

**RETHINKING RACISM:
TOWARDS A STRUCTURAL INTERPRETATION**

by
Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

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Rethinking Racism: Towards a Structural Interpretation

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva
University of Michigan

The habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw, must be abandoned.

Frantz Fanon

We cannot defeat race prejudice by proving that is wrong. The reason for this is that race prejudice is only a symptom of a materialistic social fact...The articulate white man's ideas about his racial superiority are rooted deeply in the social system, and it can be corrected only by changing the system itself.

Oliver Cromwell Cox

Race and racism are not figments of demented imaginations, but are central to the economics, politics, and culture of this nation.

Robert Blauner

I. Introduction

The area of race and ethnic studies, unlike those of class and gender studies, lacks a sound theoretical apparatus. Whereas class and gender analysts have capitalism and patriarchy as theoretical constructs upon which to ground their analyses, analysts of race and ethnicity do not have a theoretical equivalent. Instead the two major approaches to the field --the natural and the structural-- have developed the slippery notion of "racism" as the central category for explaining racial and ethnic conflict. Those who believe that racism is the "natural" outcome of racial or cultural contacts among different peoples (e.g., early work by Robert E. Park, Ruth Benedict, and Winthrop Jordan) have a very limited theory. In their view, races and ethnic groups are made up of the in-groups and out-groups in a society and racism and ethnocentrism are the ideas used by in-groups to rationalize their dominant position. In their works they emphasize how these ideas developed and evolved throughout history, affecting the status of the out-groups. Those who believe that racism is "structural" (e.g., later work of Park, Franklin Frazier, Oliver Cox, van den Berghe, Edna Bonacich, and William Julius Wilson) regard race relations as *secondary* social

phenomena. By this I mean that they deem "race" as a secondary rather than a primary category of group association. Race is seen as a "social construct" and racism (or ethnocentrism) as an ideology used by powerful social actors ("whites," the bourgeoisie, the colonizers, etc.) to exploit minority groups. In their works they explore how this ideology (defined as a set of ideas) has reflected and affected conflict rooted in the social structure. Both approaches, despite their differences, share the following: they do not regard racial phenomena as having their own *independent* structure.

To complicate matters, many analysts of racial matters have abandoned the serious theorization and reconceptualization of their central category: racism.¹ Too many social analysts researching racism assume that the phenomenon is self-evident and, accordingly, either do not provide a definition or else provide a very elementary definition of it (e.g., Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Nevertheless, whether implicit or explicit, most analysts regard racism as an *ideological* phenomenon. Racism is viewed as a set of beliefs, ideas, attitudes, stereotypes, or motives, held by individuals, which affect the life chances of racial minorities. Although, as I will show in the paper, alternative views on what is racism and how it operates in society have emerged, they still are heavily influenced by the ideological conceptualization of the phenomenon and do not provide a truly structural interpretation of it.

The purpose of this paper is to point out the severe limitations of most contemporary frameworks employed in the analysis of racial issues and to suggest an alternative structural theorization. Rather than viewing racism as a mere idea, belief or attitude, I contend that racism is *the ideological apparatus of a racialized social system*. This means that racial phenomena in any society have their own structure. I argue that the racism operates within the boundaries of social relations of subordination and superordination among racialized social actors (races). In other words, the existence of racism indicates the existence of a racial structure in society. I contend the after societies experienced racialization --social creation of racial categories-- race became an

¹ For very notable exceptions, see Omi and Winant (1986), the excellent collection edited by Rex and Mason (1986), and Essed (1991).

independent category of group association with meaningful consequences for all the races in the social system.²

This theoretical postulate requires that analysts of racism take seriously the variable race, something that has declined in many academic circles since the late 1970s (e.g., Wilson 1978, 1987).³ Moreover, this structural interpretation of race and racism compels analysts to have a comparative stand across time and social formations to disclose the particular *dynamics* of racialized social systems. Nonetheless, arguing for the *centrality* of the category race and for the fundamental role played by racism in society does not imply that other structural components of social systems (e.g., capitalism and patriarchy) and their central categories (class and gender) are secondary. Instead, I maintain that racialization originated out of the labor needs of European powers in the 15th century (Cox 1948; Williams 1990), and that since then, race has been articulated with class and gender in a "complex unity" (Hall 1980). *Class, gender, and race* are viewed as elements of the *systemic matrix* of the social system that, in the last instance, articulates the interest of the dominant race/class/gender.⁴ Yet the paper focuses almost exclusively on the analysis of the racialized aspects of social systems because the structural nature and centrality of race and race relations has not been properly theorized.

The organization of this inquiry is straightforward. In the second section I discuss the predominant view of racism in the social sciences and provide a review of its limitations. This is followed by a succinct critical review of some of the most prominent radical alternative views on

² For recent examples of the opposite view, see Barbara J. Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States," the *New Left Review* 181 (May/June 1990) and Yehudi Webster, *The Racialization of America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

³ This is not a new argument. A substantial number of social analysts have preached the melody of the "declining significance of race" since the 1950s. Among the most notable were Robert E. Park (1950), John Milton Yinger (1965), and Pierre van den Berghe (1967).

⁴ There is a growing consensus among radical social scientists about the need to develop an integrated analysis of race, class, and gender. But, so far, no major theoretical breakthrough has emerged. Some potentially useful conceptions are Denise Segura's (1990) notion of the "triple oppression" and Philomena Essed's (1991) notion of "gendered racism." See also Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

how race and racism operate in society (namely, the Marxist, institutionalist, internal colonialism, and racial formation perspectives). In the fourth section I offer an alternative framework for analyzing racism. Finally, in the fifth section I provide an overview of U.S. history through the prism of the framework advanced in the paper.

II. The Dominant View on Racism

The concept of racism is of recent origin in social scientific discourse (Banton 1970; Miles 1989, 1993). In the classic works of W. I. Thomas (1918), Edward B. Reuter (1934), Robert E. Park (1950), and E. F. Frazier (1968), the concept was not employed at all. Anthropologist Ruth F. Benedict has the distinction of being one of the first scholars to use the notion in her 1942 book *Race and Racism*. She defined racism as "the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority....It is, like a religion, a belief which can be studied only historically" (Benedict 1959: 87). Despite some refinements the current usage of the concept of racism in the social sciences is very similar to that of Benedict. In the words of renowned scholar Pierre van den Berghe, racism is "any set of beliefs that organic, genetically transmitted differences (whether real or imagined) between human groups are intrinsically associated with the presence or the absence of certain socially relevant abilities or characteristics, hence that such differences are a legitimate basis of invidious distinctions between groups socially defined as races" (van den Berghe 1967: 11; my emphasis). Richard T. Schaefer provides a more concise definition of racism: "a *doctrine* of racial supremacy, that one race is superior" (Schaefer 1990: 16).

An apparently different view is that of William Julius Wilson who defined racism in his theoretical piece *Power, Privilege, and Racism* (1972) as an *ideology*⁵ of racial domination or exploitation that 1) incorporates beliefs about a particular race's cultural and/or inherent biological

⁵ The notion of ideology is used by most social scientists to mean a set of ideas. Later in the paper I will characterize racism as the ideology of a *racialized* social system but using a Marxist-inspired definition of the notion of ideology.

inferiority and 2) uses those beliefs to justify and prescribe inferior or unequal treatment for that group. Similarly, in his *The Declining Significance of Race*, Wilson defined racism or racial belief systems as "the *norms or ideologies* of racial domination that reinforce or regulate patterns of racial inequality" (Wilson 1978: 9; my emphasis). Despite the inclusion of notions such as racial exploitation and racial domination (notions which are not defined in his work) Wilson does not develop a truly autonomous structural interpretation of race relations and conflict. Instead, race relations are viewed as dependent upon larger societal changes, "often beyond the interracial arena" such as industrialization, urbanization, immigration, revolutions, or civil wars (Wilson 1972: 61). Thus "racial ideologies" change because of *structural changes* that are not "racial" in and of themselves. In his own words:

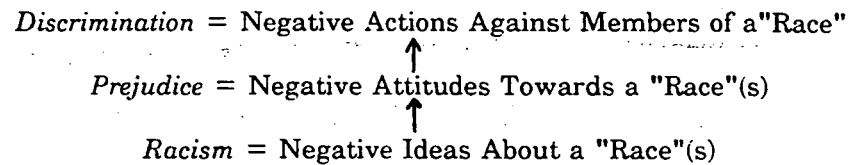
...as American racial history so clearly reveals, racial norms tend to change as the structural relations between racial groups change. And the *main sources of this variation have been the alteration of the system of production and changing policies of the state* (Wilson 1978: 12; my emphasis).

This *idealist* view --in the philosophical sense of the word-- still prevails in the social sciences.⁶ Its singular focus on *ideas* has mostly reduced the study of racism to the field of social psychology. This perspective has produced a schematic view of how racism operates in society (see Figure 1 below). First, authors subscribing to this idealist view define racism, in classical fashion, as a *set of ideas or beliefs*. Second, those beliefs are regarded as having the potential to lead individuals to develop *prejudice*, which is defined as "negative attitudes towards an entire group of people" (Schaefer 1990: 53). Finally, these prejudiced attitudes are regarded as the motor that

⁶ The following is a sample of contemporary textbooks in race and ethnic relations that still conceive racism and ethnocentrism in ideological terms. Martin N. Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994); Joe R. Feagin and Clairece Booher Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993); Vincent N. Parrillo, *Strangers to the Shores: Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994); and Virginia Cyrus, *Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States* (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993).

may induce individuals to real actions or *discrimination* against racial minorities.⁷ This conceptual framework, with minor modifications, still prevails in the social sciences.

Figure 1



There are several limitations of this idealist conception of racism:

1) *Racism is excluded from the foundations or structure of the social system.* By regarding racism as a baseless ideology ultimately dependent upon other "real" forces in society, the structure of the society itself is not classified as racist. Although some analysts have attempted to tackle the question of the historical origin of the phenomenon (Williams 1944; Cox 1948; van den Berghe 1967; Rex 1983), they have explained its *reproduction* or *maintenance* in an idealist fashion; racism, in their accounts, is viewed as an ideology that emerged with chattel slavery and other forms of class/race oppression to justify the exploitation of people of color and has survived as residue from the past.

2) *Racism is ultimately viewed as a psychological phenomenon to be analyzed at the individual level.* Accordingly, the research agenda that follows from this conceptualization is the auscultation of the attitudes of *individuals* to determine the levels of racism in society (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Sears 1988; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Given that the constructs used to measure racism are static, that is, that there are a number of standard questions that do not change significantly over time, this research usually finds that racism is declining in society.

⁷ The classic statement on these concepts and their relationships is still Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1958).

Those analysts who find that racist attitudes are still with us, usually leave unexplained the question of why that is so (e.g., Sniderman and Piazza 1993).

This psychological understanding of racism is related to the former limitation. If racism is not part of societies but is a matter of individuals who are "racist" or "prejudiced," that is, is a phenomenon operating at the individual level, then, 1) social institutions cannot be racist and 2) racism is a matter of surveying the proportion of people in a society who hold "racist" beliefs. Thus, institutions can be operated by "racist" individuals or may *institutionalize* racist beliefs and practices (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Chesler 1976), but they cannot be conceptualized as "racist" *per se*. A good example of this is William Julius Wilson contention in his *The Declining Significance of Race* (1978) that the state in the modern industrial period (post-1940) in the U.S. is not "racist." Although Wilson acknowledges that there is still "racism" at the social and political levels, the state is viewed as free of racism (see Frazier 1957b: 172-173; c.f. Marable 1981; Omi and Winant 1986).

3) *Racism is treated as a static phenomenon*. At the historical level this means that analysts cannot envision that racism may change *in nature* over time. Since the phenomenon is viewed as unchanging, when a rearticulation of a society's racial structure and its customary racial practices occurs, they are characterized as declines in racism (Wilson 1978), natural processes in cycles (Park 1950), examples of increased assimilation (Rex 1973 1986), or effective "norm changes" (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985).

This limitation, once again, derives from not conceiving racism as having an independent structural foundation. If racism is just a matter of ideas without any real basis in contemporary society, then those ideas should be similar to whatever their original configuration was. The ideas may be articulated in a different *context* but, in essence, most analysts believe that racist ideas are the same. That is why, with notable exceptions (e.g., Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988), their research is still based on assessing the responses to questions originally developed in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.

4) *Analysts defining racism in an idealist manner view racism as "incorrect" or "irrational thinking" and thus label "racists" as irrational actors* (Blauner 1969; Wellman 1977).⁸ Since racism is conceived of as a *belief* with no real *social* basis, then it follows that those who hold to racist views must be irrational and/or stupid. This view allows for a tactical distinction between the individuals with the "pathology" and "rational" racism-free social actors. The problem with this rationalistic view is twofold. First, it misses the very rational elements upon which racialized systems were originally built. And, more importantly, it neglects the possibility that contemporary racism still has a *rational* foundation. In this account, contemporary racists are perceived as Archie Bunker-type individuals (Wellman 1977).

On the issue of the psychopathological view of racism, Pierre van den Berghe noted a long time ago that:

...there is unquestionably a psychopathology of racism, but in racist societies most racists are not "sick." ...Racism for some people is a symptom of deeply rooted psychological problems, but for most people living in racist societies is merely a special kind of convenient rationalizations for rewarding behavior. If this were not true, racial attitudes would not be so rapidly changing as they are under changing social conditions. *The "sociopathology" of racism is thus a different problem altogether from its psychopathology and one of wider proportions* (van den Berghe 1967: 21).

5) *Racism is understood as matter of overt behavior.* Since this approach likens racism with "irrational" and "rigid" views, it follows that its manifestations should be quite evident and usually involve some degree of hostility. This does not present serious analytical problems for the study of certain periods in racialized societies where racial practices were quite overt (e.g., slavery and Apartheid), but places immense limitations on the analysis of racism in situations where racial practices are more subtle, indirect, or fluid. For instance, many analysts have suggested that in contemporary America racial practices are manifested in a covert manner (Wellman 1977) and racial attitudes are more symbolic (Sears 1988) or subtle (Pettigrew 1994). Therefore, it is a

⁸ This view was epitomized by the work of Adorno and his associates who viewed "ethnocentric" people as holding "rigid" views, "stereotyped negative imagery and hostile attitudes regarding ingroups," and a "hierarchical and authoritarian" view of how ethnic groups should interact (Adorno et al. 1950: 102-150).

waste of time to attempt to detect "racism" with questions like "How strongly would you object if a member of your family wanted to bring a black friend home to dinner?" or "An occasional lynching in the South is a good thing because there is a large percentage of Negroes in many communities and they need a scare once in a while to prevent them from starting riots and disturbances."⁹ (Also, these questions were developed to measure the extent of racist attitudes in the population during the Jim Crow period of race relations and are not suitable for the post-1960s period.)

Furthermore, this emphasis on overt behavior limits the possibility of analyzing racial phenomena in other parts of the world such as Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico where race relations do not have an overt character.¹⁰ The form of race relations --overt or covert-- depends upon the pattern of racialization that structured a particular society (Cox 1948; Harris 1964; van den Berghe 1967; Rex 1983) as well as on how the process of racial contestation and other social dynamics affected that pattern (see section 3 below).

6) *Contemporary racism is viewed as an expression of the original sin, that is, as a remnant of previous racial situations.* In the case of the U.S. some analysts argue that racism preceded slavery and/or capitalism in the U.S. (Jordan 1968; Marable 1983). Other analysts see racism in the U.S. as the result of slavery (Moynihan and Glazer 1970). Even promising new avenues of research, like that presented by David Roediger in his *The Wages of Whiteness*, dismiss

⁹ The first question is used by NORC and the second is from the Total Ethnocentric Scale developed by Adorno and his associates (1950).

¹⁰ Most analysts within this paradigm cannot explain race relations in Latin America, Brazil, and the Caribbean, or just deny that these societies have race relations at all. For instance, Parks claimed that although Brazil had "races" and there were obvious differences among them, Brazil did not have race relations since "One speaks of race relations when there is a race problem, and there is no race problem in Brazil, or if there is, it is very little if at all concerned with the people of African and European origin" (Park 1950: 82). The literature on race relations in Brazil has grown exponentially since the work of Florestan Fernandes and Roger Bastide *Race Relations Between Blacks and Whites in Sao Paulo* was published in 1955. For a pathbreaking analysis of race relations in Brazil, see Anani Dzidzienyo, "The Position of Blacks in Brazilian Society", in Ben Whitaker (ed.), *The Fourth World* (London: Sidwick and Jackson, 1972).

contemporary racism as one of the "*legacies* of white workerism" (Roediger 1991: 176). Again, if racism is just a legacy, then it does not have any contemporary *materiality* or *structure*.

7) *Racism is analyzed in a circular manner*. "If racism is defined as the behavior that results from the belief, its discovery becomes ensnared in a circularity--racism is a belief that produces behavior, which is itself racism" (Webster 1992: 84). The existence of racism is established by racist behavior which itself proves the existence of racism; racism, for these analysts, is a phenomenon like God: the Alpha and the Omega. This circularity stems from not grounding racism on real social relations among the races. If racism, viewed as an ideology, was seen as having a material foundation, then its examination could be associated with *racial practices* rather than to mere ideas and the problem of circularity would be avoided.

Some radical authors have developed alternative frameworks which explicitly attempt to overcome the limitations pointed out in this section. Because of their significance, I will review the *Marxist*, the *institutionalist*, the *internal colonialism*, and the *racial formation* perspectives on racial phenomena.

Some Alternative Frameworks to Interpret Racial Matters

A) *The Marxist Perspective*

The central ideas of Marxism are that *class* is the central explanatory variable of social life and that *class struggle* is the main dynamic of society. Hence other types of social divisions and collective conflict are downplayed and regarded as derivations of the class structure (Aronowitz 1992). In the case of racism, the orthodox¹¹ Marxist position is that racism is an *ideology* used by the bourgeoisie to divide workers. In the words of Albert Szymanski, racism or racialism is:

¹¹ One of the best representatives of the orthodox Marxist view on race and racism is Victor Perlo, *Economics of Racism U.S.A.: Roots of Black Inequality* (New York: International Publishers, 1975). But alongside this orthodox view, many African American Marxists like W.E.B. Dubois, C.L.R. James, and, more recently, Manning Marable, have questioned the simplistic analysis of racism of their white counterparts. For particularly biting criticisms of the traditional Marxist view on racial matters see James Boggs, *Racism and the Class Struggle* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970); Robert L. Allen *Reluctant Reformers* (Washington: Howard University Press,

[A] legitimating ideology for an exploitative structure. Racist ideology propagated in the media, educational system, and other institutions, together with the actual distribution of relative petty advantage within the working class serves to disorganize the entire working class including the ethnic majority, thereby allowing capital to more effectively exploit most majority group workers" (Szymanski 1983: 402).

Although some suggest that there is a racial structure (Szymanski 1981; Wolpe 1986), they underscore the "capitalist nature of racist structures, racialist ideology, and interpersonal racism" (Szymanski 1983: 431). According to Oliver Cox, one of the first Marxist-inspired analysts to deal with racial matters, racism or *race prejudice* was "a social attitude propagated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatizing some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself or its resources or both may be justified" (Cox 1948: 393). This social attitude or *ideology* emerged in the 15th century as a practical consequence of the labor needs of European imperialists. In Cox's words:

The socioeconomic matrix of racial antagonism involved the commercialization of human labor in the West Indies, the East Indies, and in America, the intense competition among businessmen of different western European cities for the capitalist exploitation of the resources of this area, the development of nationalism and the consolidation of European nations, and the decline of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church with its mystical inhibitions to the free exploitation of economic resources. Racial antagonism attained full maturity during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the sun no longer set on British soil and the great nationalistic powers of Europe began to justify their economic designs upon weaker European peoples with subtle theories of racial superiority and masterhood (Cox 1948: 330).

But did Cox view race relations and racial antagonism as "racial"? Cox, as all Marxists, argued that they were not. European imperialists justified their exploitation of the people and resources of the New World in racial terms but, in Cox's estimation, they essentially established "labor-capital profit relationships" or "proletarian bourgeois relations" (Cox 1948: 336). Racial exploitation was regarded as a special form of *class* exploitation (Cox 1948: 344). The racial component originated from the proletarianization of a *whole* people (people of color) in contrast to the *partial* proletarianization experienced by whites. Hence, given that the racial element in

1974) and Harold Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1968).

societies was not real, Cox concluded that "racial minorities" should strive towards assimilation and ultimately struggle for socialism along with White workers.

Another Marxist interpretation of racism that gained popularity in the seventies and eighties was that of Edna Bonacich (1980a, 1980b). The twist in her approach is that rather than regarding race relations and racism as fundamentally orchestrated by the bourgeoisie, she regarded them as the product of a *split labor market* giving theoretical primacy to *intra-* working class divisions. Bonacich defined a split labor market as situation where there is "a difference in the price of labor between two or more groups of workers holding constant their efficiency and productivity" (Bonacich 1980b: 343-44). According to Bonacich, a split labor market has existed in the U.S. since slavery times with Blacks as the more cheaply priced labor. After slavery was abolished, Bonacich attributes the cheapness of Black laborers to a "difference in labor militance" as compared to white workers (p. 345). White workers --whether long established in the U.S. or recent immigrants-- are described as having a "greater...recognition of class conflict with the capitalist class" (p. 346). Although Bonacich is aware of the fact "that a number of 'white' unions openly excluded blacks while many others discriminated more covertly," she stresses as pivotal the differential historical union experience of both groups.¹² Thus she concludes that the lesser degree of historical involvement of Blacks in labor unions accounts for their utilization as cheap laborers by capitalists in the post World War II period (p. 347).

As capitalists began using Blacks as strike-breakers and attempted to displace white workers, white workers mounted a resistance to maintain their status. Such "resistance"¹³

¹² This argument strikes me as blaming the victim in disguise. For two excellent alternative readings of why Blacks did not join unions with their "brothers and sisters," see Philip Foner's excellent *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1981* (1981) and David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991).

¹³ Bonacich downplays interpretations of this "resistance" based on racial prejudice against Blacks. Therefore, she explains the race riots that occurred in the 1919-1940 period as expressions of class protectionism from whites facing "threats" from Black workers. This interpretation naturalizes the racial view of "*they are taking our jobs*" and conveniently ignores the fact that the white working class was formed in a racialized fashion. On this point, Black historian Carter G. Woodson (1947) commented that:

involved in earlier stages the total exclusion of Blacks from unions and caste-like occupational divisions. With the enactment of New Deal legislation in the thirties --specifically, section 7a of the NIRA of 1933 and the Wagner Act of 1938-- and the ensuing strengthening of unionism and the illegalization of paying lower wages to certain workers for similar work, Black and white workers entered into a short period of "radical coalition" (Bonacich 1980b: 354). As capitalists countered the protective legislation of the thirties --and the concomitant rising costs of labor-- with relocation overseas, plant relocations at home, and automation, Blacks were disproportionately hurt due to their weak market position and some systemic "rigidities" (pp. 355-358). This has extended the life of the split labor market by creating a "class of hard-core unemployed in the ghettos" (p. 358).

There are, however, some limitations to orthodox Marxist views on racial matters. First, as suggested above, Marxists regard racism and racial antagonism as products of class dynamics. Regardless of whether the antagonism is viewed as promoted by capitalists (Cox 1948; Szymanski 1981) or as the product of intra-working class strife (Bonacich 1980a, 1980b) or as the outcome of contingent historical processes (Saxton 1990), *racial strife* is viewed as not having a *real* racial component, that is, as not having its own structure. Second, in all its versions, racial strife is conceived as emanating from false interests. Because the unity of the working class and the impending socialist revolution are *a priori* Marxists axioms, racial (or for that matter, gender-based) struggle cannot be viewed as having its own material basis (that is, as based on the

As Negroes in the North and West, therefore, were pitted against the trades unions, they engendered much feeling between the races by allying themselves with the capitalists to serve as strikebreakers. In this case, however, *the trades unions themselves were to be blamed*. The only time the Negroes could work under such circumstance was when the whites were striking, and it is not surprising that some of them easily yielded then to the temptation. In those unions in which the Negroes were recognized, they stood with their white co-workers in every instance of making a reasonable demand of their employers. Some of these unions, however, accepted Negroes as merely as a subterfuge to prevent them from engaging in strikebreaking. When the Negroes appealed for work, identifying themselves as members of the union in control, they were turned away with the subterfuge that no vacancies existed, while at the same time white men were gladly received (Woodson 1947: 439).

different interests of the actors involved).¹⁴ Consequently, racism must be explained as "ideological" or "irrational." (Although Bonacich views some of these struggles as "rational," they are "rational" in the class rather than the racial sense.) Finally, given that racial phenomena are not deemed as independent and are essentially classified as "ideological," Marxists shy away from performing any in-depth analysis of the politics and ideologies of race (see Omi and Winant 1986).

Recently some Marxist analysts --many of them inspired by the pivotal work of Stuart Hall (1980)-- have attempted to develop more flexible interpretations of racial phenomena (Miles and Phizacklea 1984; Cohen 1989; Miles 1989, 1993; Carchedi 1987; Wolpe 1986; Solomos 1986, 1989). John Solomos, for instance, after critically reviewing several Marxist approaches to racial matters, concluded that:

(a) there is no problem of 'race relations' which can be thought of separately from the structural (economic, political, and ideological) features of capitalist society; (b) there can be no general Marxist theory of racism, since each historical situation needs to be analyzed in its own specificity; and (c) 'racial' and 'ethnic' divisions cannot be reduced to or seen as completely determined by the structural contradictions of capitalist societies (Solomos 1986: 104).

Harold Wolpe has suggested that what is needed to adequately grasp issues of race is a non-reductionist conception of class. Class, for Wolpe, should be regarded as a process rather than as an abstract category. In his own words, class "is constituted, not as unified social force, but as a patchwork of segments which are differentiated and divided on a variety of bases and by varied processes" (Wolpe 1986: 121). This conceptualization allows classes to have fragments with unique interests based on ethnicity, race or gender.

Yet despite providing some honest indictments of the class reductionist reading of racial phenomena, both analysts share many of the limitations of the orthodox view. First, both Solomos and Wolpe conceive the *context* --the *structure*-- of the social system as fundamentally capitalist in nature and "racialism" as something that *may* affect its character. Although this is a theoretical and political break with the orthodox Marxist position, it still precludes the possibility of racism

¹⁴ For a similar critique of the Marxist myopia to gender oppression and the materiality of patriarchy see Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

having its own structure (albeit articulated with capitalism and patriarchy).¹⁵ That is why, for example, in Wolpe's earlier work in South Africa the question was examining within class stratification (1970) and in his more recent work how race has been "interiorized" in the class struggle (1986: 111) and, for Solomos, it has been how racism affects politics and ideology in Britain (1986; 1989). Second, they stress *a priori* class as the central organizing principle of social systems and hence race is regarded as a secondary element that *fractures* or *stratifies* class. Third, in their analysis (particularly Solomos) racism is still viewed in fundamentally ideological terms. Finally, and despite their poignant criticism of class-reductionist views on racial matters, they have not provided any new theoretical tools with which to analyze the relative autonomous structural character of race and racism in social systems.

B) *The Institutional Perspective*

The institutional perspective emerged out of the struggle of racial minorities in the sixties (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Knowles and Prewitt 1969; Chesler 1976; Wellman 1977; Alvarez, Lutterman, et al. 1979). In contrast to the liberal view on race relations which at the time blamed the "ills of racism" on poor White southerners, proponents of this viewpoint proclaimed that racism was society-wide and that it affected *all* White Americans. This perspective, forcibly put forward by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in their book *Black Power* (1967), defined racism as "the predications of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of *subordinating* a racial group and maintaining control over that group."

Furthermore, they proposed a distinction between *individual racism* or *overtly* racist acts

¹⁵ On this point Italian Marxist Guglielmo Carchedi (1987), after acknowledging that there are special groups in society who are subject to specific forms of *domination* (e.g., women, Blacks, young people, 'sexual deviants'), ends up devaluating the *specificity* of their domination. This is accomplished by arguing that although these forms of domination are not class-specific they are class-determined, that is, "they are functional for the domination of the capitalist class" (Carchedi 1987: 110). Thus, Carchedi concludes in typical Marxist fashion, that "socialism is in the interest, and must be the result of the struggle, of *all those subjected to a type of domination functional for the reproduction of the capitalist system*" (p. 11; emphasis in original). Similarly, British Marxist Gerry A. Cohen after recognizing the failure of Marxism of appreciating that "divisions of identity are as deep as those of class" reduces "racial exploitation" (his term) to class exploitation. In his words, "racial exploitation is (largely) relegation to an exploited class because of race" (Cohen 1989: 159).

committed by individuals and *institutional racism* or the *covertly* racial outcomes produced through the "normal" operations of American institutions. Chesler provided one of the definitions that attracted the most attention in academic and workshop circles: the prejudice plus power definition. In Chesler's own words, racism requires "an ideology of explicit or implicit superiority or advantage of one racial group over another, plus the institutional power to implement that ideology in social operations" (Chesler 1976: 22; see also Katz 1978: 10). In its most radical version (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967), racism was seen an outgrowth of colonialism and *institutional racism* as the mechanism to keep racial minorities (Blacks in particular) in a colonized status. Therefore, since Blacks were seen as subordinated to Whites politically, economically, and socially (p. 6), radical *institutionalists* advocated the struggle of Blacks for national liberation.

The institutionalist perspective contributed to dispel some of the myths perpetuated by the dominant paradigm. Researchers gathered data showing the systematic disadvantages that Blacks suffered in economic, educational, judicial, political, and health related institutions, forcefully pointing out the pervasiveness of racism (see Knowles and Prewitt 1969). Moreover, their persistent assertion that *all* Whites received advantages from the racial order and that there was a pressing need to challenge *all* institutions politicized an academia sick with the belief that it was not part of the problem. This perspective, as well as its offshoot --the internal colonialism perspective-- helped to politicize the discussion about race in academic circles.

Yet despite its valuable political contributions, this perspective did not pose a serious *theoretical* challenge to the dominant conception of racism in the social sciences. At the theoretical level this perspective developed a *melange* where everything could be "racist." In this view racism was ideas or a "sense of racial superiority" but also practices and processes that lead to discrimination. More significantly, *the institutionalist perspective still grounded racism at the ideological level thus failing to attack the theoretical myopia of the dominant perspective*. This ideological grounding of racism is evident in the following quotation from Carmichael and Hamilton's book:

Institutional racism *relies* on the active and pervasive operation of *anti-black attitudes and practices*. A sense of superior group position prevails: whites are "better" than blacks; therefore blacks should be subordinated to whites. *This is a racist attitude and it permeates the society, on both the individual and institutional level, covertly and overtly* (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967: 5; my emphasis).

Robert Miles listed some additional limitations of this perspective (1989). First, this perspective is intrinsically linked to a naive view of social stratification where race is the sole basis of social division. Second, the definition of racism is so inclusive that it loses its theoretical and even political usefulness. Third, its basic Black-white division minimized the "racialization" that some "white" groups experienced --e.g., the Irish¹⁶ and the Jews. Incidentally, this simplistic division tended to minimize the *racialized* experiences of other minorities in the U.S. Fourth, the perspective shuns the problem of intentionality altogether, which leads to analytical and political problems. Analytically, it detours us from understanding the processes that lead some whites to exhibit overtly, covertly, or altogether non-racist behavior. (Yet, and this point is missed by Miles (1989), regardless of the racial practices and views of individual whites, *all* of them receive some benefits from the operation of the racial order.) Politically, it makes the likelihood and desirability of an alliance a non-issue because all whites are designated as "racist." Finally, and as in the case of the dominant perspective on racism, this perspective is ensnared in circularity. Racism, which is or can be almost everything, is proven by anything done (or not done) by whites (Miles 1989: 56). The analyst identifies the existence of racism because any action done by whites is labeled as racist.

C) *The Internal Colonialism Perspective*

A group of authors, inspired by the struggles of several racial minority groups in the sixties and early seventies, postulated that racism was structured by the *colonial* status of racial minorities in the U.S. (Moore 1970; Blauner 1972). As in the case of the institutional perspective,

¹⁶ For a magnificent example of the negative *racialization* experienced by the Irish in Ireland see Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race* (London and New York: Verso, 1994).

proponents of the internal colonial framework argued that racism¹⁷ was institutionalized and based upon a system in which the white majority "raises its social position by exploiting, controlling, and keeping down others who are categorized in racial or ethnic terms" (Blauner 1972: 22). According to Robert Blauner, the foremost exponent of this perspective, modern racism emerged in the following way:

The association of race consciousness with social relations based on the oppression of one group by another is the logical prerequisite for the emergence of racism. The conquest of people of color by white Westerners, the establishment of slavery as an institution along color lines, and the consolidation of the racial principle of economic exploitation in colonial societies led to the elaboration and solidification of the racist potential of earlier modes of thought (Blauner 1972: 21).

After different Third World peoples were forcefully moved to the U.S., a racial order was established with its own dynamics. Central to the operation of such order was the maintenance of *white privilege*. Although the racial order and the particular form of racial oppression were viewed as changing throughout history, white privilege was viewed as a constant systemic fact. Blauner argued, similar to institutionalists, that white advantages accrued at all levels but, unlike them, he gave primacy to "the special advantage of the white population in the labor market" since in "industrial capitalism economic institutions are central, and occupational role is the major determinant of social status and life style" (Blauner 1972: 23).

This framework took head-on many of the limitations of mainstream approaches to race relations in the U.S. While most of the prevailing perspectives were ahistorical and postulated "race cycles" (Park 1950) or ethnic patterns (Glazer and Moynihan 1970) that would repeat themselves, the internal colonial model was very *historical* (Barrera 1979) and informed by the *differences* between the historical experiences of white ethnics and racial minorities. Moreover, the internal colonial perspective challenged the purely psychological view of racism at many levels.

¹⁷ Blauner advanced several definitions of racism in his book. The most comprehensive regarded racism as "a principle of social domination by which a group seen as inferior in alleged biological characteristics is exploited, controlled, and oppressed socially and psychically by a superordinate group" (1972: 84).

First and foremost, it challenged the dogma of conceiving of racism as virulent prejudice of some individuals by suggesting that its existence was not a necessary condition of racial orders. Racism, in Blauner's view, had an objective reality "located in the actual existence of domination and hierarchy" (Blauner 1969: 10). As with the institutionalist perspective, it forced the consideration of racism or racial/colonial oppression as systemic, comprehensive (all actors involved), and rational (based on the interests of Whites). Furthermore, it downplayed the educational road to the abolition of racism and, as with other systems of exploitation, it viewed violence as a necessary requisite to transform the racial order (see Blauner 1972: 104).

Although this approach represented a refinement of the institutionalist perspective and provided new insights for the study of race relations, it still had some serious limitations. First, because it was centered on the *colonial* nature of racial subordination, it assumed a national unity among *both* the dominant and subordinated "races" and, thus, neglected the class --and gender-- divisions among them. Also, by positing the centrality of economic oppression, it missed completely the process of economic marginalization and exclusion that some races may experience. For instance, how would an analyst with this theoretical postulate interpret the contemporary status of "underclass" African Americans (Omi and Winant 1986; Wilson 1987) or of American Indians? Finally, the categories elaborated by Blauner failed to provide a structural understanding of racism. Despite asserting that racism was systemic, Blauner did not provide the theoretical tools to study how racism is reproduced in societies. Notwithstanding these limitations, many of the insights developed by the authors associated with this perspective are incorporated in the alternative framework developed in this paper.

D) *The Racial Formation Perspective*

The recent work of Howard Winant and Michael Omi represents a theoretical breakthrough in the area of race relations. In their *Racial Formation in the United States* (1986) the authors provide a thorough critique of previous theoretical approaches and suggest a new approach for the study of racial phenomena: the *racial formation* perspective. They define racial formation as the "process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and

importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings" (Omi and Winant 1986: 61) The essence of this approach is the idea that race "is a phenomenon whose meaning is contested throughout social life" (Winant 1994: 23). The very existence of the category race is viewed as the outcome of *racialization* or "the extension of racial meaning to a previously unclassified relationship, social practice or group...[it] is an ideological process, an historically specific one. (Omi and Winant 1986: 64). In their view, race should be regarded as an organizing principle of social relationships which, at the micro level, shapes the identity of individual actors, and at the macro level, shapes all spheres of social life. Although racialization affects all social spheres, Omi and Winant assign a primary role to the political level,¹⁸ particularly to the "racial state" which they regard as the factor of cohesion of the racial order. Hence racial conflict, particularly in the post-Civil Rights era, is viewed as playing itself out at the state level (Omi and Winant 1986: 68-69).

Equipped with these categories, Omi and Winant review the recent history of racial formation in the United States. They argue that as the Civil Rights Movement expanded to include the masses of Black people it rearticulated and radicalized the collective meaning of Black subjectivity. The new subjectivity, symbolized at the cultural level by the transition from being "Negros" to "Blacks," involved a change in the tactics to challenge the racial order. *Direct* and *collective* strategies replaced *individual* and *indirect* forms of contestation. According to Omi and Winant, the first phase of the Civil Rights Movement produced real although limited reforms (e.g., enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights legislation, and registration of millions of southern Black voters). However, the economic status of most Blacks was left unaffected by these reforms. This produced the radicalization of a segment of the movement which manifested itself in the politics of Black Power. Despite the amorphous character of this political

¹⁸ In Winant's recent book *Racial Conditions* the fundamentally political character of racialization is attributed to the fact that "elites, popular movements, state agencies, cultural and religious organizations, and intellectuals of all types develop *racial projects*, which interpret and reinterpret the meaning of race...These projects are often explicitly, but always implicitly, political" (Winant 1994: 24).

movement --from self-help to revolutionary nationalists-- it involved a further rearticulation of the political and cultural agenda of Blacks. For many Black Power politicians, the question became not so much gaining "rights" but gaining "power."

The state's response to the demands of the racial social movement of the sixties was twofold. On the one hand, it *absorbed* some demands (state guarantees for civil and political rights) and actors (some "militant" leaders were coopted) and, on the other hand, it *insulated* crucial areas of state activity (e.g., tax policy) from any contestation by defining them as nonracial. As the movement fragmented in the late sixties, the state was able to repress some of the most radical segments and coopt the reformist leadership. Moreover, the state's acquiescence to the demands of racial minorities for civil and political rights entailed recasting the racial movement into another "interest group" and channeling its activities through "normal" politics.

This demise of the racial movement coincided with the profound economic and political dislocations of the seventies. As in other periods in U.S. history, these dislocations were blamed on racial minorities (e.g., the expansion of the welfare state was viewed as the cause of the economic demise of the U.S.). This set the stage for the rearticulation of racial ideology and politics carried out by neoconservatives and the new right around the notion of "reverse racism." Although this rearticulation has not rolled back the historical clock by arguing against the principle of racial equality and for segregation, it has been successful in challenging *all* the *means* to achieve equality (from state spending, to busing, to affirmative action).

The racial formation perspective is pathbreaking and provides some promising tools for the analysis of racialized societies; nonetheless, it still has some significant limitations. First, Omi and Winant's (1986) concepts of *racial formation* and *racialization* give undue emphasis to ideological processes. Both concepts are helpful in grasping how racial meanings are formed and *rearticulated* but they do not resolve the question of how it is that racial orders are structured. Arguing that racial classifications are permanently contested is an elaboration of the old idea that race is a socially constructed category. The issue is that this argument does not make clear whether or not race becomes an independent basis of group association and action. Second, although in their book

there are hints of a conception of races as social collectivities with *different interests*, Omi and Winant stop short of developing such view. Lacking this conception makes their description of political contestation over racial matters look as quarrels over *meanings* rather than over *positions in the racial order*. In their approach, it is unclear why people fight over racial matters and why they endorse or contest *racial projects* (see footnote 30). Third, Omi and Winant's analysis of the most recent rearticulation of racial ideology in the U.S. leaves out a comprehensive or systemic view of the process. The change is described as singularly carried out by the right wing and neoconservatives instead of reflecting a *general* change in the U.S. racial structure. In order to make this claim, Omi and Winant would have to include the agency of *all* the members of the dominant race --rather than privileging some actors-- and conceive the change as affecting all the levels of the social formation --rather than privileging the political level. Finally, although I am sympathetic to the idea of regarding race as "a fundamental *organizing principle* of social relationships" (Omi and Winant 1986: 66), their theoretical framework comes close to race-reductionism in many areas. For instance, their conceptualization of the state as the "racial state," although borrowed from structuralist Marxism, leaves aside the capitalist --as well as the patriarchal-- character of the state.¹⁹

So far, I have pointed to the limitations of both the traditional conception of racism and its most influential counter-alternatives. The core of my critique has been that all these frameworks fail to develop a structural understanding of racial matters. In the next section I provide a preliminary theoretical apparatus to interpret racial phenomena in such a manner.

¹⁹ This problem is partially addressed in Howard Winant's recent *Racial Conditions* (1994) through the Gramscian concept of *hegemony* which he defines as "a form of rule that operates by constructing its subjects and incorporating contestation" (p. 113). According to Winant this form of rule prevails in most "modern" societies and organizes, among other things, cleavages based on class, race, and gender.

III. Towards An Alternative Conceptualization of 'Racism'

Since the term *racism* has been equated with a psychological or an ideological phenomenon, I propose the concept of *racialized social systems*²⁰ as the starting point for my alternative framework. Racialized social systems refers to *societies in which the economic, political, social,*²¹ *and ideological levels are partially structured upon the placement of actors in racial categories or races.* They are *partially* structured by race because modern social systems articulate two or more forms of hierarchical patterns (Hall 1980; Williams 1990; Winant 1994). This implies that the phenomenon that has been coded as *racism* and regarded more or less as a free-floating ideology has a *structural* foundation.

In all racialized social systems the placement of people in racial categories involves *some form of hierarchy*²² which produces very definite social relations among the races. The race ascribed the superior position tends to receive higher levels of economic remuneration and access to better occupations and/or prospects in the labor market; has a primary position in the political system; is granted higher levels of social estimation (e.g., is viewed as "smarter," "better looking," etc.); and, in many cases, has the license to draw physical (segregation) as well as social (racial etiquette) boundaries between itself and other races; and, finally, receives what Dubois called a

²⁰ I employ the concept of social system in a non-Parsonian manner. I do not assume that a social system tends to be in equilibrium and that all its components are functional to it. Here it is used to refer to the various sets of *structures* that taken together comprise society. In our society the three main *structures* that shape the social system are patriarchy, capitalism, and the racial structure.

²¹ In traditional structural accounts of Marxism, the social level (civil society) is subsumed within the economic, the political, and the ideological levels. I do not subscribe to that depiction of society and suggest that there is a social level of group interaction and practices (the everyday life).

²² This argument applies only to *racialized* social systems. In contrast, the basis of *ethnic* conflict needs not be over relations of superiors and subordinates as conflict in many African and European countries illustrates. On this point, see Donald Noel "A Theory of the Origin of Ethnic Stratification," *Social Problems*, 16 (Fall 1968), pp. 157-72; see also Richard A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations* (New York: Random House, 1970) and Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

"psychological wage" (Marable 1983; Roediger 1991).²³ The totality of these racialized social relations constitutes the *racial structure*²⁴ of a society.

Insofar as the races receive different social rewards at all levels they develop dissimilar *objective interests* which can be detected in their struggles for either the transformation (the struggle of the subordinated race) or the maintenance (the struggle of the dominant race) of a particular racial order. Those interests are *collective* rather than *individual*; are based on *relations* between races rather than on particular *group needs*; and finally, are not *structural* but *practical*.²⁵ In other words, although the interests of the races can be detected from their *practices* they are not subjective/individual but collective and shaped by the *field of real practical alternatives* --itself rooted in the power struggles among the races (see Cox 1948: 569). Although the objective general interests of a race may ultimately lie in the complete elimination of the *racial* character of a society, its field of real alternatives may not include that possibility. For instance, the historical

²³ On the point of the distribution of social rewards along racial lines in racialized systems see Blumer (1954), Shibutani and Kwan (1965), van den Bergue (1967), Blalock (1967), Schermerhorn (1970), and Wilson (1973).

²⁴ I do not subscribe to the *structuralist* Marxist view of the "social structure" which posits that is a "set of empty spaces or positions" to be filled by actors who become plain "bearers of the structure" (Poulantzas 1982; Wright 1978 and 1985). This conception eliminates actors, history, and relationships from the structure and makes it into a mysterious entity deeply hidden in society. An alternative conception of the social structure that does not exclude these elements is that of Joseph H. Whitmeyer (1994) who defines it as "the networks of (interactional) relationships among actors as well as the distributions of socially meaningful characteristics of actors and aggregates of actors" (154). For similar but more intricate conceptions of the social structure that are *relational* and which incorporate the *agency of actors* as well as the embodiments of symbolic human action (culture) as part of the social structure see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); William H. Sewell, Jr. "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* 98: 1-29; and Sharon Hays, "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture," *Sociological Theory* 21:1 March 1994, 57-72.

²⁵ Here I am following Poulantzas' idea of locating the *interests* of actors in their real struggles rather than making a separation between latent (real objective) and manifest (subjective) interests. Reading the following quote with the concept of race instead of class in mind elaborates my point.

The concept of interests can only be related to the field of practices, *in so far as interests are always interests of a class* [or a race], of supports distributed in social classes [or socially constituted races] (Poulantzas 1982: 111).

struggle against chattel slavery did not lead to the development of race-free societies but to the elaboration of social systems with a *different kind* of racialization. Why? Because that option was not in the map of real alternatives given that the non-slave populations had the capacity (power) to preserve some type of racial privilege. The historical "exceptions" occurred in racialized societies where the power of the non-slaves was almost completely superseded by the power of the slave population.²⁶

A simple criticism of the argument advanced so far would be that it ignores the internal divisions of the races along class and gender lines. However, such criticism does not deal squarely with the issue at hand. The fact that not all the members of the superordinate race receive the same levels of rewards and, conversely, that not all the members of the subordinate race or races are at the bottom of the social order, does not negate the fact that races, as social groupings, are in either a *superordinate* or a *subordinate* position in a social system. Historically the *racialization* of social systems did not imply the exclusion of other forms of oppression. In fact, *racialization* occurred in social formations that were structured by class as well as gender. Hence, in these societies *class* and *gender* structurations are *lived* in *racialized* terms and, conversely, the *racial* experience of subjects is fragmented along *class* and *gender* lines. The important question of which *interests* move actors to struggle is *historically contingent* and cannot be ascertained *a priori* (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). Depending of the character of *racialization* in a society, class interests may take precedence over racial ones (e.g., contemporary Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico). In other situations, racial interests may take precedence over class interests and unify *most* members of a racial group against "the system" (slavery and apartheid periods in U.S. history). And yet the intersection of class and racial interests may be what moves people to action in other

²⁶ Here I am referring to cases like Haiti. Nonetheless, recent research has suggested that even in places like Haiti, the abolition of slavery did not end totally the *racialized* character of the social formation (Trouillot 1990).

situations (the race-class interests of the Black poor and working class seem to be increasingly at odds with those of middle class Blacks in contemporary U.S.)²⁷

Because *racial* actors are also classed and gendered, it is necessary that analysts control for *class* and *gender* to ascertain the material advantages that accrue to a dominant race. In a racialized society like ours, the independent effects of race are assessed by analysts who: 1) compare data between Whites and nonwhites in the *same* class and gender position, 2) evaluate the *proportion* as well as the *general character* of the participation of the races in some domain of life, and 3) examine racial data from *all* levels --social, political, economic, and ideological-- to establish the *general* position of racial groups in a social system.

The first of these elements has become standard practice in sociology. Hardly any serious sociologist presents racial data on income, occupational attainment, and other similar demographic measures without controlling for class and gender. By doing this, analysts assume that they can measure the unadulterated effects of "discrimination" manifested in unexplained "residuals" (e.g. Farley 1984, 1993; Farley and Allen 1987). However, and despite the usefulness of this technique, it provides only a *partial* account of the "race effect" given that 1) a significant amount of racial data cannot be retrieved through surveys and 2) that the technique of "controlling for" neglects the obvious: why a group is overrepresented or underrepresented in certain areas (Whatley and Wright 1994). Moreover, these analysts hold the presumption that it is possible to analyze the amount of discrimination in one domain (income, occupational status, etc.) "without analyzing the extent to which discrimination also affects the factors they hold constant" (Reich 1976: 224). Hence to evaluate "race effects" in any domain, analysts must attempt to make sense of their findings as part of the totality of the racial structure.

²⁷ Some authors have developed notions combining racial/ethnic positions with class. Milton M. Gordon developed the concept of "ethclass" but assumed that it had, a more or less, temporary character (1964). James A. Geschwender transformed that notion into the concept of race-class which he defined as "a social collectivity comprised of persons who are simultaneously members of the same class and the same race" (1977: 221; c.f. Mario Barrera 1979: 174-279). However, Geschwender views racial interests as somewhat less "objective" and "fundamental" than class interests.

But what is the nature of races or, more properly, of *racialized social groups*? According to Omi and Winant (1986; see also Miles 1989) races are the outcome of *the process of racialization* which they define as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group" (p. 64). Historically, the classification of a people in racial terms was an eminently political act. Categories like "Indians" and "Negroes" were invented (Jordan 1968; Berkhoffer 1978; Allen 1994) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to justify the conquest and exploitation of various peoples. The invention of such categories entails a dialectical process of construction; that is, the creation of a category of "Other" involves the creation of a category of "Same." If "Indians" are depicted as "savages," Europeans are characterized as "civilized"; if "Blacks" are defined as natural candidates to slavery, "whites" are defined as free subjects (Roediger 1991, 1994). However, although the racialization of peoples was invented and did not override previous forms of social *distinction* based on class or gender, it did not lead to imaginary relations but to new forms of human association with definite status differences. After the process of attaching *meaning* to a "people," that is, the process of *formation* of racial categories, is instituted, *race becomes a real category of group association and identity*.²⁸ Because racial classifications *partly* organize and limit the life chances of racialized actors, real racial practices of opposition emerge. Regardless of the *form* of racial intercourse, it is in the realm of *real* racial relations that races can be recognized. Viewed in this light, races are the *effect* of racial practices of opposition ("we" versus "them") at the economic, political, social, and ideological levels.²⁹

²⁸ This position clashes with the contemporary pronouncements of many scholars who advocate dropping altogether "racial" classifications and/or policies given that race is not real (Fields 1990; Webster 1993) or that it is "declining in significance" (Wilson 1978, 1987). For a recent critique of this attempt of silencing the "talk about race from above" see David Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness* (London and New York: Verso, 1994).

²⁹ This last point is an extension of Poulantzas' view on class. Races --as classes-- are not an "empirical thing;" they denote racialized social relations or racial practices at all levels (Poulantzas 1982: 67).

Races, as most social scientists acknowledge, are not biologically but *socially* determined categories of *identity* and *group association*. In this regard, they are analogous to class and gender (Amott and Matthaei 1991). Actors in racial positions are there not because they are of X or Y race but because X or Y has been socially defined as a race. The phenotypical characteristics of the actors are *usually*, although not always (Miles 1993), used to denote racial distinctions. (The Jews in many European nations and the Irish in England have been treated as racial groups. Also, Indians in the United States have been viewed as a race despite the tremendous phenotypical and cultural variation among tribes.) Because races are socially constructed the *meaning* as well as the *position* assigned to them in the racial structure is always *contested*. What and who is to be Black or White or Indian *reflects* and *affects* the social, political, ideological, and economic struggles among the races. The global effects of these struggles can change the *meaning* of the racial categories as well as the *position* of a racialized group in a social formation. On this latter point, the historical struggles of several "white ethnic" groups in the U.S. in their efforts to become accepted as legitimate whites or "Americans" are a good illustration (Litwack 1961; Williams 1990; Roediger 1991). Neither light-skinned --nor, for that matter, dark-skinned--immigrants necessarily came as members of X or Y race to the U.S. In the case of light-skinned Europeans, after brief periods of "not-yet white" (Roediger 1994), they became white.³⁰ Their struggle for inclusion had very specific implications: racial inclusion as members of the white community allowed their Americanization and class mobility. On the other hand, in the case of dark-skinned immigrants from Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the struggle was to not be classified as Black. The reason why they *challenged* the reclassification of their identity is simple. In the United States "Black" signified a subordinate status in society. Hence many of these groups struggled to keep their own ethnic or cultural identity as denoted in expressions like "I am not black, I am Jamaican," or "I am not black, I am Senegalese" (Rodriguez 1991; Sutton

³⁰ This does not mean that they necessarily lost their "ethnic" or "national" background (total assimilation). It only means that they soon accepted the new racial identity as one that granted them some privileges in the U.S. On this point see chapter 7 in David Roediger's book *The Wages of Whiteness* (1992).

and Makiesky-Barrow 1992; Kasinitz and Freidenberg-Herbststein 1992). Yet after a while many of these groups resolved this contradictory situation by accepting the *duality* of their social classification as Black in the United States while retaining and nourishing their own cultural or ethnic heritage --itself deeply influenced by African traditions.³¹

Although the *content* of racial categories changes over time through manifold processes and struggles, *race* is not a secondary category of group association. Changes in the *meaning* of what is to be Black or White (the *racial formation* that Omi and Winant [1986] speak about) occur within the larger racial structure. This does not mean that the racial structure is immutable and completely independent of the action of racialized actors. It just means that the social relations among the races become *institutionalized* and affect their social life whether individual members of the races want it or not. For instance, free Blacks during the slavery period struggled to change the meaning of Blackness and, specifically, to disassociate it from slavery. Yet they could not escape the larger racial structure that restricted their life chances and their freedom (Meir and Rudwick 1970; Franklin 1974; Berlin 1975).

The placement of a group of people in a racial category *initially*³² stemmed from the interest of powerful actors in the social system (capitalist class, planter class, colonizers, etc.) but, after racial categories were employed to organize social relations in a society, *race became an independent --although articulated-- part of the operation of the social system* (Stone 1985). Here I depart from analysts like Winthrop Jordan (1968) and Robert Miles (1989, 1993) for whom the mere existence of a racial discourse is taken as a manifestation of the existence of a racial order.

³¹ The question of identity is always multiple and layered. For an excellent discussion on the matter of Puerto Rican identity that is sensitive to the various webs that it entail see Juan Flores, *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1993).

³² The motivation for *racializing* human relations may have originated in the interests of powerful actors but after social systems are *racialized*, all members of the dominant race participate in the defense and reproduction of the racial structure. This is the *crucial* reason why Marxist analysts (Cox 1948; Reich 1976, 1981) have not been successful in analyzing racism. They have not been able to accept the fact that after the phenomenon originated with the expansion of European capitalism into the New World, it acquired a life of its own. The subjects that were *racialized* as belonging to the superior race, whether members of the dominant class or not, became zealous defenders of the racial order.

Such position allows them to speak of racism in medieval times (Jordan) and to classify things like the anti-peasant views of French urbanites as examples of racism (Miles 1993). In my view, we can only speak of racialized orders when a racial discourse is accompanied by real *social relations* of subordination and superordination among the races. The available evidence suggests that racialized social orders emerged *after* the imperialist expansion of Europe to the New World and Africa (Cox 1948; Williams 1961; Williams 1990).

But what are the dynamics that move racial issues in racialized systems? First and foremost, after a social formation is *racialized*, its "normal" dynamics always have a racial component (see Allen 1974). Societal struggles based on class or gender have a racial component since both social categories are also racialized, that is, both class and gender are constructed along racial lines. For example, white South African workers in the middle of a strike in 1922 inspired by the Russian revolution rallied under the slogan of "Workers of the world unite for a white South Africa." One of the concessions of the state to this "class" struggle was the passage of the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 "which prevented black workers acquiring apprenticeships" (Ticktin 1991: 26). Another example is how the struggles of women in the U.S. to attain their civil and human rights have always been plagued with deep racial tensions (Giddings 1984; Caraway 1991).

Nonetheless, some of the strife that transpires in a racialized social formation has a *distinct* racial character. I designate such strife as *racial contestation*. *Racial contestation is the struggle of racial groups for systemic changes regarding their position at one or more levels*. These struggles may be at the social (Who can be here? Who belongs here?), political (Who can vote? How much power should they have? Should they be citizens?), economic (Who should work and doing what? They are taking our jobs!), or ideological level (Black is beautiful! The transition from Negro to Black to African-American as the term to designate people of African descent in the U.S.). Although much of this contestation is often expressed at the individual level and has a disjointed character, at times it becomes *collective* and *general* and can effect meaningful systemic changes in the racial structure of a society. The *form* of the contestation may be relatively passive

and subtle (in situations of fundamental overt racial domination such as slavery and apartheid) or more active and overt (in quasi-democratic situations such as in the contemporary U.S.). However, *in order to accomplish fundamental changes in racialized systems, the struggle must reach the point of overt protest* (c.f. Cruse 1968, Hamilton 1972, Franklin 1973, Marable 1983). This does not mean that a violent racially-based revolution is the only way of accomplishing effective changes in the relative position of racial groups. It is a simple extension of the argument that social systems and their supporters need to be "shaken" in order for *fundamental* transformations to take place.³³

It is upon this structural foundation that the phenomenon labeled by social scientists as *racism* should be analyzed. Hence, *racism* is the *segment of the ideological structure of a social system that crystallizes racial notions and stereotypes*. It provides the rationalizations upon which *real* social, political, social, and economic activities among the different races take place.

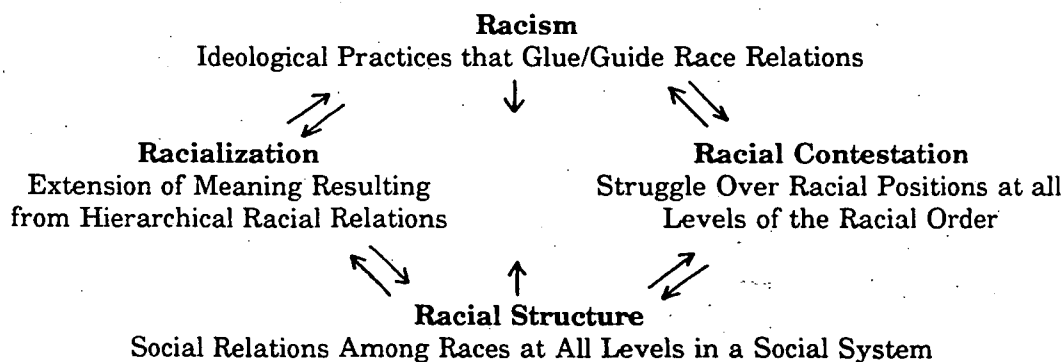
Depending on the particular character of a racialized social system, the racial ideology may be *highly* (apartheid) or *loosely* (slavery) developed and its content expressed in *overt* (U.S. until the sixties) or *covert* (U.S. after the sixties) terms. Although *racism* or racial ideology has its origins in real race relations, it acquires a degree of relative autonomy (Poulantzas 1982) in the social system and performs, like all ideological constructions, very *material* and *practical* functions in society (Laclau 1977; Poulantzas 1982). *Racism* crystallizes the dogma upon which actors in the social system operate. For instance, racial notions about how Blacks and whites are or ought to be permeate the encounters between the members of these races; *racism provides the rules for perceiving and dealing with the "other" in a racialized society*. Although racist ideology is ultimately *false* it fulfills a very *practical* role in racialized societies and with pertinent effects in racial strife.

³³ The point is an important one in the literature on revolutions and democracy. For a clear example of the role of violence in the establishment of bourgeois democracies, see Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press: Boston, 1966). In the literature on social movements, the essential works dealing with the role of violence in generating social change are Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978) and Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements* (Vintage Books: New York, 1979).

Racial ideology, as in the case of all the other levels of the social system, is permanently contested and thus changes over time.

At this point it is possible to sketch the elements of the alternative framework presented here. First, the basis of my understanding of *racism* is the historical development of *racialized social systems* which allocate differential rewards to the races economically, politically, socially, and even psychologically. After a society becomes racialized a set of social relations based upon racial distinctions develops at all societal levels. I designate the aggregate of those relations as the *racial structure* of a society. Second, races are historically constituted according to the process of racialization: they become the *effect* of relations of opposition among racialized groups at all levels of a social formation. Third, based upon this real structure, a racial ideology develops (what analysts have coded as racism). This ideology (racism) is not just a "superstructural" phenomenon (a mere reflection of the racialized system) but becomes the *organizational glue* that guides the actions of racial actors in society. It becomes as *material* as the racial relations it organizes. Fourth, most struggles in a racialized social system have a racial component but, at times, they acquire and/or exhibit a distinct racial character. Racial contestation is the logical outcome of a society with a racial hierarchy. Any social formation that has some form of *racialization* will always exhibit some form of *racial contestation*. Finally, the process of racial contestation reveals the different objective interests of the races in a racialized system. These points are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2



The alternative framework for studying racial orders presented here has the following advantages over traditional views on racism.

1) *Racial phenomena are regarded as the "normal" outcome of the racial structure of a society.* Thus, all racial manifestations can be accounted for. Instead of explaining racial phenomena as deriving from other structures or from racism (conceived as a free-floating ideology), cultural, political, economic, social, and even psychological racial phenomena can be traced to the racial organization of that society.

2) *The changing nature of what analysts label as "racism" is explained as the normal outcome of racial contestation in a racialized social system.* Changes in racism are explained rather than described. Changes are due to *specific* contestations (struggles) at different levels among the races that result from their different interests. Such changes may transform the very nature of racialization and transform the global character of the racial relations in the system (the racial structure). Therefore, in this framework, change is viewed as a normal component of the system.

3) *This framework allows analysts to explain overt as well as covert racial behavior.* The covert or overt nature of racial contacts depends on the particular manner in which the process of *racialization* is manifested --itself dependent upon how race was originally articulated in a social formation and upon the process of racial contestation. This implies that rather than conceiving of racism as a universal and similarly orchestrated phenomenon, analysts should study "historically-specific racisms" (Hall 1980: 336). This is not a new insight given that Robert Park (1950) and Oliver Cox (1948) described in their works varieties of "situations of race relations" with very distinct forms of racial intercourse.

4) *Racially motivated behavior, whether the actors are conscious of it or not, is regarded as "rational," that is, as based on the different interests of the races.* This framework accounts for Archie Bunker-type racial behavior as well as more "sophisticated" varieties. Since racial phenomena are viewed as systemic, then, all the actors in the system participate in racial affairs. (The reason why some members of the dominant racial group *tend* to exhibit less virulence towards members of the subordinated races has to do with their larger degree of control over the

form and the *outcome* of their racial interactions. In moments when they cannot control that interaction --revolts, general threats to whites, Blacks moving into "their" neighborhood, etc.-- they behave much like other members of the dominant race.)

5) *The reproduction of racial phenomena in contemporary societies is explained in this framework by reference not to a long distant past but to its contemporary structure.* Since racism is viewed as systemic (having a racial structure) and organized around the different interests of the races, the racial aspects of social systems today are viewed as fundamentally related to the *real* hierarchical relations among the races in those systems. The elimination of the racialized character of a social system entails the end of *racialization* and, hence, of races altogether. This argument clashes with the popular prescription offered by most social scientists on how to "cure" racism: education. This "solution" is the logical outcome of defining racism as a "belief." Since for most analysts racism is a matter of individuals subscribing to an irrational view, the cure is educating them; making them realize that racism is *wrong*. The alternative theorization offered here implies that since the phenomenon has material consequences for the races, the only way of "curing" society from racism is by eliminating its *systemic* roots. It is an open question --and one that is highly dependent upon the particular *racial structure* of the society in question-- whether this can be accomplished through democratic or through revolutionary means.

6) *This framework accounts for the ways in which racial/ethnic stereotypes emerge, are transformed, and disappear.* Racial stereotypes are crystallized at the ideological level of a social system. These images ultimately *indicate* --although in *distorted* ways-- and *justify* the *real* position of the stereotyped group in a social formation.³⁴ Stereotypes may originate out of 1) the material reality or conditions endured by the group, 2) ignorance about the group, or 3) rigid distorted views on the physical, cultural, or moral nature of the group. However, once they emerge the stereotypes must relate to the *real* social position of the group in the racialized system. Hence, in

³⁴ David Montejano's (1987) analysis of the stereotypes held by Anglos about Chicanos in Texas helps to illustrate my argument. Mexicans in Texas were labeled as "dirty" and "greasers." This characterization was directly related to the fact that Chicanos were kept as agricultural laborers in the race/class order of Texas.

general terms, stereotypes are *reproduced* because they reflect the *distinct real position* and *status* of the group in the racialized system. As a corollary, racial or ethnic notions about a group disappear only when the status of the group mirrors that of the dominant racial or ethnic group in that society. (As an example, think about how the stereotypes and jokes about the Polish, Irish, Chinese, Japanese, and Jews in the United States have changed over time and, in some cases, have almost completely disappeared.)

In the next section I advance a specific illustration of how a social system became racialized and how racialization became a permanent structural feature. The example is taken from the historical case of the United States and is not intended as an exhaustive discussion on U.S. history. To keep matters simple, the focus will be on Black-white relations --although other groups will be mentioned in a peripheral manner-- and racial matters will be underscored throughout the narrative sometimes at the expense of class and gender questions.

IV. Racialization in the U.S.: 1600-1960s

A) The Beginning: Conquest of Native Land and the "Indian Problem"

The first group to experience the effects of racialization in the U.S. was the Native American population. In the U.S., unlike in other localities of the New World, the incorporation of the "natives" as laborers did not occur in any meaningful way.³⁵ This stems in part from the "white settler" pattern of colonization chosen by the English (Reynolds 1961; Fredrickson 1981) in the thirteen American colonies, that is, driving off the natives and establishing colonies in the image of British towns.

Although fur trading (Cornell 1988) provided most of the early profits, land was the main aim of the colonists, given that between 90 and 95 per cent of them were involved in agriculture (Nettles 1938: 229). Thus, as historian William T. Hagan notes, for most colonists "the Indian

³⁵ Exceptions occurred in places such as South Carolina and Georgia (Duncan 1982).

was either a nuisance or a menace" (Hagan 1993; see also Jernegan 1929). Robert E. Berkhoffer described the consequences of this European activity in the following manner:

English farming, however, whether of the southern or northern variety, depended upon the extensive and exclusive use of the land and so demanded, at the same time that it promoted, the rapid expansion of White settlement upon native territory...Moreover, English agricultural practices presumed *exclusively White usage of the land*, thereby precluding any sharing of resources with Red neighbors, and English tenure and legal jurisdiction recognized this approach to territorial control. White uses of the land destroyed Indian subsistence from hunting as well as native horticulture and forced each tribe to contest White destruction of its economy, or to convert to White ways and methods, or to remove further into the frontier and encroach upon another tribe's territory. *As a result of this conflict between native and English economies as well as cultures, the history of the mainland English colonies in the seventeenth century (and later) consists primarily of the expansion of White settlement onto native lands and the peaceful or forceful transfer of ownership of those lands from Red to White hands* (Berkhoffer 1978: 129; my emphasis).

To justify their encroachment onto Indian land, English colonists developed a racial discourse about themselves and the Indians; about the "civilized" and the "savage," about the "Christians" and the "heathens." That discourse revolved around a double-mindedness about what it meant to be Indian meant, a contradictory imagery which had already been developed by other colonial powers (Pearce 1953; Jordan 1968; Berkhoffer 1978; Fredrickson 1981; Nash 1986). On the one hand, Indians were portrayed as good-spirited, friendly, and handsome, and on the other hand, they were also viewed as treacherous, promiscuous, and ruthless. Despite this discrepancy, the imagery served the interests of the English very well. It served as the ideological rationalization for the development of practical policies towards the Indians. If Indians did not object to the expansion of "civilization" into their territory, they were treated peacefully and set aside in reservations (Duncan 1982). However, if they resisted the English expansion into their territory, they were crushed (Fredrickson 1981). Although this *racialization* was initiated by powerful actors (the colonial proto-capitalists, if you will), it soon incorporated the active participation of "poor whites" for whom land was the means for social mobility (Nash 1986).

The impact of the conquest and of the racial hierarchy established by Europeans had a devastating effect upon the native populations of the Americas (Todorov 1984; Thornton 1987). In the case of the U.S., the introduction of diseases to which the native population had no

immunities, the destruction of Indian ways of life, and warfare were responsible for what can only be described as a demographic holocaust (Thornton 1987). Thornton estimated that from the early contact in the sixteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century the native population declined from over five million to around six hundred thousand (p. 90).

Although American Indians resisted this onslaught on their land and communities (particularly in the nineteenth century) the encroachment onto their land and resources has continued for over three centuries. Despite some brief periods of apparently³⁶ progressive White-Indian relations, the overarching pattern of pillage still prevails (Cornell 1988). Indians have always provided an economic developmental frontier for whites. Whereas in the past whites lusted for Indian land, today it is for the minerals, water, recreational space, and other resources found on the reservations.³⁷

B) *Chattel Slavery: 1660-1865*

There is much debate about the character of white-Black relations in the seventeenth century. For some (Handlin and Handlin 1971; Breen 1976; Fredrickson 1981; Boles 1983), race relations at the time were fluid. In one Boles opinion, Blacks and white indentured workers "ran away together, had sex together, in fact lived, worked, played, and died together with apparently little racial antipathy" (Boles 1983: 16). However, there is also evidence that these groups occupied *distinct* social positions in the colonies before 1660 (Frazier 1954; Jordan 1968; Meir and Rudwick 1970; Franklin 1974). One clear example of the different status of Blacks and poor whites in the colonies was the application of penalties to runaway servants. For instance, in 1640

³⁶ I am referring to Roosevelt's "Indian New Deal" and Nixon's "Self Determination" programs. For a critique of these programs see Vine Deloria, *Custer Died for your Sins* (London: The McMillan Company, 1969).

³⁷ On the twentieth century history of white attempts to control Indian resources see the following books. Native American Studies, *Economic Development in American Indian Reservations*. Native American Studies: University of New Mexico Development Series No. 1, 1979; Joseph G. Jorgensen (ed.), *Native Americans and Energy Development II* Boston: Anthropology Resource Center and Seventh Generation Fund, 1984; Marjane Ambler, *Breaking the Iron Bonds: Indian Control of Energy Development* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1990); and Joseph G. Jorgensen, *Oil Age Eskimos* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990).

the General Court of Virginia pronounced a sentence on three runaway servants: a Dutchman, a Scot, and a Black. The first two were ordered to serve one extra year of service to their masters but in the case of the third the Court pronounced that "being a negro named John Punch [he] shall serve his natural life here or else where" (Jordan 1968: 75). Nevertheless, as Winthrop Jordan (1968) pointed out some time ago, the historical record on this early period is too scant to make any strong case about how Blacks and whites interacted.

Yet what no historian contests is that after the 1660s "racial slavery" (Fredrickson 1981) crystallized as an institution setting a definite racial pattern. Historian T. H. Breen, who supported the thesis of the common status of Blacks and whites in the early period, commented that:

....whites achieved a sense of race solidarity at the expense of blacks. Negroes were set apart as objects of contempt and ridicule. The whites, even the meanest among them, always knew there was a class of men permanently below them (Breen 1976: 134).

Historian Gary B. Nash offers a similar view about the effects of racial slavery and the availability of an Indian frontier on forging racial unity across class lines among whites.

By relocating their reservoir of servile labor from the impoverished rural villages of England and Ireland to the villages of West Africa, while at the same time turning internal class tensions into external violence against native occupiers of fertile land, late-seventeenth-century southern colonizers were able to forge a consensus among upper- and lower class whites. With new land available through dispossession of Indians, and the pipeline carrying new indentured servants shut down, lower-class southern whites became aspiring landowners, desirous of owning their own black bondsmen and bondwomen, and thus emerged as a stabilizing force in the eighteenth-century plantation society rather than a source of disequilibrium as in the seventeenth. *Race became the primary badge of status in a world that had relied primarily on religious and economic distinctions in creating lines of social stratification* (Nash 1986: 15-16; my emphasis).

Although some analysts insist that racism was the cause of slavery (Jordan 1968; Degler 1971), *racial slavery was what transformed racial notions and disjointed racial practices into a highly structured and formalized system of social relations* (Boles 1983; Allen 1994). Such an institution, which emanated out of the labor needs of the planter class (Williams 1961; Fredrickson 1981; Williams 1990), developed into a *structural feature of the social system*. After a negative "social

value" (Williams 1990) was attached to some groups (Indians and Blacks), race became another factor of vertical division in the social system. Those assigned the "unfree labor slot" in the plantation economy (Williams 1990) became degraded and, to use Orlando Patterson's notion (1982), "socially dead." Even accepting Eugene Genovese's (1974, 1979) description of slavery as a "paternalistic" institution, the fact remains that enslaved Africans were property and, as such, were sold, raped, beaten, used as collateral in loans, and overworked.³⁸ On this point, anthropologist Sydney Mintz has pointed out that in societies like the U.S. where slavery coincided with capitalistic forms of social organization "a more complete dehumanization of the slaves" prevailed (Mintz 1969: 33).

The laws and regulations and the racial practices that crystallized after 1660, by denigrating Blacks, "elevated the lowest white to a level above the most talented slave into a pseudo fraternity of white equals" (Boles 1983: 21). In fact, the institutionalization of racial slavery affected the nature of the inter-racial relations between whites and blacks *regardless of the class status of Blacks*. For instance, the slave codes, in addition to specifying in a very detailed way the status of slaves, specified that *all* Blacks regardless of their legal status (free or slave) had to submit themselves to the will of *all* White people (Goodsell 1969).

Notwithstanding that some analysts have virtually ignored class and legal status distinctions among Blacks from 1619 to 1860 (notably, Wilson 1978), the evidence suggests that these distinctions were as important then as they are today in shaping the life chances of Blacks (Woodson 1922; Frazier 1957a; Litwack 1961; Berlin 1975; Sowell 1975; Brooks 1990). Yet, and this is the important point for our purposes, all Blacks experienced the effects of *racialization despite their class* position, their legal status (free or unfree), and their place of residence (North or South). Free Blacks, whether poor (as most were) or rich (as a few were), and whether they lived in the North or in the South, had to abide by the racial etiquette of the period and had *restricted*

³⁸ For an alternative interpretation on the paternalism of some masters, see Leslie Howard Owens, *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

possibilities for social class mobility (Wade 1964; Berlin 1975). Ira Berlin noted that before 1790 the proportion of free Blacks was small and the extent and intensity of the laws to regulate their lives was limited. However, as their proportion increased, they were more heavily regulated. The following description by Berlin exemplifies their plight.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the legal foundation of white control was set. Southern law presumed all Negroes to be slaves, and whites systematically barred free Negroes from any rights and symbols they equated with freedom. Whites legally prohibited Negro freemen from moving freely, participating in politics, testifying against whites, keeping guns, or lifting a hand to strike a white personIn addition, they burdened free Negroes with special imposts, barred them from certain trades, and often tried and punished them like slaves. To enforce their prescriptive codes and constantly remind free Negroes of their lowly status, almost every state forced free Negroes to register and carry freedom papers, which had to be renewed periodically and might be inspected by any suspicious white (Berlin 1975: 316-317).

Despite their internal stratification along class lines and the diversity of African peoples that were brought into the U.S. the fact that all them experienced some form of *racial oppression* (Allen 1994) facilitated their consolidation into one racial group. Moreover, through their *resistance* (racial contestation) to the iniquity of slavery and the constant degradation that all of them had to endure, Blacks were able to develop their own culture, social institutions, and particular religious form (Rawick 1972; Owens 1974). As historian George P. Rawick noted some time ago:

In a long social process the slaves developed an independent community and culture which molded the slave personality. This social personality was kept whole by the day-to-day and night-to-night life of the slave quarters. While the struggles that the slaves engaged in were rarely epic, they were real and often successful in limited terms (Rawick 1972: 97).

C) *Apartheid Toward Blacks: Race Relations from 1860 until the 1960s*

The racial structure developed until 1860 crumbled with the Civil War. Although rationalized as a fight against slavery, the War had more to do with the business of preserving the Union. President Lincoln, as most white northerners, believed that there was a "physical difference between the white and black races" and supported the notion of racial segregation (Gossett 1972). Moreover, his discussion about slavery was incidental to the matter of preserving the Union. As Abraham Lincoln clearly noted in a letter to Horace Greeley 1862:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing *all* slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about Slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union (As quoted in Ringer 1983: 183; emphasis in original).

But what was the *meaning* of "saving the Union"? Historian Eric Foner suggested that Unionism was part of a larger Republican ideology which articulated a series of elements: "northern resentment of southern political power, devotion to the Union, anti-slavery based upon the free labor argument, moral revulsion to the peculiar institution, racial prejudice, a commitment to the northern social order and its development and expansion" (Foner 1970: 310). The substratum of this ideology was the defense of a *particular* path of socioeconomic development: "small-scale capitalism." In the words of Foner, "For the Republicans, enmity toward the South was intimately bound up with their loyalty to the society of small-scale capitalism which they perceived in the North" (p. 316).

This interpretation does not give any credit to the agency of enslaved Africans in *contesting* the institution of racial slavery. Slaves had resisted slavery in multiple ways since its establishment by running away, slowing the pace of production when unsupervised, destroying tools, self-mutilation, committing suicide, dividing the masters and the overseers, deceiving the masters, and by revolting even in unfavorable demographic and geographical conditions (Aptheker 1943; Stamp 1956; Wood 1971; Rawick 1972; Owens 1976). According to Kenneth Stamp:

Slave resistance, whether bold and persistent or mild and sporadic, created for all slaveholders a serious problem of discipline. As authors or as readers they saw the problem discussed in numberless essays with such titles as "The Management of Negroes," essays which filled the pages of southern agricultural periodicals. Many masters had reason to agree with the owner of a hundred slaves who complained that he possessed "just 100 troubles," or with the North Carolina planter who said that slaves were "a troublesome property" (Stamp 1956: 30).

As the Civil War unfolded, slaves' resistance increased exponentially. Furthermore, Blacks served in the Union Army in large numbers and were recognized even by President Lincoln as a vital ingredient in defeating the Confederate army (Dubois 1939; Boston 1988). The important role played by Blacks in the Civil War was pointed out by W. E. B. Dubois in his *Black Folk*:

In the revolution which ensued, the possible reaction of the slaves was ignored by all except the small party of abolitionists, with its contingent of free Negroes. In the end, however, this great mass of them remained on the plantations. They were from the first a source of great anxiety, and a considerable percentage of them at every opportunity ran away to the area occupied by Northern armies and became servants and laborers; eventually, to the number of 200,000, they became actual soldiers bearing arms (Dubois 1939: 204).

While southern white men went to war, surveillance decreased in plantations and all forms of "insubordination" increased. The fear of slave rebellion, a fear that had always been part of the southern "white mind" (Jordan 1968; Rawick 1972; Fredrickson 1973), was evident in the documents left behind by masters. As historian Leon Litwack noted:

Deprived of what they deemed essential protection, often frustrated in their attempts to anticipate black behavior, many anguished whites forgot all that talk about contented and loyal slaves and described a situation fraught with the most terrifying implications. Having heard that the home guard might soon be recalled to combat the Yankee invaders, the mistress of a plantation in the Abbeville district of South Carolina wondered how the remaining whites could possibly survive the internal enemy. "If the men are going, then awful things are coming, and I don't want to stay. My God, the women and children, it will be murder and ruin. There are many among the black people and they only want a chance." If any additional evidence were needed, the obsession with internal security and, perhaps most ominous, the deployment in some regions of Confederate troops to resist *both* Yankee invaders and rebellious blacks suggested a white South desperately clinging to the fiction of the docile slave without in any way believing it (Litwack 1978: 30).

With the abolition of slavery, the *form* as well as the *content* of racial oppression changed and a new racial structure emerged. The new economic position assigned to Blacks and other racial minorities (Chicanos) became tenant farmers or, for the lucky ones, "nigger jobs" in the service and the industrial sectors (see Table 1 below). Their "placement" in this labor niche was accomplished through vagrancy and apprenticeship laws, restrictions on the right of Blacks to buy land, and to work in certain occupations (Fredrickson 1981: 213). To "guarantee" the immobility of Blacks, other measures such as debt imprisonment and the infamous convict lease system were enacted. Thus, rather than a split labor market (Bonacich 1980a), "most blacks in the South between 1865 and 1900 were not yet in a position to compete directly with whites for the same occupations" (p. 215). As tenants workers, they were "reduced to the status of a serf" (Woodson

and Greene 1930: 25) and, as industrial workers, they were located at the bottom of the well with little chance for occupational mobility (Spero and Harris 1974: 32-33).

Table 1 -- Distribution of Blacks By Occupations, 1890

Industry	Number	Per Cent
Agriculture	1,728,325	56.2
Domestic and Personal Service	956,754	31.1
Manufacturing	208,374	6.8
Trade and Transportation	145,717	4.8
Professionals	33,994	1.1

From Table 10 in Greene and Woodson, *The Negro Wage Earner* (1930), p. 37.

The economic position of Blacks did not change much until well into the twentieth century (Spero and Harris 1974; Higgs 1977; Foner 1981; Marable 1983). It not until after WWI, which created a labor shortage in the industrial North, that many Blacks migrated from the South and joined the ranks of the working class (Foner 1981). Yet, this transition from agricultural to industrial jobs did not break the Jim Crow pattern of employment. Spero and Harris (see also Woodson 1947) contend that although there was no wage discrimination³⁹ between Blacks and whites in the North, Blacks earned less than whites because they were elbowed into low skill jobs.⁴⁰ In their own words:

³⁹ The data on whether or not northern employers engaged in wage discrimination is not clear-cut. Although Abraham and Harris believed that it was not widespread, they reported some wage discrimination in several northern cities (p. 176-177). See also Herman Feldman, *Racial Factors in American Industry* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931).

⁴⁰ The role of the white working class in this process is nowadays accepted as a fact. On this point see Aronowitz (1973), Gould (1977), Foner (1981), Trotter (1985), Smith (1987), Griffith (1988), Roediger (1992), and Hill (1993).

The jobs into which the Negroes went were usually those which native Americans and Americanized foreign-born white labor did not want. This largely accounts for the almost spectacular increase in the proportion of Negroes in the iron and steel foundries where the work is dirty, hot, and unpleasant (Spero and Harris 1974: 155-156).

In the South, where rapid industrialization started in the 1880s (Reich 1981), the traditional distinction between white and Black jobs persisted with good jobs monopolized by whites and bad jobs by Blacks. In addition, whenever whites and Blacks worked in similar jobs, Whites received wages that were in average fifty to twenty percent higher (see Abraham and Harris 1974: 169-174).

At the social level, the rules of the new racial order emerged slowly given that the War and the period of Reconstruction (1865-1877) shook the rules of racial engagement and challenged the place of Blacks in society (Woodward 1966; Fredrickson 1981). The transition from slavery to apartheid (Jim Crow) was characterized by *inconsistency* and *no generally accepted code of racial mores* (Woodward 1966). Slavery did not require either a very sophisticated and specific set of rules to preserve "social distance" or an elaborate racial ideology (racism) because of the thorough differences of status among the races (Fredrickson 1981). But as Blacks became free they posed a threat to white supremacy. Slowly, but in a definite manner, segregationist laws and practices emerged after 1865 and were solidified by the 1880s with the enactment of Jim Crow laws all over the South. These laws involved the disenfranchisement of Blacks, racial separation in public accommodations, segregation in housing and in schools, the workplace, and in other areas to insure white supremacy. C. Vann Woodward describes the extent of these laws in the following manner:

The extremes to which caste penalties and separation were carried in parts of the South could hardly find a counterpart short of the latitudes of India and South Africa....curfew...separate phone booths....separate books and storage of books in public schools..South Carolina separated the mulatto caste..separation of prostitutes, and even "Ray Stannard Baker found Jim Crow Bibles for Negro witnesses in Atlanta and Jim Crow elevators for Negro passengers in Atlanta buildings" (Woodward 1966: 102).

As in the previous period, *racialization* affected all Blacks despite their class position. As C. Vann Woodward noted, "the Jim Crow laws applied to *all* Negroes -- not merely to the rowdy, or

drunken, or surly, or ignorant ones," reinforcing the racial aspect of their location in the social system (p. 107; see also Myrdal 1944). At the same time, the Jim Crow laws placed the authority for enforcement on "common whites." This ingredient reinforced the racialization of whites in the system because it implied that all of them had some real power over all nonwhites. In this second period of race relations, racialization allowed for the lowest White to count more than the highest negro in civil, social, and legal matters. And, as in the previous period, this superior standing applied even when a "respectable" Black was involved.

The racialized character of the social system, although all-inclusive and systemic as in the previous period, represented progress vis-a-vis the system shaped by chattel slavery. First and foremost, Blacks ceased to be viewed as property. Although this was also the period of heightened "scientific" discourse on Black inferiority, the apologists for the system did not advocate the re-enslavement of Blacks. Second, the period of Reconstruction (1867-1877) established numerous civil, social, and political rights that later served as ammunition to contest the racial standing of Blacks socially and politically. Third, segregation created the foundation for developing an ethnic enclave in which Blacks who had acquired a higher class position and/or some skills during the slave period could flourish by monopolizing the Black market (Marable 1983). Given that this sector could not "move up" as it wished in society, it provided some vital resources (monetary and otherwise) to mount an effective challenge to the segregationist order. Finally, segregation had the unintended consequence of strengthening the social basis of the Black experience and, thus, created the necessary conditions for its own demise (Morris 1984). Blacks were able to develop and strengthen their own social institutions (e.g., Black church, Black colleges, etc.) and their own communal spirit.

D) Racialization Since the 1960s: The Emergence of the 'New Racism'

The segregation of Blacks was predicated on 1) keeping them in rural areas, mostly in the South, 2) maintaining them as agricultural workers, and 3) excluding them from the political process. However, as Blacks successfully challenged their socioeconomic position by migrating initially from rural areas to urban areas in the South and later to the North (Henri 1975;

Harrison 1991), by pushing themselves by whatever means necessary into non-agricultural occupations (Tuttle 1970; Foner 1981), and by developing political organizations and movements like Garveyism, the NAACP, CORE, the National Urban League, the Southern Regional Council, and the CIC (Woodward 1966), the foundations of Apartheid began to crack. Other factors leading to the abolition of the segregationist order were the participation of Blacks in World Wars I and II, which patently underscored the contradiction between fighting for freedom abroad and lacking it at home (Wynn 1993); the Cold War, which made it a necessity to eliminate overt discrimination at home in order to sell the U.S. as the champion of democracy; and a number of judicial decisions, legislative acts, and presidential decrees that transpired since the late thirties (Woodward 1966).⁴¹

All these factors and the actions by Blacks made change possible. But ripe conditions are not enough to change any structural order. Hence, the racial order had to be *directly* challenged if it was going to be effectively transformed. That was the role fulfilled by the Civil Rights movement and the other forms of mass protest (so-called race riots) by Blacks that took place in the sixties and seventies. Organized and spontaneous challenges were the catalysts that brought down overt segregation.⁴²

⁴¹ There is a well known thesis which connects industrialization and/or modernization with the elimination --or at least, the attenuation-- of racist practices. In recent times, William Julius Wilson's work (1978; 1987) has resuscitated that thesis. However, such arguments are predicated on a conception of "capitalists" --and capitalism-- as rational subjects purely oriented by profit-making. For more nuanced historical accounts of the role of monopoly capital in the transition from Jim Crow to the contemporary racial structure, see David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1987) and Melvin E. Leiman, *Political Economy of Racism* (London: Pluto Press, 1993).

⁴² The discussion of the Civil Rights movement is beyond the scope of this paper. For some interpretations of the movement, see Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1984); Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Jack Bloom, *Class Race and the Civil Rights Movement* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987). On the importance of riots in effecting social change in this period, see James W. Button, *Blacks and Social Change: Impact of the Civil Rights Movement in Southern Communities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

The major changes brought by the Civil Rights movement were at the political level. Blacks, particularly southern Blacks, gained formal political rights (Piven and Cloward 1979; Omi and Winant 1986). In addition, the proscription through legislative and judicial means of overt forms of racial segregation and discrimination, created a new social space for Blacks and other minorities in the United States. Again, as in the previous period, structural changes led to significant changes in the *form* of racial oppression. Many analysts (Caditz 1976; Wellman 1977; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988; Pettigrew 1994) have noted that "racism" (as usually defined) and race relations have acquired a new character since the sixties. They have pointed to the increasingly *covert* nature of racial discourse and racial practices; the avoidance of racial terminology and even the existence of racism as a social problem by whites (Lamont 1992); and the elaboration of a racial agenda over political matters (state intervention, individual rights, responsibility, etc.) that eschews any direct racial reference.⁴³ What follows is a tentative outline of the emerging racial structure that I have termed the "New Racism."

1) The racial ideology has been rearticulated over the issue of "reverse racism." The new racial ideology exhibited by whites incorporates the principle of racial equality but, at the same time, opposes and classifies as "racist" policies to achieve it (Omi and Winant 1986; Winant 1994). Moreover, racial ideology has become more sophisticated and slippery and tends to exclude the overtly racist language and expressions of previous periods. Yet even though contemporary racial discourse avoids direct "racist" references it is still shaped by racial notions.⁴⁴

⁴³ The contemporary subtle and yet pervasive character of the U.S. racial structure seems not to be unique. Others have reported similar patterns in England and other European countries. For European examples see M. Barker, *The New Racism* (London: Junction Books, 1981); and, more recently, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (New York: Verso, 1991).

⁴⁴ There is a significant debate among social psychologists about whether or not there is a new set of racial attitudes operating in American society. Although the proponents of this view (McConahay and Hough 1976; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988) have slightly different conceptions about the content and meaning of the new racial attitudes, they basically agree that it includes a "subtler cluster of racial attitudes consisting of a combination of anti-Black and traditional American values" (Sidanaus, Deveraux, and Pratto 1991). Opposing these view is a cluster of authors who argue that we still have the "old racism" (Weigel and Howes 1985; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986; Sniderman and Piazza 1993) and that the "new racism" proponents

2) Despite the much heralded growth of the Black middle class there is still an unquestionable racialized aspect to the class experience of all Blacks, as well as other racial minorities, in the United States. In the case of the middle class, they experience their middle class life *differently* than their white counterparts in terms of income, housing, quality of education, type of job, job satisfaction, etc. (Landry 1987; Boston 1988; Brooks 1990; Benjamin 1991). Racial minorities are overrepresented in the lower tiers of the occupational structure and among the unemployed (Blackwell 1991; Hacker 1992; Pinckney 1993). Despite their increase in white collar occupations (Farley 1984; Farley and Allen 1987), they are overrepresented in the lower echelons of white collar jobs and are highly overrepresented in the state sector, a sector that has been targeted for significant cuts since the late seventies (Pinckney 1984; Landry 1987). Also, in all occupations, most minorities earn less than whites despite their educational background (Newman et al. 1978; Hacker 1992; Goldsmith and Blakely 1992; Williams 1993) and some even argue that there is still a racial wage gap (Boston 1988).

Those minority groups that do not fit this pattern (Korean Americans, Asian Indians, Japanese Americans, etc.) grew extraordinarily through recent immigration, an immigration with a high proportion of professionals, making their case an exceptional one. However, even these relatively privileged immigrants suffer from the racial organization of America as they are systematically denied higher-level jobs, are forced into the small-business niche, and are attacked by whites for their success (Takaki 1989; Chan 1991; Tagaki 1993).

3) A new web of *informal* segregationist and exclusionary practices consistent with the general *covert* character of the "New Racism" seems to be replacing the old formal practices. Such informal practices have been documented in terms of housing (Massey and Denton 1993), employers' hiring preferences (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1994), internal labor markets in factories (Williams 1987), access to loans and insurance policies (Squires and Velez 1987), and are conflating opposition to government intervention (a political matter) with racial matters (Bobo 1988; Jackman and Muha 1984; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Those who oppose the "new racism" argument seem to hold a purely ideological notion about American traditional values (e.g., Sniderman and Piazza 1993), conceive racial ideology as static, and do not envisage how racist thinking can be *rearticulated* and fused with what they define as "political" attitudes.

even in restaurants (Schuman et al. 1983). Although many of these practices are "invisible" to whites, most minorities identify the subtle and yet pervasive character of these practices in their everyday life (Close 1993; Feagin 1994).

4) Politically, minorities seem to be incorporated in *symbolic* fashion, that is, only certain types of minorities are selected for positions of power in the social system (e.g., Andrew Young, Clarence Thomas, and the like). Both the Republican and the Democratic parties incorporate de-racialized (whitened) and de-radicalized minorities in positions of power (Marable 1980 and 1983). Although the urbanization of racial minorities (Blacks in particular) allowed for their election to mayoral positions in large cities, they inherited cities in decline and were forced to recant their radicalism and pursue "pro-growth strategies" that benefit mostly white corporate America (Jennings 1992). Black mayors face a hostile white environment at the local, state, and federal level which limits their chances for success (Catlin 1993).

Another element of the current political situation faced by racial minorities is that the particular problems afflicting its poorest segments, the group that sociologists have labeled as the "underclass" (Glasgow 1980; Marable 1983; Wilson 1978 1987), seem to be beyond the reach of institutional politics. Of course, at no time in history have racial minorities attained any significant change in the U.S. racial structure through the traditional channels alone (Hamilton 1973). The difference today is that the option of mass protest is not being seriously contemplated by most minority leaders (Marable 1980). As political scientist Robert C. Smith has noted:

One of the problems in the organization of black insurgency today, however, compared to the Civil Rights era, is that black leadership and would-be-leaders are so thoroughly integrated into institutional structures and process that they may be removed both physically and psychologically from the mass base of the community....Most black leaders know that the conditions of the black underclass cannot be effectively addressed without changes in the structure of the national economy. Yet they act as if fundamental changes can come about as a result of playing the routine power games of Washington or city politics when clearly such changes, if possible, are *only* possible as a result of mass mobilization inside the black community (Smith 1992: 119).

5) Among the structural features employed for controlling racial minorities and keeping them "in their place" are police brutality, unequal arrest rates and sentencing, and the

surveillance and imprisonment of radicals and, sporadically, of even moderate leaders (Marable 1983, 1991). Moreover, given the hyper-segregation of minorities in urban areas (Massey and Denton 1993), a new strategy of monitoring entire minority communities seems to be emerging (Dumm 1993; Davis 1993).

Figure 3 depicts the primary racial coordinates of the U.S. racial structure at the economic, political, social, and ideological levels during the periods of conquest/slavery, apartheid, and New Racism.

V. Conclusion

The central argument advanced in this paper is that racism (as defined by mainstream social scientists) does not provide the tools for adequately understanding racial phenomena. I suggest that until a structural framework is developed, analysts will be entangled in ideological views of racism that are ungrounded. Lacking a structural view, racial phenomena will be reduced to a derivation of the class structure (as Marxists interpreters do) or will be viewed as the result of an irrational ideology (as mainstream social scientists believe). Although others have pointed to the need for a structural understanding of race (authors associated with the institutionalist, the internal colonial, and the racial formation perspectives), they have failed to provide the analytical categories to move beyond their critique of mainstream views on racism.

The alternative framework elaborated here suggests that racism should be studied from the point of view of *racialization*. The essence of my theorization is the contention that after a society becomes racialized, racialization develops a life of its own.⁴⁵ Although racialization interacts with class and gender structurations in the social system, it becomes in and of itself an organizing principle of social relations (Omi and Winant 1986; Essed 1991). Race, as most analysts suggest, is a social construct but that construct, as in the case of class and gender, has

⁴⁵ Historian Eugene Genovese (1971) made a similar argument years ago. However, he regarded racism as an ideology albeit one that once it "arises it alters profoundly the material reality and in fact becomes a partially autonomous feature of that reality" (Genovese 1971: 340).

Figure 3 -- Main Features of U.S. Racial Structure, 17th to 20th Century

Slavery	Apartheid	New Racism
<i>Economic</i>		
-Slaves -Free blacks systematically received the worst deal	-Sharecropping (1860s-1910s) -Exclusion from top jobs -"Nigger Jobs" (1920s-1960s)	-Mostly in the lower tiers of the occupational structure and experience -Occupational <i>sedimentation</i>
<i>Political</i>		
-Exclusion	-Almost total exclusion	-Symbolic integration -Deracialization of nonwhite politicians
<i>Social</i>		
-Almost complete social degradation of nonwhites -No need for rigid racial separation	-Rigid racial separation *Housing covenants *Laws against inter-marriage *Separate and unequal	-Covert racial practices *Meritocracy *Limited integration *Worst schools and tracking
<i>Ideological</i>		
-Simple ideology No need for a highly developed ideology because of the thorough character of racial domination.	-Elaborate ideology Need for an ideology to order/explain the "place" of nonwhites in society.	-Sophisticated ideology Ideology in accordance with new covert practices. The new ideology revolves around the issue of "reverse racism" ('they' are taking 'our' jobs) and "equal opportunity" (why should 'they' have any advantages over 'us').

independent pertinent effects in social life. After racial stratification is brought about, race becomes an independent form of vertical hierarchy in society. This means that races experience positions of subordination and superordination in society and, thus, develop *different* interests.

It is argued that although not all members of the dominant race receive phenomenal advantages, all of them receive advantages and are in a superior strategic position compared to members of the subordinated race who are in the same class and gender locations. This differential social status of the races changes through the "normal" dynamics of the social system given that all aspects of the system are racialized. However, at times, the social dynamics acquire a distinct racial character. This process is defined as *racial contestation* or the struggle to maintain and/or change the position of one's race in the system. The changing character of *racialization* and of the historical conception of what race is, produces different forms of racial oppression and of racial ideology (*racism*).

The framework developed here is not a theoretical panacea to explain racial phenomena in societies. It is intended to trigger a serious discussion on how race *structures* social systems. Moreover, the serious matter of how race interacts and intersects with class and gender still has not been satisfactorily addressed. Provisionally, I argue that a non-functionalist reading of the concept of social system may give us the clue of how to comprehend societies "structured in dominance" (Hall 1980). If societies are viewed as systems that articulate different structures (organizing principles upon which sets of social relations are systematically patterned after), then it is possible to claim that race --as well as gender-- have *distinctive* as well as *combined* effects in society. To test the usefulness of this theorization, it is necessary to develop comparative work on *racialization* in other social formations. Then and only then can the usefulness of the categories introduced in this paper be adequately assessed.

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