash and repression unless certain conditions are present.

One official response to crisis and conflict is to study it. This may give the impression that something is being done while costing relatively little. Michael Lipsky and David Olson analyze some of the constraints under which a commission such as the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders operates. In so doing they indicate why commissions often disappoint their critics.

#### INTERRACIAL COOPERATION AND THE LIMITING OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

Between a mass media that is all too often sensation-seeking and the distortions of white and black nationalist ideologies, it is easy to forget or even deny the unheralded and undramatic, but quantitatively much more prevalent, examples of interracial cooperation, or at least nonantagonism, as well as the variation that exists within racial groups. That race, at least in the United States, is an important factor in identity

<sup>9</sup> F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Dial Press, 1967).

does not mean it is the only factor. Human beings are also united and divided by many factors which far transcend race, such as their generational, social class, regional, national, religious, and sexual identities, as well as their identification with various ideologies and special interest groups. As suggested in the last section, to the extent that these potential sources of cleavage (e.g., between the young and the old or between those who live in urban and rural areas) cross cut rather than overlap with racial grouping, conflict is less likely. Men of different racial and ethnic groups but of the same social class, age, and region are likely to find they have more in common in terms of life style and political interests than those with whom they merely share racial identity but differ markedly from with respect to the above characteristics. Those who fantasize about a final American racial armageddon where lines of struggle are determined only by color deny the deep divisions and heterogeneity within racial groups.

Beyond this, even where race is a salient factor in a person's identity or in a social situation, this does not therefore preclude harmonious relations with outsiders. The mere existence of difference need not imply conflict. Under various conditions similarly marked birds may indeed flock together, though opposites as well may be attracted to each other or differences may be seen as irrelevant.

Given the pressure of recent current events, most research and public attention have focused on racial conflict and discord. Yet countless thousands of harmonious interracial contacts in schools, factories, supermarkets, playing fields, and the like daily go unnoticed. There is a considerable body of literature on the psychology and sociology of racial cooperation. Studies have been done on the relatively suc-

cessful integration of the armed services and some neighborhoods and schools.<sup>10</sup> Many studies, such as those discussed by Rabb and Lipset in Part I, have shown that positive racial feelings often result from interracial contact which occurs in an equal status setting, in a context where norms of tolerance are stressed. Attitude research reveals sizable reservoirs of good will on the part of a large majority of the black population and a goodly proportion of the white population as well.

This is by no means to suggest that American society is one big, happy, tolerant, racially mixed family where things are uniformly getting better all the time. The depth of racism and resistance to change among certain segments of the white population and the quickening pace of the bitterness felt among certain segments of the black can hardly be denied. Yet little is gained and much may be lost in the form of self-fulfilling effects by overemphasizing the extensiveness of, and potential for, racial conflict and the impossibility of any reconciliation between blacks and whites.<sup>11</sup>

As the articles in this book of readings suggest there are clearly many grounds for racial conflict. A more

<sup>10</sup> For example, C. Moskos, Jr., "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces," *American Journal of Sociology* (September 1966); and B. Hesslink, *Black Neighbors: Negroes in a Northern Rural Community* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968). On the effects of interracial contact, see G. Simpson and M. Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 503-511.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the self-fulfilling prophecy, see R. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1957), pp. 421-436. Self-fulfilling effects refer to situations where men's actions on a given erroneous belief result in the belief being made true. For example, the widespread belief that narcotics addicts steal often results in their being denied jobs, which then may lead many to steal. Or the erroneous belief that most blacks favor racial separation, are militantly antiwhite and provocation may lead to racial policies which in fact bring these about.

racially just American society will not be achieved without struggle, though struggle alone is not sufficient.<sup>12</sup> Yet in applying a conflict perspective to society what exists of consensus and cooperation should not be ignored. Careful understanding certainly requires appreciation of the necessity of conflict. Yet there is more, actually and potentially to American race relations than this, even if it often remains obscured.

These facts aside, violent conflict might be greatly reduced were scare resources more equitably distributed and national priorities shifted more from defence and space to social needs. It is not clear at what point the granting of concessions may cease to raise aspirations and cause demands to escalate. The most important argument for bringing about racial change should not be that it will necessarily stop conflict and disorder, but that it is just and moral and consistent with the unique values upon which this country was founded. However it is clear that greater inclusion of lower status groups, their more cohesive and forceful organization into interest groups, effective mechanisms for the expression of grievances, the strong legitimization of the need for change rather than its exploitation by calls only for law and order on the part of government officials, impartial law enforcement, the development of nonviolent alternatives for coping with crisis situations, greater restraints on the use of official violence, and greater controls over the availability of weapons would reduce the probabilities of conflicts which result in violence.

## 51 *The Functions of Racial Conflict\**

JOSEPH S. HIMES

When one contemplates the contemporary American scene, he may be appalled by the picture of internal conflict portrayed in the daily news. The nation is pictured as torn by dissension over Vietnam policy. The people are reported being split by racial strife that periodically erupts into open violence. Organized labor and management are locked in a perennial struggle that occasionally threatens the well-being of the society. The reapportionment issue has forced the ancient rural-urban conflict into public view. Religious denominations and faiths strive against ancient conflicts of theology and doctrine toward unification and ecumenism. Big government is joined in a continuing struggle against big industry, big business, big finance, and big labor on behalf of the "public interest."

The image created by such reports is that of a society "rocked," "split," or "torn" by its internal conflicts. The repetition of such phrases and the spotlighting of conflict suggest that the integration, if not the very existence of the society is threatened. It is thus implied, and indeed often stated, that the elimination of internal conflict is the central problem for policy and action in the society.

These preliminary remarks tend to indicate that there is widespread popular disapproval of social conflict. In some quarters the absence of conflict is thought to signify the existence of

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<sup>12</sup> See K. Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), chap. 8.