

Roots and Rebirth: The Role of Policy
Sciences in Addressing Disparities in
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ENDARCH

Journal of Black Political Research

Editorial Remarks

Carmen Walker

Articles

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Getting Beyond the Bitter Lessons**
Hashim Gibrill

**How do I know what I say I know?
Thinking about Slim's Table and Qualitative
Research Methods**
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**A Preliminary Discussion on Alternative
Electoral Systems and Black Legislators:
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GIVEN THE GENERALLY DESTRUCTIVE, anti-developmental character of widespread conflict, this sanguineous side of Africa's reality demands close examination. In the range of critical political and economic concerns that the continent confronts, the achievement of long-term conflict resolution and substantive post-war recovery are prominent. This paper looks at the causes of war and at recovery efforts, and argues for a fundamentally regional approach to resolution and development.

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THIS PAPER EXPLORES some of the methodological issues raised by Mitchell Duneier's book, *Slim's Table*. While it has been widely reviewed since its publication in 1992, few critics have considered the book from this perspective. Specifically, this paper addresses four issues: the importance of methodological transparency, the role of triangulation, the possibility of integrating elements of experimental design in an ethnographic work, and the importance of assessing uncertainty when drawing conclusions.

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Systems and Black Legislators:**

A National Survey

Bob Holmes

THIS ARTICLE FOCUSES on the views and attitudes of African American State Legislators towards alternatives to the single member district system of election. Data are primarily from the responses of 106 questionnaires completed from the total of 575 mailed to Black State Senators and Representatives throughout the United States. The major findings were that more than 90 percent desire additional information on various forms of proportional representation, 80 percent believe such information would

be helpful in the next reapportionment period and 82 percent said there has been no serious discussion of the issue in their state. A comprehensive education and training program on alternative electoral systems needs to be conducted in southern states for legislators, civic and religious leaders to provide them with options in the 2001 reapportionment/redistricting political struggle.

49 **Ideology and Politics:
Their Status in Afro-American Social Theory**
Alex Willingham

THIS ARTICLE WAS originally published in an earlier edition of Endarch. In an effort to revisit significant works that remain relevant to current debates and discussion, the ENDARCH Editorial Board selected Alex Willingham's "Ideology and Politics." This article reflects on the ideological underpinnings of Civil Rights and Post-Civil Rights and the ideological constraints that shape black political efforts.

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Statement of Purpose

In decades characterized by the complete atrophy of all struggle from the sixties and the defection of most of the former participants, the principal question must be why? What has happened consistently to denature and distort incipiently progressive impulses that appear among black people?

Endarch, as its name would suggest, identifies with motion; not any haphazard or desultory movement, but movement that is conscious of its origins and destinations. As an embodiment of aggregate but mutually consistent perspectives, this journal seeks to reflect, analyze, and generate activity which will ultimately lead toward the expansion, clarification, and solidification of black political thought.

The conscious nature of movement is derived from a clear social and analytic methodology. An approach which views the world as a totality, but also diaphanously understands that the components comprising this world are not of equal importance. With this in mind, and given black people's historical grounding in oppression and exploitation, Endarch sees of paramount importance those phenomena and groups of phenomena which operate in a system of oppression and exploitation. Recognition of such phenomena must lead to a discernment of those vital elements, the crucial essences of which define and condition the world. Our purpose is to expose those essences and through this explication illuminate the totality from the vantage point of a specific oppressed people. Such is the task of a conscious and critical black political thought imbued with the task of defining the black experience in politics. It is toward this goal that we aim.

Editor's Remarks

The students and faculty, of the Atlanta University Department of Political Science, created a vehicle for assessing theoretical and practical aspects of black life throughout the Diaspora. Since its beginning, Endarch Journal has provided a critical space for the development of black political thought. It has provided the necessary opportunity for those voices to test existing assumptions while creating new realities.

What continues to be needed are social scientists who are willing to expand current analyses beyond prescribed frameworks and paradigms that have limited us to simply solving race, class, and/or gender puzzles of oppression. While our multiple perspectives have created popular and to some extent commercialized narratives, we must reflect on whether we are using our knowledge to initiate change in our communities or simply peddling our intellectual products for self satisfaction.

The Spring 2000 edition of Endarch contains articles that ultimately reflect on the nature of our politics and our strategies. Hashim Gibrill's article on "War and Recovery" challenges some historically prevailing assumptions that attribute the causes of war and instability in Africa to Africa's inability to govern itself. Gibrill examines the historical role of the African state and moves beyond discussions of war to show that recovery is intricately tied to development and grass roots participation. While numerous articles have publicized wars in Africa, Gibrill's analysis points toward regional cooperative efforts that must require the commitment and responsibility of African intellectuals and scholars throughout the Diaspora, as well as the rest of the international community. Paul Manna reexamines *Slim's Table*, a 1992 ethnographic work on black men, written by Mitchell Duneier. This article offers a good discussion on methodological issues relating to the use of qualitative research in social science. His analysis offers valuable reminders of why systematic empirical analyses are critical for presenting alternative assessments that seek to challenge quantitative analyses that have rendered us "statistically insignificant." Bob Holmes presents us with some preliminary arguments and data on alternative electoral systems in the United States. Within the sphere of electoral politics, the legal and illegal dilution and marginalization of the black vote continues to be an historical fact. Holmes offers initial statistical findings that connect general knowledge to specific interests. Finally we chose to revisit an earlier Endarch article that we feel offers critical insight today as we work ourselves through various ideological and theoretical maps for opposition. Alex Willingham's article on "Ideology and Politics" ultimately speaks to the foundation of black opposition and why we have not moved beyond managing, not changing, our position in the United States.

We hope that you enjoy the following articles. We hope that you are encouraged to submit your contribution to this journal. This professional journal is a graduate student led effort, so graduate students are especially encouraged to submit articles for consideration. We would like to thank the graduates of the Atlanta University Department of Political Science for creating this space and the Clark Atlanta University Department of Political Science for sustaining it. I would like to thank the following persons: Patrice Herrod and Marcie Bell-Evans for their typing and formatting assistance, Molly Landholm for copy-editing, Sharon Whipple Cissokho for helping us update our layout design, formatting, and assistance with the submission guidelines and Debernee Pugh for scanning and copying documents. I would also like to thank Elton Hugee for his support. This publication would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the University and the U.S. Department of Education.

The Spring 2000 edition of *Journal of Black Psychology* contains articles that primarily reflect on the nature of our politics and our strategies. Hassan Ghaffar's article on "War and Recovery" challenges some historically prevailing assumptions that attribute the causes of war and instability in Africa to Africa's inability to govern itself. Ghaffar examines the historical role of the African state and moves beyond discussions of war to show that recovery is intricately tied to development and grassroots participation. While numerous articles have published war in Africa, Ghaffar's analysis points toward regional cooperative efforts that must include the commitment and responsibility of African intellectuals and scholars throughout the Diaspora, as well as the rest of the international community. Paul Manns reexamines Shiri's Table, a 1992 ethnographic work on black men, written by Mitchell Duncan. This article offers a good discussion on methodological issues relating to the use of qualitative research in social science. His analysis offers valuable reminders of why systematic empirical analysis are critical for presenting alternative assessments that seek to challenge quantitative analyses that have rendered us "statistically insignificant." Bob Holmes presents us with some preliminary arguments and data on alternative electoral systems in the United States. While the system of electoral politics the legal and illegal diffusion and institutionalization of the black vote continues to be an historical fact, Holmes offers initial evidence that connects general knowledge to specific interests. Finally we chose to revisit an earlier *Journal* article that we feel offers critical insight into the work towards through various ideological and theoretical means for deconstructing Black Willingham's article on "Ideology and Politics" ultimately speaks to the foundation of black opposition and why we have not moved beyond mere "not changing our position in the United States."

War and Recovery in Africa: Getting Beyond the Bitter Lessons

Hashim Gibrill
Clark Atlanta University

God knows that we in Africa are sick and tired of war and strife.¹
Kwame Nkrumah, 1957

War and Recovery from War: The Pressing Agenda

Wars, conflict resolution, and recovery from wars are conspicuous features of Africa's current political and economic condition. No region of Africa is free from this ongoing dialectic. Africans are participants in an alternation between relative political stability and open warfare, conflict and conciliation, destruction and rebuilding. The widespread conflict is having a range of dire impacts. Often targeting combatants and non-combatants alike, casualties are numerous. Over four million Africans have been killed in war over the past two decades.² Impelled by these conflicts, large-scale movements of people flee within and across national borders, resulting in Africa being home to approximately five million refugees or internally displaced persons; one third of the world's total population of refugees.³ The violence is taking the lives, violating the person, destroying the livelihoods, and fracturing the social structures of millions of Africans. Already-contentious political institutions and processes are imploding. Already- marginal economies are being further undermined.⁴

¹Kwame Nkrumah, "Broadcast to the Nation, 24 December, 1957," *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Panaf Books, 1972) ,105.

²This is a broad estimation. See, for instance, David R. Smock and Hrach Gregorian, "Introduction" in David R. Smock, ed., *Waging War and Waging Peace: Foreign Intervention in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace 1993),1; *The Carter Center, State of the World Conflict Report: 1994 - 1995*, (Atlanta: International Negotiation Network, 1995), 6-17.

³See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR by Numbers, Table 2, <http://www.unhcr.ch/un&ref/numbers/table2.htm>. United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees, Africa Fact Sheet (UNHCR / PI / Feb.97 / FSH-0d02.pm5).

⁴Some recent case studies of Africa's wars include Abiodun Alao, *Brothers at War: Dissidence and Rebellion in Southern Africa*, (New York, N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1994); Hilary Anderson, *Mozambique: A War Against the People*, (New York, N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1992);

With the warfare and destruction have come strenuous efforts to abate the conflicts, stop the bloodshed, shelter those forced from their homes, reconcile participants, recreate political institutions, replant land, re-launch industries, and rebuild infrastructure. In West Africa, precedents in regional peacemaking and conflict resolution are being established on the ground and diplomatically.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) is revising long held positions regarding non-intervention in internal wars. The United Nations (UN) is readily legitimizing these regional efforts. Post-war reconciliation and reconstruction are underway in former conflict areas across the continent. Africa's political elders, non-governmental organizations, researchers and commentators are producing important studies of the many conflicts, and blueprints for transformation. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan has presented his own comprehensive overview of the extent, causes and impacts of Africa's wars, and required interventions to secure long-term peace.⁵ In sum, there is a growing, vigorous effort to learn lessons and put in place new strategies of conflict prevention, intervention, reconciliation and recovery in Africa.

Clearly, Africa's wars are not a unique phenomenon. The "dirty" wars of Latin America, the "killing fields" of Cambodia, and the mass graves of the many conflicts in the former Yugoslavia testify to the universality of indiscriminately violent, hateful warfare. However, as part of the established tradition of portraying Africa as grotesque and barbarous, there is an overwhelming tendency in the Western media to focus almost exclusively on Africa's wars and despair, to the virtual exclusion of all else taking place on the continent. While the harrowing images from Africa's many war fronts portray real death, real destruction, and real despair, all too often, the final representation is that all is viciousness, famine and collapse, requiring external intervention, even a recolonization of Africa.⁶ Going largely unremarked is the successful mediation of conflicts, humanitarian assistance

Francis M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995); William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1994).

⁵Kofi Annan, *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. Secretary General's Report to the United Nations Security Council*, 16 April, 1998. UN, Information Technology Section, Department of Public Information. <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec /sgreport/index.html>

⁶Paul Johnson, "Colonialism's Back - and Not a Moment Too Soon," *New York Times Magazine*, (April 18, 1993):22 (3); Keith B. Richburg, *Out of America: A Black Man Confronts Africa* (New York: New Republic Book, 1997). Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, 44(21). For a succinct critical review of Western media portrayals of Africa's wars see Frank Füredi, "At the Heart of Rwanda's Darkness," *Living Marxism*, September 1994, No. 71, 24-26.

to refugees and neighbors, recovery from war and growing regional cooperation. Little attention has been given to the ending of settler political hegemony, the growth of Africa's social and economic infrastructure, demands for and progress towards meaningful popular participation in politics, and other post-colonial and post-war progressive political and economic developments.⁷

Nevertheless, and in spite of the concrete achievements, the exigencies of post-conflict reconciliation and rebuilding are serving to multiply and deepen development challenges. The institutionalization of consensual political processes, the consolidation of national and continental sovereignty, the broadly beneficial utilization of scarce national resources, agricultural, industrial and technological innovation and growth, and regional integration are all being held hostage to the instability, disruption, destruction and terror of widespread warfare.

It is broadly recognized that "the causes of the myriad conflicts on the continent have probably not been thoroughly researched and understood" which has resulted in an urgent need for systematic analyses of "the complexities of the issues of conflict, peace and security."⁸ Attaining lasting conflict resolution and sustained recovery involves strategies and policies derived from thoroughgoing, engaged analyses of complex, conflictual conditions. Thus, there is a pressing need to explore the underlying causes, characteristics, trends, dominant and subordinate interests, strategies, achievements and setbacks intrinsic to the problematic of war and recovery in Africa.

Currently a range of suggestions is being proffered regarding conflict prevention and resolution. Proposed and active strategies include an African intervention force, pacification by regional hegemony, proactive, preemptive intervention by UN peacekeeping forces, sidelining the state, and even re-colonization. These and other related strategies deserve careful examination to elaborate both the possibilities they hold for confronting the critical needs of conflict resolution and recovery, and to expose partisan, ideological, authoritarian and neo-imperial designs. This is not a call for dispassionate deliberations. There has already been too much futility that has left too many lives damaged and wasted.

In this pursuit, we seek to learn from and carry the existing analyses on the immediate level of issues, participants, character, impact, and ultimately research needs, forward. These analyses must get beyond the rush of events and reactions,

⁷Michael Chege, "What's Right with Africa?" *Current History*, May 1994, 194-197.

⁸"Peace and Security in Africa," *Association of African Political Scientists Newsletter*, May - August 1997, 1

and seek essential broad causes, dynamics, and new possibilities in philosophies, strategies, and achievements. This is where systematic, policy-relevant lessons can be elicited. These lessons can illuminate the proximate and fundamental causes of Africa's many wars, the survival and coping strategies of displaced communities, along with the requirements and results of humanitarian and military intervention. Furthermore, these analyses would also expose vested interests that must be overcome or deflected to resolve conflicts, reconcile and reintegrate combatant parties into civil society, and resettle the displaced.

The discussion that follows has two thrusts. One line of analysis centers on the lessons and continuing research needs regarding the causes, character and impact of Africa's wars, and the strategies and achievements of conflict resolution and post-war recovery. The other component of the discussion consists of notions towards confronting and seeking to get beyond Africa's debilitating warfare. In constructing both parts of this discussion, the admonishment is noted that "the interface between all the relevant forces in each catastrophe is so perplexing that only the ideologue claims to understand completely how and why things 'fall apart', or how to put things back together again."⁹

Africa's contemporary wars have diverse causes, involve an array of participants, and are having multiple, long-lasting impacts. In addition, post-conflict transformations are fraught with obstacles, challenges, and setbacks. This totality of war, warfare, resolution, and recovery has to be understood in its broad complexity. The following chart represents an initial analytical step, outlining the dynamic array of key actors, processes and issues. The challenge then is to elaborate the manifestations and interactions among these variables. What is the established empirical record? What can we assert with some confidence? What do we still need to understand? What can we do as scholars and activists?

⁹Isebill V. Gruhn, "Land Mines: an African Tragedy," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34, 4 (1996): 687. However, see the concept of the "ideological critique" in Samir Amin, "The Crisis of the State," in *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of a Global Failure* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1990), 76.

Chart 1: War and Recovery: The Analytical Array

War and warfare	Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation	Recovery
<p>Causes Immediate; Fundamental</p> <p>Type Conventional; Guerrilla Internal; Inter-state</p> <p>Actors Belligerents Victims Supporters Procurers Suppliers Interveners Humanitarians</p> <p>Character Philosophies of war Strategies and tactics Targets Intensity Duration Extent Technology</p> <p>Impacts Casualties Refugees and displaced persons Political decay Militaryization of civil society Economic dislocation Famine Destruction of infrastructure Social decay Regional contagion</p> <p>Pressing Research needs Women and war; Children and war Protagonists Victims Rescuers</p>	<p>Issues Intervention: Who; When; How? Africa Getting Its Own House in Order Recolonization; Sub-imperialism</p> <p>Actors Domestic; Regional; International Governmental; Non-Governmental</p> <p>Stages Initial contacts Talks about talks Talks Cease fire Cessation of hostilities Encampment of belligerents Integration of forces Demobilization Disarmament Political reconciliation National security</p> <p>Strategies Regional/Pan-African External Neo-imperial Military Diplomatic Humanitarian Peacemaking/Peacekeeping</p> <p>Political Reconciliation National conferences Governments of national unity War crimes: trials/tribunals retribution; catharsis</p>	<p>Needs In addition to continuing general development needs Resettlement of refugees and displaced communities Rehabilitation of agriculture and industry Reconstruction of infrastructure Sustained political reconciliation Regeneration and creation of political institutions</p> <p>Policies Actors Ideologies Interests Substance Impacts</p> <p>Process Self-help; Assistance Prescription; Imposition</p> <p>What is to be done? Reconciliation of peoples, not simply leaders Breaking the political hold of historic and new enmities Creative and practical Pan-African state craft: borders, citizenship, mobility, planning, institutions Regeneration of the OAU/African Unity Enhanced coping strategies Early intervention: refugees; conflict resolution</p>

War and warfare	Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation	Recovery
Coping strategies of displaced peoples: safety; sustenance; health; psyche	Institutional reconstruction Elections Post-election accord	Dedicated intervention philosophies, legal codes, forces, and resources. World responsibilities mines; mercenaries; refugee resources; financial assistance; diplomacy; Intervention.

War, Warfare and the State in Africa

War is a complex, dynamic phenomenon, and Africa's wars defy simple depictions. But they have core realities that can be explored. In a broad overview, it is possible to say much regarding the causes, types, extent, participants and impacts of Africa's wars.

As of January 2000, fourteen of Africa's fifty-four countries were wracked by on-going warfare, or could be said to be in a situation of recent and precarious peace amid fragile recovery efforts.¹⁰ At the level of observable events, these many wars have diverse immediate causes. The armed conflicts constitute, variously, struggles for broadened political participation, economic fairness, an end to corrupt and repressive governance, the reversal of historic subordination, the revision of national boundaries, self-seeking dominance over rivalries, and cynical, strategic maneuvering of external, regional and non-African states. These violent political struggles for dominance, equality, national sovereignty, strategic access or pillage are concretized in diverse internal and inter-state conflicts across Africa.

Most often Africa's current wars are combinations of nationalist and guerrilla insurgencies, sectional and factional conflicts, and anti-insurgency campaigns. They involve governments, opposing forces, and numerous supporting and secondary actors. They vary in intensity, being characterized as both sporadic and sustained warfare.

They are most often "internal" or "domestic" or "civil" wars because they are largely confined within national or narrow sub-regional boundaries. Africa's

¹⁰This charts only sustained, intense political violence, excluding the many examples of violent government repression of political opponents in situations of putative peace in the context of military and civilian led politics.

internal wars include national liberation struggles in which "armed militants" wage war in the context of widespread, popular resistance to the ruling regime. In response to this insurgency, indiscriminate government campaigns target armed nationalist forces and their supporters, and invariably involve violent retribution and brutality against large sections of the population identified by the regime as sympathizers or collaborators. The national liberation struggles against colonial and settler-colonial regimes in Algeria, Guinea Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique, South Africa, Rhodesia, and Namibia, and the long-standing Anyangyang rebellion in Sudan provide various examples of the causes, trajectories, warfare, and outcomes of Africa's national liberation and anti-insurgency wars.

Africa's internal wars also include ethnic and regional conflicts in which much, if not the entire nation is caught up in combat and flight. These conflicts, among sub-national groups and factions, involve rival forces struggling for political, economic, or social dominance. The periodic conflagrations in Rwanda and Burundi are such an example.

Other internal wars consist of sectional and factional insurgencies and militant revolts against ruling regimes in the context of often-terrorized populations. Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, Angola, and contemporary Algeria provide various examples of these wars. Internal conflicts in Nigeria and Ethiopia have involved central governments battling against militant secessionist efforts.

While the domestic territory may serve as the primary location for conflict, neighboring states are often involved as safe bases for insurgent forces, havens for fleeing populations, conduits for forces and arms, and supporters and conciliators. Africa's internal wars do not take place within a vacuum. External manipulations and direct involvement impact contentious domestic situations. Often inter-state wars, in which sovereign states battle each other, take place in concert with internal wars. Sovereign states battle over borders, control of resources, regional hegemony, ethnic and racial solidarity and leadership.

War and the State in Africa

Why are African states so wracked with war? A past generation of African nationalists and political leaders saw the roots of Africa's wars in the psychological trauma, class contradictions, racist and ethnic oppressions, and imperialist machinations of colonialism and neocolonialism.¹¹ More recent portrayals and

¹¹Some classical statements include: Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), Kwame Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* (London: Panaf Books, 1968) 34; Amilcar Cabral, *Selected texts by Amilcar Cabral; revolution in Guinea, an African*

policy positions regard Africa's widespread warfare as a "retreat from modernity,"¹² or a reflection of the inability of Africans to engage in consensual rule, or a core dimension of the modernization process.¹³

There are both astute insights and false leads in these diverse explanations. Space does not permit that they be elaborated here. Whatever else it is, war is a profound crisis of the state. The immediate and particular causes of Africa's wars vary. Yet, as a collective phenomenon, the pervasive resort to sustained violence to maintain or challenge the political order tells us much about the contemporary state in Africa. War has its roots in the nature of the contemporary state in Africa, in terms of conflict among contending forces, or campaigns to suppress subordinate social forces, or the struggle over advantage and domination and liberation in context of new state structure.

Appreciating the complexities of the African State is a core analytical requirement of our problematic. For present purposes, it is argued that any systematic analysis of current political structures, processes, and capabilities in Africa must conclude that the contemporary African State is most often a composite, penetrated and contested state. This state exists within a global and regional structure of unequal individual and conjoined states. It also exists with various regime types (civilian, military, popular, authoritarian, one-party, multi-party), ideological elaborations (socialist, democratic socialist, nationalist, monarchist, redemptive), and marginalized economies.

The contemporary African State exhibits a complexity of political and authoritative structures. These structures include the formally sovereign, post-colonial states, largely demarcated by European imperialist penetration, and concretized in the broad agreement of Africa's post-colonial leadership to accept this interstate framework. There are also pre-existing, historic states and other political structures which, while no longer sovereign entities, commingle with, and challenge, contemporary states in terms of loyalty, legitimacy, efficacy, law, administration, and salience to the political and economic lives of citizens.

people's struggle (London: Stage 1, 1969) H.I.M. Haile Selassie I, Speech, February 28, 1968, California arranged and sang by Bob Marley and the Wailers, "War," *Rastaman Vibration*, (Island Records, 1976).

¹²Ali A. Mazrui, "Conflict as a Retreat from Modernity: A Comparative Overview," in Oliver Furley, ed., *Conflict in Africa* (London: I.B.Tauris and Co. Ltd., 1995), 19-27.

¹³There are some parallels in this theoretical depiction and that of violence being a result of process of modernization. Also Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1969).

The contemporary African state is also a penetrated state, because its sovereignty is often significantly compromised, Political processes are manipulated by external interests via the sponsorship of compliant leaders, political parties and media, through covert or overt intervention, and through the power to dictate national priorities and policies intrinsic to Africa's current subordinated position in the global economic order (international division of labor), manifested most prominently in the continent's aid dependency and "debt peonage."

The African State is also a challenged state as it is the open objective of deep-seated struggles among contradictory and fractious dominant and subordinate social forces. Intrinsic to the contemporary state in Africa is an ongoing struggle for hegemony.¹⁴ In all states, on a global basis, hegemony is something that has to be recreated and shored up on a daily basis through processes of socialization, indoctrination, legislation, and by police and military action.¹⁵ The domestic struggle for hegemony includes the contested ability of a politicized social force to establish and sustain its political, economic, and cultural dominance, project its ideology, and defend its felt needs in a given local political, economic, legal, and administrative formation. In much of Africa, domestic hegemony, and the political, economic, and social hierarchies it encapsulates, are only tentatively in place or still up for broad contestation. Interstate hegemonic struggles also impact domestic struggles for dominance through indirect intervention and neo-imperialism.

Political instability is intrinsic to the current state in Africa, as the struggle for hegemony is sharply ongoing. This struggle for hegemony continues on a daily basis in terms of the factions, fractions, perceptions, battle lines, and contentions within regularized politics. Politics can, and all too often does, become war when those currently holding the reins of state power are mightily challenged, or when there has been a steady, prolonged escalation of political violence to contain growing challenges, or when destabilization is orchestrated by external forces pursuing their own nefarious agendas. Authoritarianism, intolerance of opposition,

¹⁴See, for example, Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), Alan Wolfe, *Limits of Legitimacy: political contradictions of contemporary capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

¹⁵Hegemony as a state of affairs portrays a social order "in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations." Gwynn Williams, quoted in Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, (London: Quartet Books, 1973), 162.

fragile and ineffectual political institutions, preponderance of rhetoric over substance are all core facets of Africa's contemporary politics.¹⁶

The core characteristics of the state in Africa also expose the complexities and intractability of the root causes of Africa's many wars. Therefore strategies have to be fashioned that recognize these characteristics and their many specific empirical variations. The crux of the matter is that intrinsic conflict has to be managed, and the structural weaknesses and tensions of current state structures have to be transcended. We have more to say in this regard.

Africa's Wars: A Brief Overview

Algeria

In Algeria the current civil war between the armed forces of the military-lead state, state-armed militia and the militant forces of resurgent political Islam is essentially a struggle over political ideology and the distribution of national resources. Thus, it has cultural and class dimensions. The conflict also has international ideological and strategic dimensions in terms of external support for both the Algerian state and for the Islamist militants; and due to the presence of Algerians in France, the conflict is also affecting domestic French politics in the form of anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic legislation, hostile police action, and rabid verbal and physical attacks on Algerians and other Africans by racist political parties and hate groups.

Sierra Leone and Liberia

The decade-long turmoil in Sierra Leone and Liberia began as insurgencies against discredited, authoritarian regimes. They rapidly became complicated, vicious wars in which the armed forces of reconstituted transitional and elected governments have engaged in alliances and battles with insurgents, militias, mercenaries and sub-regional peacekeepers. Also involved as advisors, observers, conciliators, rescuers covert arms suppliers and assistance providers have been forces and representatives of the US, Britain, the OAU, and the UN. As in other wars, prominent supporting actors include arms dealers, oil and mining corporations, diamond smugglers and overseas communities. In addition, as in all the various wars across Africa, many groups in civil society (religious organizations, women's organizations, overseas communities) and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have sought to provide refuge and craft peace in the midst of conflict.

¹⁶Claude Ake *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1996), chapter 1.

More specifically in Sierra Leone, the war among the national army, multinational peacekeeping and insurgent forces, local militia groups, South African, British and other foreign mercenaries is part ethnic and class based sectional struggle, part inter-state combative diplomacy, part self-serving brigandage, and part cynical collusion among soldiers of fortune, diamond smugglers and mining companies. The war has significant continental and international facets. Precedents in regional diplomacy and peacekeeping are being set or solidified. Also, due to a bungled attempt to cover-up British involvement in the conflict, the nascent Labour government faced an early crisis of credibility and statecraft.

South Africa

South Africa's national liberation struggle against the Apartheid State was, firstly, a sectional struggle driven by profound racist oppression and class exploitation. The conflict had related underlying sectional and factional dimensions revolving around ideological, ethnic, and class schisms and solidarity within and among contending racial groups. The war for national liberation also had major inter-state, Pan-African, and Cold War dimensions in terms of continental and global anti-racist solidarity and struggles for strategic, economic, and ideological hegemony.

Rwanda and Burundi

In Rwanda and Burundi bitter ethnic and class divisions drive the episodic, explosive political violence. These historical enmities are interacting with transnational and sub-regional political solidarity and rivalries, resulting in violent domestic and inter-state politics. Similar, often related, insurgencies and inter-state alliances are a central facet of the longstanding struggle for political dominance and territorial integrity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sudan and Somalia

Race, religious and class forces drive the civil war in Sudan in an historical struggle over political dominance and autonomy. A clear international dimension is also present in the form of external support for the contending forces, and aggressive, punitive United States economic and political diplomacy. In Somalia a primarily sectional conflict pits clans against clans in a competition for political dominance and territorial autonomy.

Angola and Mozambique

The generation-long wars in Angola and Mozambique illustrate the range of participants and contentious issues involved in Africa's wars. Both conflicts began in the 1960s as primarily national liberation struggles among

competing nationalist forces and against the weak but intransigent imperial state, Portugal. Once formal national sovereignty had been won, the conflicts transformed into intertwined domestic struggles for political dominance and control of mineral and other prized national resources, and a regional war of neo-imperialist rivalry and destabilization. These conflicts have ranged Marxist-influenced state forces against contending domestic subordinate nationalist and insurgent forces. External states openly or covertly involved in the conflicts have been apartheid South Africa, Zaire, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Other significant participants have included the regional Frontline States, Portugal, and the UN. Supporting actors have included the numerous arms dealers, oil and mining corporations, diamond smugglers and overseas communities. Core contentious interests have centered on domestic and sub-regional ethnic, racial and class antagonisms, control of natural resources, Cold War strategic and ideological struggles, and the configuration of post-colonial state structures:

There is much that needs to be elaborated regarding the specifics of Africa's current wars. The immediate causes, the array of belligerents and supporting actors, and the plight of the many communities caught up in the warfare, all require detailed, committed research.

The Ethics and Characteristics of Africa's Wars

There is also much to reflect on as regards the character of warfare in Africa. A central realization is that Africa's wars can be distinguished by ethical considerations that focus on the objectives of the war and the character of the warfare. Not all wars are unjust; not all means are legitimate. In this ethical calculation, ideological and humanitarian considerations usually dominate our reasoning. It can be argued on ethical grounds that armed liberation struggles against intransigent racist, exploitative states (e.g. apartheid South Africa, Rhodesia, colonial Algeria) or violently repressive, sectional, corrupt regimes (Sudan, Zaire), are justifiable and legitimate responses of oppressed and exploited peoples. On the other hand, those wars that degenerate into largely rapacious, nihilistic insurgencies (Sierra Leone, Liberia), genocidal outburst of inter-communal hatred (Rwanda, Burundi), or drag on interminably and viscosly (Angola, Algeria) must be condemned for the destructive conflicts they have become, whatever the validity of original motivating factors.

Many of Africa's wars, however, are not readily classified as just or criminal conflicts. In these cases, the availability of other avenues to redress legitimate grievances, and the impact of war in terms of casualties, displaced communities, the level of destruction, are among the core bases of ethical evaluation.

Multiple local and external belligerents and supporting players are involved in Africa's wars. National armies, palace guards, insurgent and irregular forces, mercenaries, military advisors, arms merchants, financiers, mining concessionaires, exile communities and international peacekeepers are all prominent participants. There are also the rural and urban communities, individuals, organizations and personnel caught up in the warfare as targets, evacuees, and assistance providers; all engaged in a tortuous relationship with the protagonists.

The effects of war in Africa are many, profound and long term. A common feature is the brutality, summary justice, and large-scale refugee condition occasioned by Africa's wars. The warfare is often indiscriminately vicious, causing large numbers of civilian casualties and giving rise to millions of refugees and displaced people.

Africa has approximately 13 percent of the world's population; yet 35 percent of the world's refugees and displaced men, women and children are African. Put another way, 1-in-10 of continental Africa's 700 million people has currently been forced to flee their homes. Broad estimates of those killed in Africa's wars over the last 20 years range up to 4 million. Of this number, at least 3 million were civilians caught up in the bloodshed. Accommodating refugee movements can undermine already fragile political and economic structures in the host states that are often equally stressed communities.

Small arms proliferation has militarized civil societies, with destabilizing and harrowing results. Brigandage has become an act of war, and even a way of life, for many belligerents. More than 20 million land mines continue to kill and maim tens of thousands every year, in many cases after conflicts have been significantly muted or resolved. Critical livestock is similarly being ravaged. Families have disintegrated, and social structures shattered. Professionals, scientists, teachers, poets, novelists, journalists, and the intelligentsia in general have fled or been violently eliminated.

History and sociology inform us that in times of war, socially sanctioned and acceptable behavior is vitiated by what heretofore would be regarded as illegitimate, on the very margins of society. Societies are traumatized. Historic relations between parents and children, leaders and citizens, priests and followers and among neighbors break down. Your neighbors are killers; your pastor may be a killer; you are a killer; you are scarred; you are scared; you are bitter; or you are numb; or you have a complex range of conflicting emotions. All of this has resulted in numerous secondary casualties of war.

The narrow resource bases and already indebted national treasuries have been wasted on the procurement of material and mercenaries. Health care, sanitation, and other social assistance systems have been disrupted, resulting in outbreaks of cholera, and other epidemic diseases. Already limited, underdeveloped infrastructures have been destroyed. Subsistence and commercial agriculture has been dislocated due to the forced abandonment, burning, and looting of crops, the theft and killing of livestock, the breakdown of marketing channels, and the inability of farmers to prepare the land and plant the next season's crops. These tragedies have resulted in widespread hunger and sometimes famine. Also, domestic and foreign investors flee to be replaced by the inflation and profiteering of hot money chasing the financial gains of war. Consequently, the development agenda is stretched further into the future due to the costs of resettlement, reconstruction, clearing the mines, caring for the maimed, and much more besides.

The effects are long lasting. Recovery strategies need to be innovative, profound, and thoroughgoing. Africa's wars defy simple depictions. But they have core realities that can be explored to discern common causes, catalysts, driving forces, and impacts. This exploration can then serve as a significant resource basis for strategies of transcendence.

Conflict Resolution in Africa

Given the current prevalence of war in Africa, what are the strategies that are being adopted to stop and transcend war? To what degree do we have a sustained record of how these strategies are working out as processes on the ground? How do we understand conflict resolution in Africa as a theoretically and empirically grounded concept? So again, what do we know, what do we need to know still, what can we do?

The broad picture regarding conflict resolution is one of diverse, often uncertain, and sometimes controversial strategies with a mixed record of achievement. Currently in Africa, conflict resolution processes are fashioned or emerge in a piecemeal fashion. This involves an array of stopping the bloodshed, cease-fire, demobilization, reconciliation and rehabilitation measures. External intervention in Africa's wars to resolve conflicts has been as clear a reality as involvement in the prosecution of war. Thus, there is a broad range of local and international actors, pursuing actions that range from self-serving and strategic, to policing and peacekeeping, to humanitarian and diplomatic, to implementing.

Core issues regarding efforts to resolve Africa's current wars include the imperative of Africa getting its own house in order; the new departures in regional peacekeeping; the complexities of dispute resolution; the challenges of demobilizing

and reintegrating armed forces; and the strategies and challenges of post-conflict reconciliation and recovery.

Getting Our Own House in Order

There is a widely asserted need for Africa to get its own house in order. African states and commentators as well as the international community are expressing this sentiment. This crisis of profound political instability has to be overcome through the commitments and energies of Africans themselves.

From an African perspective, there are various goads prompting the urgency of self-help. There is continental pride, solidarity, and most significantly the long-standing tradition of conflict resolution in which we assist our neighbors. This tradition is being reinvigorated with new departures in regional peacekeeping. There is also general frustration, even exasperation, with the prevalence and intractability of some of the conflicts. Notable conflicts, such as those in Angola, Sudan, and Ethiopia, have been going on for decades. There is also the realization that all this strife is delaying the implementation of national and regional development initiatives, holding us back as other regions forge ahead. There is also the realization that in the end, peace can only be sustained if it is grounded in local realities and traditions. There is the complementary realization that external interveners in Africa's wars and conflict resolution efforts have often sought to shape and fashion processes according to their precepts and specific entrenched global interests.

Political influences from current global changes are also clearly impacting Africa's commitment to stability. Essentially this impact has two broad dimensions. First is the widespread demand for "democratization" and "economic liberalization". Second is the impact of the demise of the Soviet bloc and the subsequent withdrawal of support for African "socialist" regimes such as Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique.

The call for Africa to get its house in order is embodied in renewed calls and planning for an African interventionist force (The African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) and specific interventions by Nigeria, South Africa, and others to broker or impose stability). This strategy is, of course, not new. We recall that much earlier Kwame Nkrumah argued for the establishment of an All African People's Revolutionary Army.¹⁷ interveners, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN are supporting their actions through resolutions, diplomatic, and material support.

¹⁷ See Kwame Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare: A Guide to the Armed Phase of the African Revolution* (Panaf, London: 1968)

Precedents in conflict resolution are being established. These include direct military intervention by neighboring states such as Nigeria's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone, South Africa's efforts in Lesotho, Uganda's intervention in Rwanda, and Zimbabwe's, Uganda's and Angola's intervention in the current fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is also the hiring of private armies to both prosecute war and impose a halt to the fighting. The activities of Executive Outcomes and Sandline International in Sierra Leone provide a prominent example. There is also the evolution of the non-interference in internal affairs founding principle of the OAU.¹⁸

Getting Beyond the Vicious Circle

The struggle to avoid war has to be fought with commitment and coherence on as many fronts as war itself. There are vested interests at all stages in the transition to political and economic recovery. Recovery has to address war in all its facets and take place against a general background of Africa's already profound development needs. Recovery is also caught up in and structured by this same struggle for hegemony. However, this time, recovery is specifically in the struggle to shape and control a post-war future.

There is a core need for reconciliation at the level of the people rather than just at the level of leaders. If we are satisfied with reconciliation only at the level of leaders, we face the ever present danger that such resolution will be capricious, vulnerable to personal relations among temporary actors, rather than entrenched in institutions, understandings, shared commitments, and popular visions for the future. In contrast, reconciliation at the level of the people lessens the possibilities that future leader schisms will result in calls to and responses from masses of ordinary citizens that it is acceptable for leaders to couch political disputes and strategies in genocidal terms.

The goal has to be that the people will reject such leaders before they reject their fellow citizens. What does this involve? Civic education; the creative use of historical procedures and regulations; reinvigorating trusted institutions; breaking the political hold of historic and new enmities; substantive progress toward social, economic, and political equity; and training our next generation of scholars, intellectuals, and anti-war activists.

Another area requiring attention can be regarded as creative Pan-African statecraft. This Pan-Africanism will focus on aspects such as borders, citizenship, mobility, policy-making, institutions, peacekeeping, etc. There is a clear need to

¹⁸Compare the OAU stance regarding the Nigerian civil war of the 1960s and the current war in Sierra Leone.

transcend the legal, political, economic, and psychological barriers of the current state structure in Africa. Symbolic and substantive borders shape the arena of struggle, exacerbate historic rivalries, and create new rivalries. These boundaries also slow progress toward African unity.

This is not an exercise in romantic idealism, but rather, hardheaded practicality. Regional integration is a core element of the current phase of globalization. The European Union stands at the apex, but other examples include NAFTA, Caricom, LAFTA, and ASEAN. Sentiments of African unity have longer currency than that of European union; yet much remains to be done to turn sentiments into substantive, sustained economic integration and political union. The political vision that propelled the drive towards African Unity needs to be recaptured. The proposed African Economic Community (AEC) in 2025, if realized, would be a contribution. However, what is required is a greater vision that seeks the creation of regional institutions that would reinvigorate, strengthen and extend the current mandate and practice of the OAU. In the end the OAU has to transcend its current limits. At present, the organization is the only viable continental political institution. And it is our institution, i.e. created by Africans. Creative coordination between OAU and regional powers, such as Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt, has to be developed. Such cooperation between multinational institutions and regional hegemony is a reality elsewhere (e.g. Europe, the Americas). There is no reason why Africa should be exceptional in this regard.

This issue of regional powers and their responsibilities for balancing and stabilizing the politics of their sub-region has been long debated. Among the more recent discussions, Mazrui's writings are probably the most sustained and commented upon note. They have helped legitimize Nigeria's interventions in West Africa. Recent interventions by South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Angola in neighboring conflicts have brought this issue to the fore of the policy agenda.

Another key concern centers on enhancing coping strategies of the civilian populations in times of war. How do people survive the terror and rigors of war? What can be done to facilitate and enhance, and not get in the way of, exist coping strategies developed by the secondary casualties?

There is also the need for dedicated intervention philosophies, legal codes, strategies, and resources. Requirements include early intervention in simmering conflicts aimed at countering war-talk and preventing the escalation of initial clashes.

Other interventions include anti-mines legislation and banning small arms trade. Non-African countries have specific responsibilities in this regard. The

mercenaries, diamond smugglers, arms dealers, financiers, etc. are not from Mars. The United States, European and Asian countries must show greater diligence regarding the rapacious, cavalier activities of their own nationals in Africa's war zones. They must develop the political will to prosecute/sanction their own nationals once evidence is gathered of nefarious involvement in Africa's conflicts. African scholars and activists resident in Europe and North America have a particular responsibility to investigate, expose and agitate for action against the traffickers in arms and looted and smuggled resources.

There is also, of course, the need for the global community to devote much greater diplomatic commitment, manpower and resources to facilitate conflict resolution in Africa. There is much to be done to elaborate and realize these and other prevention, resolution, and recovery strategies. This is where the discussion is heading.

How do I know what I say I know? Thinking about *Slim's Table* and Qualitative Research Design

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No matter what their approach or predispositions, social scientists confront an important question at nearly all stages of the research process: How do I know what I think I know about the phenomena I am studying? Consider *Slim's Table*, sociologist Mitchell Duneier's book that challenges popular and academic stereotypes about black men of the inner city. Focusing on the patrons of the Valois cafeteria on Chicago's south side, Duneier argues that contrary to the conventional wisdom, there do exist men such as Slim and his friends who not only persevere, but also thrive in otherwise difficult urban conditions. The author draws these conclusions based on interviews and observations that he conducted during a multi-year ethnographic study of the Valois regulars. During this time, Duneier dined at the cafeteria, talked with Slim and others in semi-formal but usually informal interviews or free-flowing discussions during mealtime, and observed the men as they interacted with each other both at Valois and elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Specifically, Duneier finds that Slim and his friends do indeed recognize and apply high standards to their own and others' behavior. In short, "they possess some of the most important human virtues" including "pride, civility, sincerity, and discretion."¹ However, that does not mean that the men are superhuman; rather, while they are upstanding citizens in a variety of ways, the Valois regulars embody many of the same personal weaknesses and contradictions that all people struggle with as they go about their daily lives. Thus, in his conclusion, Duneier argues that we should remember that these men do exist and to some extent thrive in a challenging urban environment, but more important perhaps, that their experiences speak to men more generally, be they urban or rural, black or white, rich or poor. Put another way, Slim and his friends are significant because they challenge popular stereotypes and they can serve as role models for others, something that the book's subtitle (*Race, Respectability, and Masculinity*) and, in particular, the last chapter both suggest.

¹Mitchell Duneier, *Slim's Table* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 45.

While *Slim's Table* has been widely reviewed few academic critics have explored in any depth the methodological considerations that the book raises.² This is unfortunate given that one of the best ways to improve the business of qualitative research in general and ethnography in particular is for scholars to confront each other directly on questions of method and interpretation.³ Furthermore, making these issues explicit can help scholars to address more deeply the question that frames this essay: How do I know what I say I know? Certainly, philosophers and scientists have puzzled over this question for centuries, and scholars of all stripes rely on a variety of working criteria to help them navigate their respective intellectual and substantive landscapes.⁴ It is important to remember, though, that as fields develop, these criteria themselves are often in flux. As Kaplan argues: "Standards governing the conduct of inquiry in any of its phases emerge from inquiry and are themselves subject to further inquiry."⁵ Thus, by sidestepping questions of method and the bases of knowledge, too frequently scholars miss important opportunities to expand their ways of knowing. However, this does not mean that every study of the social world should begin with extended discussions about the philosophy of science; some work suggests those kinds of conversations better than others. And while this paper will focus primarily on the methodological choices that Duneier made as he studied the men of Valois, one could easily imagine how *Slim's Table* could serve as a launching pad for broader discussions about theories of inquiry and knowledge.

Thus, even though Duneier's book was published almost eight years ago, its popularity in undergraduate and graduate courses across the United States begs for exploring some of the design and presentation issues that it raises. This is the case for those interested in social science research in general or the specific arguments that Duneier attempts to make.

²See: Ellis Cashmore, "Café Society," *New Statesman and Society* (18 September 1992) 37; Judith Amory, "Sociology" *Wilson Library Bulletin* (March 1992) 100; Carolyn Ellis, "Reviews" *Contemporary Sociology* (1993 vol 23) 378; Scott Heller, "Over Countless Chicken Pot Pies, A View of Working-Class Men" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (29 July 1992): A8; Charles P. Gallmeier, "New Ethnographies" *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (1994 vol 23) 109-113.

³Karl G. Heider, "The Rashomon effect: When ethnographers disagree" *American Anthropologist* (1988 vol 90): 73-81; Gary King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁴Scott Gordon, *The History and Philosophy of Social Science* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁵Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964).

Methodological Transparency

Some academic reviewers have criticized *Slim's Table* because it lacks a methodological appendix describing how the author prosecuted his work and drew his conclusions.⁶ This is an important criticism given that the reliability and validity of the arguments that scholars make often turn on the procedures they employ; questions of substance and method are often impossible to disentangle. Having said that, however, this criticism is not quite accurate in Duneier's case. While it is true that *Slim's Table* lacks an extended methodological discussion, the author does disclose portions of his approach in a few scattered places throughout the book.

Generally speaking, readers do know that Duneier spent over four years as a participant observer at Valois, taking three meals a day with Slim and the other patrons. To his credit, the author does explain his note taking method and how he attempted to increase the reliability of his conclusions by seeking corroborating evidence from a range of informants (note 5 to chapter 1). However, even there he alludes to a distinction between "normal conversations" and "formal interviews" without explaining the difference. Two other points describe the logic he used in deciding how to handle the issue of confidentiality with his informants and certain physical locations in the city (note 6 to chapter 2; note 11 to chapter 8). Finally, in one last note he provides a vague explanation of how he drew conclusions about portrayals of black stereotypes in news stories: from a "careful, if unscientific examination" (note 3 to chapter 8). While these footnotes provide a start, they leave the reader interested in Duneier's methodology yearning for much more. Additionally, many basic questions remain unanswered: How did he decide which Valois regulars to include in his final analysis? Where were his efforts at data collection frustrated and how did he compensate? As he became close friends with some of the men, how did he wrestle with issues of "objectivity" that inevitably arise in this kind of study? In short, readers get only a small glimpse of how Duneier knew what he thought he knew when he wrote the book.

One should not infer from this criticism that Duneier's methods were necessarily sloppy or the database that he gathered inadequate. However, given what he discloses, it is impossible to say either way, which essentially is the crux of my argument. Put another way, one of the uncontroversial points in King, Keohane, and Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry* is that the procedures of social science should be made explicit and public.⁷ That is important in order for others

⁶Ellis, 378 and Gallmeier, 109-113.

⁷Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

to “judge the validity of what was done” and to “learn” from other researchers.⁸ In Duneier’s case, it is hard to either criticize or garner insights from his approach because he makes so few of his procedures transparent. That is not to say that *Slim’s Table* should be re-written as a methodological tome. Rather, a well-detailed appendix or prefatory chapter that makes explicit the procedures and database would have significantly improved the work’s substantive punch and its appeal to other academic researchers, an audience that Duneier himself claims he is attempting to reach. Even a simple map of the cafeteria’s floorplan would have helped to set the stage for the book.⁹ The general point is that scholars need not tie themselves in knots in order to fulfill this professional obligation to their colleagues. Good examples of methodological transparency are not difficult to find and include.¹⁰

The transparency critique is an obvious but important one to consider. *Slim’s Table* offers many more methodological points of entry, though, that few if any scholars have addressed specifically. Three in particular will follow: the role of triangulation, the possibility of integrating elements of experimental design in an ethnographic work, and the importance of assessing uncertainty when drawing conclusions.

Triangulation

A measurement can be considered reliable if over the course of multiple trials the researcher obtains the same results (within acceptable margins of error, of course). Scholars of all stripes, be they more qualitatively or quantitatively inclined, try to increase the reliability of their measurements and hence, their substantive conclusions. Duneier’s efforts to seek corroborating evidence from multiple patrons of Valois is important in this regard.¹¹ It suggests that he was sensitive to

⁸King et al., 8.

⁹See: Katherine J. Cramer “Grass-roots collective information processing: Making sense of politics through public discussion.” Paper presented at the *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting* 14-17 April 1999, Chicago.

¹⁰See: Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Home style: House members in their districts* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1978); John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1995); and Robin Wagner-Pacifici et al., “The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial: Commemorating a difficult past” *American Journal of Sociology* (1991 vol 97): 376-420.

¹¹See: Edward G. Carmines et al., “Reliability and validity assessment” Sage University paper series on quantitative applications in the social sciences, series no 07-017 (Newbury Park: Sage 1979) and Jerome Kirk et al., “Reliability and validity in qualitative research methods, series no. 1. (Newbury Park: Sage, 1986).

the reliability question and it reassures the reader that he attempted to present accurately the discussions he observed. However, by itself this approach can only carry one so far and raises the important issue of triangulation as a way to increase confidence in one's substantive conclusions.

In its common usage, triangulation refers to identifying a point of interest by observing it from a number of different angles. In social science this is sometimes taken to mean the kind of interviewing that Duneier conducted: if you want to know if a statement is true, try asking many people to confirm it. Triangulation in its most rigorous sense, however, implies much more than that; it involves bringing different sources and types of data to bear on a research question.

For example, in his study of the relationship between political participation and the receipt of different types of public assistance, Joe Soss relied on in-depth interviews with program participants that he then supplemented with statistical analyses based on data from the American National Election Studies (ANES).¹² Similarly, in a project that parallels Duneier's, Katherine Cramer supplemented her study of political talk in a neighborhood coffee shop by asking patrons to complete a questionnaire that included the same questions used in past versions of the ANES.¹³

That brief survey – conducted after lengthy fieldwork during which she gained the trust of the shop's patrons – allowed her to make interesting descriptive comparisons between the individuals she was studying and the population at large.

While both of these studies involved statistical analyses that supplemented in-depth interviews and participant observation, other methods can provide great insight as well. In Duneier's case, for example, some of his informants' recollections about past economic activity in the Hyde Park neighborhood – the "good ole' days" – could have been validated with city records that documented the number of small businesses in the area, or census information that described the nature of the population and its employment patterns. Even secondary sources such as local economic yearbooks would have been a helpful device. In fact, many of these resources are available a short trip north from Hyde Park at the Chicago Historical Society. There one can find extensive collections including books and other published materials, archives and manuscripts, and many prints and photographs.¹⁴ Specific archival collections of the Illinois Manufacturers Association from 1893-1986, and the papers of Claude A. Barnett, director of the

¹²Joe Soss, "Lessons of welfare: Policy design, political learning, and political action" *American Political Science Review* (1999 vol 93): 363-80.

¹³Cramer, 1999.

¹⁴Chicago Historical Society, <http://www.chicagohistory.org/research.html>. (Accessed on October 10, 1999).

Associated Negro Press, 1918-67, may have been especially helpful in Duneier's case. Thinking about triangulation as a search for alternative data sources germane to a research question is an important way for scholars to sharpen their conclusions¹⁵. The kind of historical evidence available at the Society not only would have served to confirm some of the recollections of the Valois patrons, but it also might have helped readers not directly familiar with Hyde Park to better understand the setting of Duneier's study.

Experimental Design

More and more scholars have begun to see the potential for using experimental designs in social research.¹⁶ When they can be run, experiments are powerful tools for helping researchers to make causal arguments about the social world. That is perhaps the main purpose of experimental designs in any field, be it medicine, psychology, or agriculture: to generate conclusions with high internal validity and to rule out rival alternative explanations of the phenomena under study.

There are two key elements of experimental designs that allow researchers to establish these high claims of internal validity. First is randomization in assignment of subjects to treatment and control groups. Second is control over the explanatory variable of interest. Taken together, these two elements increase the researcher's confidence that the variation in the dependent variable of interest is the result of manipulations in the key independent variable. One other important technique to note here is the class of studies known as "quasi-experiments."¹⁷ While researchers who use this approach are also concerned with drawing conclusions with high internal validity, because they often occur in natural settings, these designs lack the degree of control that one finds in true experiments.

It may seem somewhat odd to consider the role of experimental design in the context of an ethnographic study. However, whether one ever conducts an experiment or quasi-experiment as part of a research project, those who do not use experiments can profit from becoming knowledgeable about their principles and functions.¹⁸ By simply considering experiments as a viable design option it is

¹⁵Howard S. Becker, "Problems of inference and proof in participant observation" *American Sociological Review* (1958 vol 23): 652-60; also see King et al., 1994.

¹⁶Donald R. Kinder et al., *Experimental foundations of political science* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Kathleen M. McGraw et al., "Experimentation in political science: Historical trends and future directions." (1994 vol 4): 3-29.

¹⁷Thomas D. Cook et al., *Quasiexperimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979).

¹⁸Kinder et al., 1993 and McGraw et al., 1994.

possible that many scholars will begin to see new ways to use them (something that I will suggest in the case of *Slim's Table* in a moment). Additionally, considering possible threats to internal validity is one of the foremost preoccupations of scholars who conduct experiments or quasi-experiments. This is something that should concern all researchers, especially those who are interested in drawing causal inferences about social phenomena. And even if one never runs an experiment, studying how experimental researchers guard against these various threats – and there are many – can help others to think more carefully about the validity issues inherent in their own designs.¹⁹

Ruling out rival explanations of social phenomena is one of the great strengths of research designs built with experimental principles in mind. In this regard, arguably one of the main weaknesses of *Slim's Table* is that Duneier spends little time presenting and then considering other plausible reasons for the behavioral patterns and attitudes that he observed at Valois. It appears that he is so committed to the argument that it is “the black man’s inner strength” that allows men like Slim to persevere and thrive in urban America that Duneier does not seriously consider and rule out other possible factors.²⁰ One plausible alternative that could help to explain Duneier’s findings is the presence of powerful local institutions. Relatively speaking, the resolve of Slim and his friends might be less related to their own personal characteristics than with the neighborhood institutions, such as Valois, that exist in this part of Hyde Park. If that is the case, then one could reasonably argue that what creates the stability that Duneier observed are not necessarily impressive individuals, but stable institutions in this borderland region of the city. Even if one was uncomfortable stating the point that strongly, at least one might concede that if institutions are not *the* dominant factor explaining the results, certainly one could argue that it is the *interaction* of the men and their institutions – Valois, work, the other groups to which they belong – that drives Duneier’s findings. However, no such explanation is entertained in any depth.

Based on the accounts in the book, it does appear that there was at least one instance where Duneier could have leveraged the principles of experimental design to address this issue. The period of time during which Valois shut down for repairs provided an excellent opportunity for the author to test the rival explanation that the effect of institutions and not personal character was the main force at work. In

¹⁹Cook and Campbell 1979

²⁰Duneier, 26.

essence, the shutdown created a sort of naturally occurring quasi-experiment: a simple interrupted time series design.²¹

Given that Duneier was deeply engaged with the Valois regulars, one would assume that this event did not take him or the patrons by surprise. If that was indeed the case, taking careful note of the discussions and feelings of the men at time points before the closing, during the time Valois was shut down (something that Duneier begins to do on pp. 87-9), and then during the “debriefs” that occurred once the men were able to reconvene at their regular meeting place would have helped him to address the role that institutions played in the results that he was observing. Had some of the men formed an ad hoc eating club during the stoppage at Valois – perhaps at another local cafeteria or restaurant – that would have provided the author with an important type of control group against which he could have compared those who dined alone in other settings. Even though the design ideas mentioned here would be far from the ideal that one finds in a laboratory or even a well-designed field experiment, that does not vitiate the main point: thinking about experimental designs as a plausible research strategy can help scholars to see how they might be introduced in settings where they initially may seem inappropriate or even detrimental.

Reporting Uncertain

One important component of addressing the “how do I know what I think I know” question is to recognize that very few propositions in social research are either absolutely known or unknown. Conclusions are usually more or less certain. There are a number of conventions available to quantitative researchers that help to convey degrees of uncertainty, the most common being the “p-value” that accompanies parameter estimates in statistical models. For example, one usually sees regression coefficients tagged with an asterisk when they achieve statistical significance at the “ninety-five percent confidence level.” In those cases, the researcher is telling the reader that one can reject the null hypothesis with ninety-five percent confidence that the effect of the independent variable of interest is equal to zero. One way to assess levels of uncertainty in qualitative work is to consider the nature of the data that one has available for making inferences about social phenomena. Becker provides one way to do this with the following seven statements that convey different levels of certainty.²²

²¹Cook and Campbell, 1979.

²²Becker, 652-60.

1. Every member of a group said in response to a direct question that X is true.
2. Every member of a group volunteered the response that X is true.
3. Some proportion of a group either answered a direct question or volunteered the information that X is true, but the other proportion could not be questioned.
4. Some proportion of the group either answered a direct question or volunteered information consistent with X, but some proportion offered answers at odds with X.
5. No members of the group were asked questions or volunteered information on X but all members were observed to engage in behavior consistent with X.
6. Some proportion of the group was observed to engage in behavior consistent with X, but the remainder of the group could not be observed.
7. Some proportion of the group was observed to engage in behavior consistent with X, while the remainder of the group engaged in behavior at odds with X.

Becker's framework suggests a few steps that qualitative researchers might consider taking in reporting their results. First, studies such as Duneier's that are based on participant observation should make explicit the criteria that were used to assess confidence. In other words, a researcher should state that if a conclusion was based on A then she is more certain than if it was based on B; and conclusions based on B were more certain than those based on C, and so on. Second, in writing up the results of one's study, either embedded in the text or in some kind of tabular form at the end of a book chapter or in the discussion section of an article, the main conclusions might be listed in clear prose (i.e.: a short declarative sentence for each conclusion) with some indication of how much confidence the researcher has in each one. Not only would that help the reader to assess where the author might be talking in a more speculative versus a more confident mode, it would also suggest possible places where other scholars could press on with future research.

This kind of framework would have been quite useful to help sort out many of Duneier's claims. Consider these two statements about Bart, a white retired file clerk and one of the Valois regulars: "Through such conversations [with Bart] the men learned very little about Bart's beliefs and values, but they began to

comprehend something about his temperament.”²³ “The moral authority embodied in Slim’s caring behavior had pushed Bart to the limits of his own potential for tolerance, friendship, and respect.”²⁴ Based on Duneier’s discussion in the book, one might reasonably infer that he is more certain about the first statement than the second. On the former, he could actually question the men about their feelings and observe them as they interacted with Bart and each other in Bart’s absence. Given that the other men suggested that Bart was such a tough nut to crack during even casual conversation, it is doubtful that the author was ever able to obtain from Bart any direct confirmation of the second statement listed above. Rather, it is likely that Duneier drew this conclusion indirectly, relying more on his own discussions with Slim and his sitting buddies as well as observing the interactions between Bart and the other men at Valois. This is not to suggest, however, that one should subject every substantive claim in a book or article to Becker’s or some other framework. The examples here are simply to illustrate the larger point that it would serve the social scientific community well if scholars devoted more time to assessing and reporting on levels of certainty in their work.

How do I know what I say I know

Almost 100 years ago W.E.B. DuBois called America’s problem of the Twentieth Century the “problem of the color line.”²⁵ Clearly that problem still exists in a variety of contexts, and Duneier should receive high marks for attempting to provide new insights about it. Equally significant is his decision to focus on a sub-population within the urban black community that journalists and researchers have tended to neglect. Even though the men of *Slim’s Table* may represent a sort of statistical outlier, unrepresentative of most black men who live in the nation’s urban areas,²⁶ Duneier’s approach helps him to challenge popular stereotypes that emerge from studies that are based solely on aggregated statistical portraits of urban life. For that he has received much deserved praise.

Hopefully, readers of *Slim’s Table*, especially those who eventually will conduct future qualitative studies of their own, will consider seriously the methodological issues that this book raises, some of which are highlighted in this essay. In many ways, it is difficult if not impossible to disentangle considerations

²³Duneier, 7.

²⁴Ibid., 21.

²⁵William E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: New American Library, 1982 [1903]).

²⁶William Julius Wilson, *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

of substance and method in either designing, carrying out, or evaluating a study of social phenomena. Thus, scholars should consider these issues simultaneously, and when appropriate, larger questions about the bases of knowledge and knowing as well. In the context of *Slim's Table*, then, this essay provides at least a starting point for more explicit considerations about how one might design social research with an eye on the major question with which I began: How do I know what I think I know about the phenomena I am studying? If all scholars not only forced themselves to address that question, but also considered whether their readers could answer it based on the description of methods that appear in their books or articles, everyone interested in important topics such as black men of the inner city would benefit. And even though it can be difficult for econometricians to grasp all of the elements of an effective ethnography, or for ethnographers to follow the computational logic of complicated statistical models, we need not abandon the goal of attempting to describe the trade-offs and bridge the gaps between different methods of social research. If this essay helps to foster that kind of spirit, then it has done its job well.

marginalized in politics is an indicator, to me, of the importance of rugged individualism in the face of a system that rewards group pressure; of the failure of the academic rank without political application; and ends up being a case study in how to remain an ineffective minority.

Our charge together is to work toward becoming an effective minority in this country. If we are not successful, not only will we be second rank and marginalized in politics, we will be largely ignored because other minority groups will become more important and more effective than us.

Perhaps the most important issue of concern regarding the need for cooperation is the issue of reapportionment/redistricting, which will occur in 2001. Since the 1996 Supreme Court ruling in *Miller vs. Johnson*, that race could not be used as the primary criterion in drawing legislative districts,¹ some have cited a concern for the future of black political representation at the federal, state, and local levels of government.

The decision essentially reversed the opinion of the Supreme Court in the 1986 case of *Thornburg vs. Gingles* in which Court prohibited state legislatures

¹"Words to NCOSPS from Congresswoman Cynthia M. McKinney," in NCOSPS Newsletter, (Spring/Summer 1998), 5.

²*Miller v. Johnson*, 53 U.S. 4726 (1995).

A Preliminary Discussion on Alternative Electoral Systems and Black Legislators: A National Survey

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In her Awards Banquet address to the 29th annual National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) meeting in 1998, Georgia Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney issued a clarion call for black elected officials (BEOs) and black political scientists to come together. McKinney made the case that collaboration among BEOs and black political scientists is essential to enhancing black representation and political influence in the United States. In her words:

We have no choice but to work together. That we are so marginalized in politics is an indicator, to me, of the impotence of rugged individualism in the face of a system that rewards group pressure; of the failure of the academic track without political application; and ends up being a case study in how to remain an ineffective minority.

Our charge together is to work toward becoming an effective minority in this country. If we are not successful, not only will we be second rank and marginalized in politics, we will no longer count because other minority groups will become more important and more effective than us.¹

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¹"Words to NCOBPS from Congresswoman Cynthia M. McKinney," in *NCOBPS Newsletter*, (Spring/Summer 1998), 8.

²*Miller v. Johnson*, 63 U.S. 4726 (1995).

from diluting minority-voting strength.³ The U.S. Department of Justice used the *Thornburg* ruling to pressure Southern states to maximize the number of majority-minority legislative districts after the 1990 census. However, amidst charges of "racial gerrymandering," in 1993 the Supreme Court ruled in *Shaw vs. Reno* that districts drawn with race as the exclusive or predominant criterion could be found unconstitutional.⁴ While the ruling was vague, two years later, the Court clarified its position concerning factors determining the constitutionality of redistricting plans in *Miller vs. Johnson*. The 1996 case involved an irregularly shape elongated district along I-85 in Georgia that was said to have been drawn for racial reasons. Five persons in the 11th Congressional District of Georgia filed a suit alleging racial gerrymandering in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. In *Miller vs. Johnson*, the Supreme Court said race neutral principles, such as compactness, communities of interest, boundaries of political subdivisions, incumbency and others could be considered, but if race were the predominant factor, the plan was impermissible and unconstitutional.

As a result, the district was reduced from a 64 percent majority black to only 35 percent. The result of this and other cases has been that numerous majority black Congressional districts have been "reduced" to majority white districts with black populations as low as 31 percent. Also, in Georgia there was a reduction of 16 majority black State House and Senate districts as a result of a lawsuit by the same attorney, Lee Parks, who filed the *Miller vs. Johnson* suit.

In a comprehensive study concerning the increase in black representation in state legislatures and Congress, Wayne Arden, Bernard Grofman and Lisa Handley concluded that "the vast majority (86 percent) of African Americans serving in the state legislatures represent majority black districts."⁵ Their analysis shows that the drawing of more majority - minority districts under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), as amended in 1982, was the primary reason for the significant gains in the number of African American legislators after the redistricting of the 1980s and 1990s. The 1982 Amendment said a finding of discriminatory purpose was not necessary before a districting plan could be held to violate the VRA.

³*Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30 (1986).

⁴*Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630 (1993).

⁵"The Impact of Redistricting on African American Representation in the U.S. Congress and State Legislatures in the 1990s" in Georgia Persons ed., *Race and Representation*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 43.

Making the Case for Alternative Electoral Systems

In a recent book titled *Race and Redistricting in the 1990s*, which includes an analysis of several case studies involving the politics of race, redistricting and representation, Bernard Grofman shows that black legislative representation is likely to decline if we do not find new creative and innovative strategies to address the Supreme Court's decisions.⁶ One course of action is to explore alternatives to the single member district method of electing members of legislative bodies. Since state legislatures are responsible for redistricting/reapportionment after each dicennial census, it is important to ascertain black legislators' attitudes, views and interests concerning non-single member district election structures.

It should be noted that only four western industrial democratic nations utilize the 18th century, archaic winner take all system – Canada, France, Great Britain and the United States.⁷ The three major forms of alternative voting are: 1) Limited Voting – voters either cast fewer votes than the number of seats or parties nominate fewer candidates than there are seats (for example, in a race to elect five candidates, voters are given two votes and winners are determined by a simple plurality); 2) Cumulative Voting – voters cast as many votes as there are seats; however, they can concentrate their votes on one or more candidates (for example, in a race to elect five candidates, voters can cast all five votes for one candidate or any combination between 2 – 5 candidates with the top five elected being the highest vote getters); and 3) Choice Voting or Single Transferable Vote – voters rank candidates and the winners are determined by the threshold number of voters who would live in a single member district if drawn or minimum number necessary based on number of seats and ballots. Candidates reaching the threshold are elected after counting first choice, and surplus ballots for them are transferred to the remaining candidates based on voter preference until remaining seats are filled. (Example – in a race to elect nine seats, voters rank as many candidates as they choose. Ten percent is the threshold and 90 percent of voters will help elect a candidate).

African American legislators in Georgia, Texas and Tennessee have proposed proportional representation (PR) legislation related to judicial elections, school districts and state legislatures. Others in Florida, Massachusetts, South Carolina and North Carolina have contacted the Center for Voting and Democracy

⁶Bernard Grofman, *Race and Redistricting in the 1990s* (New York: Agathon Press, 1998).

⁷See Douglas J. Amy, *Proportional Representation* (North Hampton: Crescent Street Press, 1997).

in Washington, D.C. for data and information on proportional representation systems. Under proportional representation, legislative bodies are elected from multi-seat districts in proportion to the number of votes received.

This method of electing legislative bodies seeks to ensure that political parties or candidates will have the approximate percent of legislative seats as their level of votes received in the election without having to finish first to win a seat. This method reduces the number of votes required for a candidate/party to win a seat and thus requires less campaign funds. It makes it easier for racial and/or political minorities to win seats without the need to draw majority people of color districts. Such a race-neutral method may be the remedy needed to overcome recent Supreme Court rulings and maintain or even enhance African American opportunities to elect representatives of their choice.

There have been more than 50 federal district court decisions in which the judges have permitted the use of PR as a remedy in county, municipal and school system elections. Alabama and Texas are the two states in which the majority of federal court rulings permitting PR as a remedy have occurred. In Alabama, the Alabama Democratic Conference (the Black Political Caucus of Alabama political leadership) filed the landmark suit, *Dillard vs. Crenshaw County, et.al.* in 1985, challenging the at large elections in 180 political jurisdictions. The result of this historic case was a settlement agreement in which 32 different governing bodies (three county governments, 28 municipalities and a county Democratic Committee) now use a form of alternative voting. Among the various alternative voting systems adopted were limited voting, cumulative voting and a pure at-large system without numbered places.⁸

Attitudinal Survey

The remainder of this paper will focus on the findings of a 1998 national survey of the membership of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL). At the December 1997 annual conference of the NBCSL, a resolution was passed to create a Task Force on Alternatives to the Single Member District Election Method. The first step was to ascertain the members' knowledge level of the issue and their major concerns with proportional representation, and to determine the most effective major activities to best disseminate information and foster understanding of the concept and its application. The national survey is the

⁸An excellent analysis of the history of the Alabama experience with alternative voting is provided in Jerome Gray, "Alternative Voting in Alabama," paper presented at the 30th annual meeting of the *National Conference of Black Political Scientists*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, March 10-13.

first phase of a larger, multi-year project that will involve the formation of a coalition of national organizations that have been involved in reapportionment/redistricting struggles over the past three decades. To date, we have received positive responses from Julian Bond, Chairperson of the NAACP Executive Board; Congressman James Clyburn, Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus; and Jane Smith President, of the National Organization of Negro Women, Jerry Henderson, Executive Director of the National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO) and Representative James Thomas, President of the NBCSL have also agreed to join the coalition. Numerous political scientists from eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the South have been recruited to participate in the education/training of legislators, civil rights and community leaders.

Methodology

The following data is derived from the responses of 106 of the 575 members of the NBCSL. The questionnaire was pretested in April 1998 using a focus group of eight state legislators who were attending a meeting of the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) in Washington D.C. The instrument was then revised and mailed out to the membership in late April. Three weeks after the mailing, follow-up phone calls were made to determine whether the survey had been received and to inquire whether it had been completed and returned. Forty-seven letters were returned as undeliverable. During the next two months, the research assistants did additional follow up calls in two week intervals. Survey instruments were also faxed to legislators who indicated they had either not received or had misplaced the instruments. In July 1998, the author took questionnaires to the annual meeting of the NCSL in Las Vegas and a workshop on the Tobacco Settlement in Washington D.C. in August 1998 to secure the final group of completed surveys. The following is a summary of the major findings presented in two sections: 1) the aggregate responses, and 2) cross tabulations using the variables of gender, age, tenure, geography and racial constituency.

Demographic Profile

Aggregate Responses

Table 1: Gender

Males	62%
Females	32%
No Answer (NA)	6%

Sixty-two percent were males; 32 percent females; and 6 percent did not answer.

Table 2: Age

20-29	1%
30-39	3%
40-49	30%
50-59	30%
60 and Above	17%
NA	19%

Thirty percent were 40-49 years; 30 percent were 50-59; 17 percent were 60 and above; 1 percent were 20-29; 3 percent were 30-39; and 19 percent did not answer.

Table 3: Tenure

1-5 years	22%
6-10 years	38%
11-15 years	14%
16-20 years	6%
21 years or more	7%
NA	13%

Thirty-eight percent served 6-10 years; 22 percent were in office 1-5 years; 14 percent each had tenure of 11-15 and 16-20 years; 13 percent gave no answer; and those in office 21 or more years were 7 percent of the sample.

Table 4: Geography

Urban	72%
Rural	14%
Suburban	9%
NA	5%

Seventy-two percent represented an urban constituency; 14 percent were from rural areas; 9 percent from suburban areas; and 5 percent did not answer.

Table 5: Racial Constituency

Majority Black	79%
Majority White	10%
Other	8%
NA	5%

Seventy-nine percent had majority black constituencies; 10 percent majority white; 8 percent other; and 3 percent gave no response.

Attitudes Toward Multi-Member District Elections

Table 6: Involvement in Multi-Member District Election

Involved	12%
Not Involved	81%
NA	7%

Only 12 percent have been involved in multi-seat district elections; 81 percent had not been involved; and 7 percent said they did not know or did not answer.

Table 7: Knowledge of PR

Familiar with PR	42.5%
Unfamiliar	41.5%
Don't Know (DK)	7.5%
NA	8.5%

Forty-two and one-half percent were familiar with the concept of proportional representation; 41.5 percent were unfamiliar; 7.5 percent responded don't know; and the remaining 8.5 percent did not answer.

Table 8: Information

Desire More Information	91.5%
Did Not Want More	3.8%
DK	2.8%
NA	1.9%

Ninety-one and one-half percent desired more information on PR; only 3.8 percent did not want more information; 2.8 percent responded don't know; and 1.9 percent gave no answer.

Table 9: Value of Information

Assist in Reapportionment Negotiations	80%
Unsure Whether Data is Helpful	18%
NA	2%

Eighty percent said such information would assist them in negotiations during the next round of reapportionment; 18 percent did not know if the data would be helpful; and 2 percent gave no answer.

Table 10: Knowledge of PR's Impact

Knowledge of federal court rulings on cases	19%
Unaware of court cases	70%
DK	9%
NA	2%

Seventy percent were unaware that in more than 50 cases the federal courts had permitted PR as a remedy; only 19 percent were aware of such cases; 9 percent responded don't know; and 2 percent did not answer.

Perspectives on The Likely Impact of PR on Elections

Table 11: Constitutional/Legal Impediments to PR in State

Unaware of whether there are Legal Impediments	64%
Aware of Legal Impediments	13%
DK	16%
NA	7%

Sixty-four percent did not know whether there were constitutional or legal impediments to the use of PR in their state; whereas 13 percent said there were none; 16 percent said do not know; and 7 percent did not answer.

Table 12: Views on Impact of PR on Election of Black Candidates

Easier to Elect	31%
More Difficult to Elect	11%
No Impact	9%
DK	40%
NA	9%

Thirty-one percent said adopting PR would make it easier to elect people of color and women; 11 percent said it would make it more difficult; 9 percent said it would have no impact; a plurality of 40 percent said they did not know the impact; and 9 percent gave no answer.

Table 13: Consideration of PR by State Legislatures

No Serious Debate/Discussion	82%
Some Debate	8%
DK	8%
NA	2%

Eighty-two percent said there had been no serious debate/discussion of PR in their state; only 8 percent said such debate had occurred; while 8 percent said they did not know; and 2 percent gave no answer.

Table 14: Views on Multi-member District Elections

Support	28%
Oppose	36%
DK	33%
NA	3%

Only 28 percent said they favored an electoral system which may result in a multiple party system with candidates elected by a plurality; 36 percent said no; 33 percent said they did not know; and 3 percent gave no answer.

*Education Methods***Table 15: Best Ways to Adopt PR**

State Legislative Enactment	36%
Initiative/Referendum	17%
Federal Court Ruling	16%
Local Government	9%
DK	22%

Respondents said the best ways to promote PR in their state were state legislative enactment (36 percent); initiative/referendum (17 percent); federal court directive (16 percent); local government adoption (9 percent); and 22 percent said don't know.

Table 16: Difficulty in Educating Constituency About PR

Somewhat Difficult	32.1%
Average Difficulty	25.5%
Very Difficult	23.6%
Somewhat Easy	3.8%
Very Easy	1.9%
DK	11.3%
NA	1.9%

Regarding the degree of difficulty involved in educating their constituency regarding how to use PR, 32.1 percent said somewhat difficult; 25.5 percent said average difficulty; 23.6 percent said very difficult; only 3.8 percent said somewhat easy; 1.9 percent responded very easy; 11.3 percent said don't know; and 1.9 percent gave no answer.

Table 17: Best Vehicles to Educate Constituency About PR

Churches	30.2%
Radio	25.5%
Community Organizations	16.0%
Newspapers	8.5%
Cable TV	5.7%
Others	2.8%
DK	7.5%
NA	3.8%

The best ways to educate constituents about PR were said to be: churches (30.2 percent); radio (25.5 percent) and community organizations (16.0 percent); newspapers were next at (8.5 percent), followed by cable TV with (5.7 percent); (7.5 percent) don't know; (3.8 percent) no answer; and (2.8 percent) other responses.

Table 18: Best Ways to Educate State Legislators

Focus Groups	31%
Audio-Visual Presentations	25%
Role Play/Simulation	25%
Brochures	10%
Lectures	9%

The most useful educational tools cited to explain the PR concept to legislators were: small focus groups (31percent); audio-visual presentations (25 percent); role play/simulation exercises (25 percent); brochures (10 percent); and lecture presentations (9 percent).

Legal Challenge to Redistricting in 1990s

Table 19: Experience with PR

Involved with Legal Challenge	37.7%
Not Involved	56.6%
DK	1.9%
NA	3.8%

Only 37.7 percent of the respondents' districts were involved in legal challenges during the 1990s; while 56.6 percent were not; 1.9 percent said don't know; and 3.8 percent did not answer.

Table 20: Involvement with Redistricting Activities

Yes	71.7%
No	25.5%
NA	2.8%

*Cross Tabulation Analysis***Table 24: Comparison of Male and Female Views on Exploring PR**

	Males	Females
Yes	63.1%	64.7%
No	24.6%	23.5%
DK	12.3%	11.8%

The male response to whether alternatives to single member district voting should be explored was as follows: 63.1 percent said yes; 24.6 percent said no; and 12.3 percent responded did not know. The female response was similar: 64.7 percent said yes; 23.5 percent said no; and 11.8 percent did not know.

Table 25: Level of Support for PR by Gender

	Male	Female
Yes	33.8%	35.3%
No	33.8%	35.3%
DK	32.4%	29.4%

Concerning whether they felt comfortable supporting an election from multi-member districts, 33.8 percent of the male legislators responded yes; 33.8 percent said no; and 32.4 percent answered do not know. The female answers were 35.3 percent no; 35.3 percent yes; and 29.4 percent did not know. Thus, there was no noticeable difference between the sexes regarding the need to explore alternative election methods.

Table 26: Support To Explore Alternative Election Methods By Age

Age	Yes	No	DK	NA
20-29	100%			
30-39	33.3%	66.7%		
40-49	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%	
50-59	62.5%	28.1%	9.4%	
60 and Above	88.9%		11.1%	

However, among the age groups there were significant differences. One hundred percent of respondents in age group 20-29 years of age said yes; respondents ages 30-39 were divided as 33.3 percent said yes and 66.7 percent said

Almost 71.7 percent of the sample were involved in redistricting/reapportionment activities in their state; only 25.5 percent were not involved in such activities; and 2.8 percent gave no answer.

Table 21: Views on Difficulty of Next Redistricting Session

More Difficult	54.7%
Same as Last	24.5%
Less Difficult	4.7%
DK	10.4%
NA	5.7%

Approximately 54.7 percent said the next redistricting session would be more difficult; 24.5 percent said about the same; and only 4.7 percent said less difficult; 10.4 percent responded don't know; and 5.7 percent did not respond to the question.

Table 22: Views on Citizen Commission to Redistrict

Support	9.8%
Oppose	55.7%
DK	16.0%
NA	8.5%

Only 19.8 percent supported the concept of a citizen's commission to draw the legislative districts after the next census; 55.7 percent opposed the use of such a commission; 16 percent said don't know; and 8.5 percent gave no answer.

Table 23: Impact of Demographic Changes on Drawing Single Member Districts

More Difficult	29%
Not More Difficult	49%
DK	14%
NA	8%

Only 29 percent said demographic changes would make it more difficult to draw single member districts which are likely to elect black state legislators; 49 percent said not more difficult; 14 percent did not know the effects; and 8 percent gave no answer.

no; 57.1 percent of the 40-49 age group said yes, 28.6 percent said no; and 14.3 percent did not know. Among those ages 50-59, 62.5 percent said yes; 28.1 percent said no; and 9.4 percent did not know. Among respondents 60 and above, 88.9 percent said yes; 11.1 percent responded do not know. Interestingly, the youngest and most senior members were the most receptive to alternative electoral methods.

Table 27: Support for Multi-Member Electoral Districts By Age

Age	Yes	No	DK	NA
20-29	100 %			
30-39	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	
40-49	28.6%	33.3%	31.0%	7.1%
50-59	46.9%	31.3%	18.7%	3.1%
60 and Above	27.8%	38.9%	33.3%	

The same age groups were asked if they felt comfortable supporting a method which involves election from multi-member districts, and again the one legislator in age group 20-29 responded yes. Respondents ages 30-39 were equally divided, 33.3 percent said yes; 33.3 percent said no; and 33.3 percent did not know. Legislators ages 40-49 responded as follows: yes, 28.6 percent; no, 33.3 percent; 31 percent did not know; and 7.1 percent gave no answer. Respondents ages 50-59 answered as follows: 46.9 percent said yes; 31.3 percent said no; 18.7 percent did not know; and 3.1 percent gave no answer. Respondents 60 and above years of age replying yes was 27.8 percent; no was 38.9 percent; and 33.3 percent did not know. The youngest legislator was most willing to support an alternative, while those 50-59 were the second most supportive segment and the 60-69 group was the least interested.

Table 28: Support for Election in Multi-Member District By Plurality Vote By Tenure

Years in Office	Yes	No	DK	NA
1-5	47.8%	34.8%	17.4%	
6-10	47.5%	25.0%	25.0%	2.5%
11-15	26.7%	46.7%	26.7%	
16-20	66.7%	20.0%	6.7%	6.7%
21 and Above	66.7%	33.3%		

Regarding support of the election of candidates winning seats in a multi-member district by a plurality vote, of those serving 1-5 years in office, 47.8 percent responded yes; 34.8 percent said no; and 17.4 percent did not know. For those in office 6-10 years, 47.5 percent said yes; 25.0 percent said no; 25.0 percent did not know; and 2.5 percent gave no answer. Of those serving 11-15 years in office, 26.7 percent said yes; 46.7 percent said no; and 26.7 did not know. Individuals serving 16-20 years in office responding yes was 66.7 percent; no was 20 percent; 6.7 percent did not know; and 6.7 percent gave no answer. Individuals serving 21 and above years in office answering yes was 66.7 percent, and those responding no was 33.3 percent. Rather surprisingly, those with the greatest seniority and legislators with the second longest tenure were the most supportive of multi-member plurality elections.

Table 29: Support for Multi-Member Election by Plurality Vote by Geographical Constituency

	Yes	No	DK	NA
Urban	50.0%	29.0%	19.7%	1.3%
Rural	66.7%	26.7%	6.6%	
Suburban	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%

Based on their geographical constituency, members were asked if they support election of candidates winning seats in a multi-member district by a plurality vote. Those responding yes from urban areas were 50.0 percent; no, 29 percent; 19.7 percent did not know; and 1.3 percent gave no response. Among those representing rural areas, 66.7 percent responded yes; 26.7 percent said no; and 6.6 percent did not know. Of the individuals representing suburban areas, 11.1 percent said yes; 33.3 percent said no; 44.4 percent did not know; and 11.1 percent gave no answer. Urban legislators, who were more than 7 in 10 of the sample, were the strongest proponents of proportional representation, while the suburban legislators were the least supportive of change in the election method.

Table 30: Support for Exploration of Alternatives to Single Member District by Geography

Constituency	Yes	No	DK	NA
Urban	64.5%	23.7%	11.8%	
Rural	60.0%	40.0%		
Suburban	66.7%	11.1%	22.2%	

The respondents were then asked, based on geographical constituency, "Given the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Miller v. Johnson* 1995 and related cases in which it said race could not be a major criterion used to reapportion/redistrict, do you believe alternatives to the single member district should be explored?" Individuals in urban areas responding yes was 64.5 percent; 23.7 percent said no; and 11.8 percent did not know. Those in rural areas responding yes was 60.0 percent and those responding no was 40.0 percent. Individuals in suburban areas responding yes was 66.7 percent; no was 11.1 percent; and 22.2 percent did not know. The results indicate almost identical responses among the three geographically situated groups of legislators with a range of 60 to 66.7 percent.

Table 31: Support for Multi-Member District Plurality Election Based on Race of Constituency

Racial Constituency	Yes	No	DK	NA
Majority Black	51.2%	27.4%	19.0%	2.4%
Majority White	36.4%	45.4%	18.2%	
Other	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%	

Based on their racial constituency, respondents were asked whether they support a candidate winning a seat in a multi-member district by a plurality vote. Those members with constituencies classified as "other" responding yes was 37.5 percent; no was 25.0 percent; and 37.5 did not know.

Those with a majority African American constituency responding yes was 51.2 percent; no was 27.4 percent; 19 percent did not know; and 2.4 percent gave no answer. Those with a majority white constituency responding yes was 36.4 percent; no was 45.4 percent; and 18.2 percent did not know. While the only group with majority support for proportional representation was from majority black districts, the other two groups had 36 and 37 percent support.

Table 32: Support for Exploring Alternatives to Single Member District Elections

Racial Constituency	Yes	No	DK
Majority Black	65.5%	26.2%	8.3%
Majority White	63.6%	18.2%	18.2%
Other	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%

Finally, the legislators were asked, "Given the Supreme Court decision, *Miller v Johnson*, do you believe alternatives to the single member district election method should be explored?" Those members with constituencies classified as other had 37.5 percent responding yes; 25.0 percent said no; and 37.5 percent did not know.

Those with a majority African American constituency responding yes was 65.5 percent; no was 26.2 percent; and 8.3 percent did not know. Those with a majority white constituency responding yes was 63.6 percent; no was 18.2 percent; and 18.2 percent did not know. It is a very positive development that approximately two-thirds of the legislators from majority black and majority white districts desire to explore new electoral methods.

Conclusion

Overall, there is a significant interest among black legislators in proportional representation. Perhaps the four most important responses were: 1) 91.5 percent desired more information about PR; 2) 80 percent said such information would assist them in negotiations during the next reapportionment; 3) 82 percent said there was no serious debate/discussion in their state on PR; and 4) 70 percent were unaware of the more than fifty cases in which federal courts have permitted PR as a remedy in voting rights cases.

The data also indicates that there are major challenges as well as significant opportunities for black political scientists, BEOs and civil rights organizations to work together to make an impact on the political system in 2001. However, a commitment must be made now to assist in the educational and training activities necessary to ensure that in the next round of redistricting there will be viable options to the single member district election method. BEOs, black political scientists and other leaders must work to ensure that the maximum number of options are made available to increase black political representation. Thus, strategies and techniques must include the full range of political and legal techniques, including alternative electoral systems. In the 1990s round of reapportionment/redistricting, black political leaders employed the following techniques:

1. Negotiated with white Democratic political leadership to increase the number of Black majority districts.
2. Independently formulated and supported alternative reapportionment plans.

3. Use threats of filing law suit or appeal to U.S. Department of Justice to pressure the legislature to "do the right thing".
4. Formed tactical coalition with Republicans to achieve mutually beneficial redistricting outcomes.

This essay suggests that considerable effort needs to be devoted in the next redistricting struggle to educating and training the black community to seek remedies in legislative bodies and the federal courts to adopt alternative electoral systems where feasible. The data on such remedies show that the results in Alabama and Texas have actions in an increase in black and Hispanic representation. Thus, this would appear to be one viable option. Finally, it is interesting to note that Associate Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, the swing vote in the many 5 – 4 decisions striking down race based redistricting plans, has said proportional representation is a race neutral option that he can support.⁹

⁹*Holder v Hall* 512 US 874 (1994).

Ideology and Politics: Their Status in Afro-American Social Theory¹

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The great visibility accorded political struggle, in the U.S. black community over the 1960's, has obscured the fact that this group of people still lack a compelling model of themselves, of their purposes in North American society, and of the kind of reasoning which can generate such a model. We see this among political activists when we examine recent controversies over a "race" or a "class" interpretation of the black community, the call to join traditional African customs, the attempts to prevent the rise of a "nationalism" within the black community, the effort to implant "scientific" analysis or the vain search for a glorious black history which has no present and for which nobody has demonstrated a need. The result has been a failure to develop a radical politics which can make unambiguous demands on the American state.

The times seem much like they were in the Age of Washington when social initiatives passed from the hands of blacks into those of Southern and National spokesmen and industrial activists. Yet today as the corrective changes from the Civil Rights Movement have been given such wide attention, it has been difficult to keep persistent theoretical problems in focus and to resolve them. The basis for a militant, self-confident critical assessment of American society was severely modified with the removal of racial segregation. Thus to discuss the problem of ideology and politics, even in terms of the remote future of the black community, challenges us to a new description of contemporary social structure accounting for extensive changes and estimating limits. In order to see the relationship between that structure and theoretical problems it will be useful to relate present day trends to those prevalent during the previous "age."

My working assumption is that, as a matter of principle, the general population is directly confronted by social institutions and adjusts according to a

¹This essay is developed from comments first prepared for presentation at the fifth annual *Conference of the Association of African Historians*, Center for Inner City Studies, Chicago, IL, February 13-16, 1975. Because the subject matter of this essay is seldom evaluated in terms used here I had projected numerous extended substantive footnotes. These have been kept to a minimum both for reasons of time and to limit digressions from the argument.

survival criterion.² We can call this the most elemental force to all individual social action. In the prior historical epoch (circa 1877-1915) when those adjustments took the form of subordination behind the developing walls of racial segregation, individual leaders took it upon themselves to articulate a "theory" to affirm the adjustment. In another epoch, the post segregation era in which we are now, another adjustment is occurring also of massive proportions and, returning to form, other spokesmen are attempting to articulate this motion. Now as then those responsible for the ideology, while they may be condemned for many valid reasons, do stand close to actual changes that people are going through. Today the general black population seems to be readjusting after the upheavals of the Civil Rights Era.

On the face of it these are commonplace remarks with which many would agree. Yet today we seldom hear an effort made to say who is supporting the adjustments and how that group should be approached theoretically. If we were to speculate we might conclude that they are the proverbial cultural or revolutionary nationalists, the new communists, the scientific socialists or the Pan-Africanists. We would be in error in each case. The problem of this essay is to discuss why this question has been so seldom asked or meaningfully answered. In the process it will be necessary to characterize the malaise which has undermined the critical forces in the black community and foisted on them a style of analysis which is escapist. It is my hope that by so doing we can push political discussion beyond mere ideological debate and restore to it both a capacity to criticize social practice and the potential to engender, among black people, a receptive response to progressive politics. So while we may agree pro forma with the need to define the social character of the Post-Civil Rights black community, it should be remembered that this has special importance for those unhappy with the beast.

The Rise of a New Elite

In order to identify those elites who are more intimately connected with mass adjustments, their politicking and their ideology, we can take a hint from a process of analysis used by Frantz Fanon in his evaluation of revolutionary Algeria.³ There he identifies a group of native politicians aligned with the

²Generally I use this term "social institutions" to cover three distinct forms of institutions; political, economic and cultural which may be isolated for purposes of analysis but which interact dialectically to create a given social situation. The epistemological basis for this procedure is in the work of Harold Cruse. See *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow, 1967).

³Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, (New York: Grove, 1965), trans. by Haakon Chevalier with intro. By Adolfo Gilly. Cf. E.J. Hobsbawn, "Passionate Witness," 20 *New York Review of Books* (Feb., 22, 1973): 6-10 and Jack Woddis, *The New Theories of Revolution* (New York: International, 1972).

cosmopolitan sector of the settler politicians and occupying privileged positions relative to the mass of natives. This group assimilates and functions according to the rationalist thought criteria prevalent among the settler bourgeoisie. Such principles ultimately lead it to serve a dynamic nationalist function starting from a class demand for larger participation in the present governing set-up, a demand which becomes increasingly extreme, provoking "repression," expulsion, a resort to independent party organizing, suppression of the elitist party, and finally a resort to the mass party out of which a movement is generated to reclaim the territory and expel the settlers.

This little group of native liberals thus carry through a process which eventuates in a self-determining situation in which a people are now confronted with all the problems and opportunities of an independent social existence. While the particulars of Algeria do not apply to North America, the way in which Fanon conceptualized decolonization there is useful methodologically if we focus on the discrete phases of the process. Thus in terms of formal modeling, we can identify each phase, say what is positive or negative about it, the empirical indices which allow us to project the probability of proceeding beyond a given stage, the changing class dynamics⁴ of each phase (e.g. the extent to which the internal strata maintain traditional or customary loyalties) and how the character of either phase predisposes the general movement towards more or less humane ends. Generally speaking Fanon's model would judge the movement more humane the extent to which prior, received class configurations are dialectically resolved into a new "nation."

In the Afro-American situation I think it is possible to apply Fanon's ideal type. We can identify an equivalent group of activists, relate them institutionally to cosmopolitan sectors of the American bourgeoisie and chart the conflicts or tension between the two groups. In terms of such a process the Civil Rights Movement can be understood in a historically specific sense. We find, however, that the Afro-American elite's function is less progressive than that imputed by the ideal type. Generally the character of the struggle perpetuated by the black elites of North America never set up a situation in which either that sector or any other in the black community could be transformed beyond their received social roles--unless it be toward closer approximations of the authentic models of such

⁴The significance of class categories is tied to the productive relationships in modern capitalist society. Yet the advantages such a society maintains in relation to other societies (e.g. neo-colonialism) depends on politically significant groups who may have no economically productive role. "Class" then is a strained use which, in these cases, may depend more on status or custom and have a different functional significance than is usually the case. I continue to use "class," though without any "scientific" pretensions and consider it part of the broader problem of taxonomy that I briefly discuss below.

roles prevalent in white society. Two mechanisms had accounted for such transformation in the ideal model: (1) the generation, by the liberal activists, of absolute claims against the (settler) state--a condition forced on them by the nationalist demands of another more numerous stratum and concretized in a demand for the land, and (2) the total affirmation of violence which fastened a cover of seriousness onto the struggle and set a tough criterion of skepticism within which any compromise would be evaluated.

In the United States, on the contrary, the state was looked upon as an object to get into and as nearly as it was possible to have an "official" black position on political conflict it was to be grounded in a so-called philosophy of non-violence. The result was an incomplete "black" revolution considered peculiar to North America in which the largely homogenous former slaves developed internal stratification and made peace with the American state.

A black status group then has come to occupy authoritative positions in America which leave them "more free" than during previous eras but closely tied and subordinate to the cosmopolitan sector of the American power elite. The major mechanism covering this tie is the Democratic Party. The McGovern reforms were efforts to formalize a new status for this group of participants in the party. In other crises their strength comes from appointed positions in federal, state and local governments as well as actual offices held in the U.S. Congress, the state houses and local aldermanic councils. Indeed the group of big city mayors is just now probably one of the most glamorous political groups in the entire black world. The significance of these trends may inhere in the fact that probably none of these individuals would have any prominence were it not for politics (i.e. their actual cultural and economic work has been insignificant) giving credence to a charge by Booker T. Washington that "politics is parasitic." Still they exist as a going social force in contemporary America.

But to identify this process and to point to its end result creates a serious problem of taxonomy: what name is to be given the new elite or its behavior?⁵ It is fashionable these days, in some circles at least, to identify the above-mentioned phenomenon and to condemn it as neo-colonialism. Thus Amiri Baraka has so concluded in terms of his discussion of Kenneth Gibson, Mayor of Newark, New Jersey:

⁵If it is the outgrowth of prior historical trends, probably a bias this author would support, we might use black bourgeoisie as developed in E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisies: The Rise of a New Middle Class* (1957). Cf. however, the reservations stated in Oliver Cox, "Introduction" in Nathan Hare, *The Black Anglo - Saxons* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

Newark, New Jersey, (is) a classic neo-colonial creation, where Black United Front of Blacks and Puerto Ricans moved through the late sixties to elect Kenneth Gibson black mayor. Now some of the fruits born of the struggles of the sixties can be tasted in their bitterest aspect. These black faces in high places are simply objective agents of the rule of monopoly capitalism, as cold and as cynical as they have to be.⁶

Yet such neo-colonial analysis is fine only so far. To the extent that it affirms the need for criticism of the situation and of the antagonism there it is fine. Yet the analysis is misleading insofar as it implies that a "coherent" people stands juxtaposed to the new elite with a program of action that has been betrayed. Such might usually be the case in Third World situations where: (1) native culture can be distinguished from alien dominance and, perhaps, corruption, and (2) some kind of social independence has been experienced. In the case of the Afro-American there would be no need for a prefix on "colonialism."

At the very least we must start to focus on the continuity between the Age of Washington and the post-Civil Rights Era. Certainly it is the Gibson's and others who articulate the adjustment that the people have had to make. But like Booker T. Washington, modern elite ideology is directly linked to real necessary living patterns and represent—and I see little reason to think this does not hold for the mass of black people—accurate depictions of some binding constraints of American life. Because the Civil Rights Movement compromised too drastically on the rearrangement of American institutions of order, it failed to modify the real relationship of black people to them and the black elite functions today in a situation in which the prior subordination of their constituency is accepted as a given.⁷ Their honest articulation of this gives them a credibility not to be found among those who play on variations of "blacks should take the lead" slogans.⁸ Indeed such clarion calls can only be considered threatening when viewed by the potential agents themselves. As was true of Washington, modern leadership ideology has the

⁶Amiri Baraka, "Newark Seven Years Later: ¡Unidad y Lucha!," *26 Monthly Review* (Jan., 1975): 16-24

⁷Alex Poinsett, "Class Patterns in Black Politics," *28 Ebony* (August 1973): 35ff.

⁸The tendency is associated with Grace and James Boggs in their conception of the new American Revolution. Most recently it took the form of a slogan on black workers for the African Liberation Support Committee. See Abdul Akalimat and Nelson Johnson, "Toward the Ideological Unity of the African Liberation Support Committee: A Response to Criticisms of the A.L.S.C. Statement of Principles," (174).

positive aspect of being thus "realistic."⁹ Yet because the subordination of the black community was not engineered by the handiwork of an indigenous class we get a paradox which allows this group to develop and accumulate a reservoir of sympathy. This paradox suggests the peculiar difficulty of applying traditional models to the situation.

To recapitulate: in order to develop a viable model to criticize the black situation it is necessary to have a conception of social structure covering American institutions, and the black masses & elite activists. A black left (i.e. the group engaging in and acting on the actual criticism) is possible only as it is conceptualized outside the Holy Family. Certainly there will be a few reading this who will notice and be disappointed at a definition of the left based on status rather than ideas. Such caution is warranted, but two things justify the definition: one is the absence of an authentic black radical praxis comprehensive enough to withstand the needs of modern political analysis and the other is the co-optation by liberalism during the Civil Rights Era, of the only black radical tradition available i.e. DuBoisian protest. Certain dynamics of the recent politics give further support to the status approach however. For example the uncomfortable suspicion persists that militant radicalization and criticism from the mid-sixties on is directly related to the status of the ideologues relative to the developing liberal establishment. As they have suffered personal exclusion, they have become disaffected with the Civil Rights settlement and open to radical ideas. These conditions set the context for a black left entity to develop. Increasing self-consciousness about this is the key to generating a new criticism capable of withstanding the many rationalizations which legitimate American society today.

We may treat the question of ideology and politics as two phases of the same problem. To those still concerned about removing the fetters from left forces in the black community--and this means first and foremost establishing a dependable basis for criticism--it means close attention must be given to both phases: (1) the subtle but pervasive difference between "ideology" and social analysis or theory and (2) constraints imposed on radical politics by the new black experience which entails actual participation in authoritative U.S. institutions. Neither of these has

⁹ In contemporary circles of "scientific" analysts it might be called materialist. Thus we could emphasize the actual impact of the adjustments on the daily lives of the people and exercise attempts to make this just happy-go-lucky survivalism. But the resort to so-called materialism among this group hardly reassures me that they will be able to grasp reality any better than Alice in Wonderland! In fact their application of the materialist method, in spite of numerous formal definitions, is consistent with the opening statement in chapter ii of Paul's letter to the Hebrews as recorded in Chapter 11, verse 1 of the King James Version of the Holy Bible. For help in locating this citation I am indebted to Rosa Lee Johnson and Viola Young.

been recognized as problems previously even though historical changes have moved them to center stage now. Let us consider each in turn

Ideology

First ideology. Again the main problem here has to do with the capacity to distinguish between "ideology" and effective social theory. What we have seen in the past and especially in the evolution during the 1960's through DuBoisian Protest, Black Power, black nationalism, Pan-Africanism, intercommunalism or Marxism-Leninism is the tendency to select already defined ideology and stipulate the black theoretical task as one of taking it to the people. The consequence of such an effort is to focus attention away from direct analysis of social practice toward "study." The failure of recent activists to take a direct approach to social analysis (consequently settling for previously aggregated "ideologies") may result from their continued and perhaps unconscious reliance on a model of thought developed concurrently with the practical subordination of black people through racial segregation. Thinkers like N.T. Fontaine and L.D. Reddick raised some criticisms of developing black thought in the late 1930's which charged that, in the black community itself, there were tendencies to do analysis already circumscribed by theoretical formulations.¹⁰ A more direct statement of the tendency, albeit one that approved it, can be found in Gunnar Myrdal's classic work *American Dilemma* written after the American pattern of race relations had been set. Of black thinking he said:

Negro thinking is almost completely determined by white opinions--negatively and positively. It develops as an answer to the popular theories prevalent among whites by which they rationalize their up holding of caste. In this sense it is a derivative, or secondary thinking. The Negroes do not formulate the issues to be debated; these are set for them by the dominant group. Negro thinking develops on the presuppositions of white thinking. In its purest form it is a blunt denial and a refutation of white opinions.¹¹

¹⁰ W. T. Fontaine, "An Interpretation of Contemporary Negro Thought From the Standpoint of the Sociology of Knowledge," 25 *Journal of Negro History* (1940): 6-13 and "'Social Determination' in the *Writings of Negro Scholars*," 49 *American Journal of Sociology* (January, 1944); L.D. Reddick, "A New Interpretation for Negro History," 22 *Journal of Negro History* (1937): 17-28.

¹¹ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper, Row, 1944).

What is to be emphasized here is the withdrawal of the philosophic constraint¹² from this peculiar kind of thought by virtue that its "presuppositions" are set outside of any self-conscious epistemology. What it means is that for social theory to be meaningful for blacks (i.e. when done by black thinkers) it must answer a range of practical questions relevant to the world of immediate action or public policy. To the extent that such policy is developed by prejudicial reasoning then blacks have a special obligation to protest. C. Wright Mills isolated this as just one aspect of "political philosophy" and called it ideology.¹³ I follow his usage although we cannot review all of his argument here. Suffice it to say that such "ideology" has as its fault the obscuring of basic criteria in terms of which the significance of practical questions are determined. Thus ideological work proceeds most smoothly when several other theoretical solutions can be taken for granted. Yet at least since the 1930's just such ideology was supposed to have been the special black approach to political theory.

I conclude that in order to provide integrity to social criticism in the Post-Civil Rights area it will be necessary to restore the philosophic constraint. Perhaps some modern theorists will rephrase the danger stated by Myrdal especially to supplement the racist part implied in his phrase "presuppositions of white thinking." Consequently we may relate the earlier model to recent changes in analysis and account for the continuing tendency to fail to evaluate pre-suppositions even when they bear no relationship to the thought of American racists. In any case it seems well established that past analysis by and about black people justifies the need for careful scrutiny of any proposed theoretical innovations put forth.

A negative point needs to be made here. It is in answer to the query: what is the specific danger of a "black" ideology which is unaware of its presuppositions? The point: it certainly is not an inability to put forth logically consistent descriptions of social actions. In fact political analysis shares with other non-philosophical modes of thought the drive for a systemic rendering of the real world. For example in recent black analysis what was more systematic than Kawaida nationalism or revolutionary intercommunalism? It is interesting though that when one thinks of the litany of European theorists usually relied on to illustrate model social analysis, the unique virtue of political theory may be an inability or unwillingness to explain every facet of the phenomenon as one is sure to find in more "mystical" systems like Christianity or astrology.

¹²Here I utilize some suggestions from Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Change in Western Political Theory* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960).

¹³C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists* (New York: Dell, 1962), 12-13.

Further, as political thinkers our efforts to persuade people to an ideology may be self-defeating by tapping, perhaps indirectly, a residue of faith in finality first embedded by the Judeo-Christian tradition (operationally brought to African people by missionaries in one form or another) a continuing source of strength for bourgeois society and a prop for self alienation ever since merry England first proclaimed herself the workshop of the world. Such I think, is the main consequence and danger of calling these ideologies "scientific" when in fact, like all social theory, they remain merely the not-to-successful efforts of a particular people in one epoch. Scientistic¹⁴ thought predisposes us to rush to accept as "concrete" what is nothing more than the product of our wishes. If these are drawn from and set by the crass filth and unrelieved suffering that is American society today, then the function of the left ideologue is to reinforce the pattern of life prevalent in this country. Such primitivism must be overcome.

I call for an approach to social theory that is reflective, critical and purposive. Even use of the word ideology should be curtailed in social discourse except, as it is used--as I do below--as a term to "translate" prior theoretical conclusions or to cover rationalization of privilege. We should think instead in terms of critical social theory that, following Cruse, dialectically relates political, cultural and economic matters into a theoretical form as they so interact in any specific social practice or in general behavioral systems. To paraphrase Plato: black ideologues must either become philosophers or remain the inadvertent purveyors of bourgeois reaction.

Ideology and criticism

To move now to the interplay of ideology and criticism, I have argued that current social trends call attention to the rise of the black bourgeoisie complete with glamorous politicians, mass constituencies and specific change ideologies. Their rise is an undeniable today as were those of yesteryear who amassed the material wherewithal to establish themselves as special among god's children and gave the Western world such slogans as "life, liberty and property," "equality, fraternity, liberty," and "cast down your buckets where you are." This same combination of accumulation and political advancement characterized our modern bourgeoisie elite.

The character of the new criticism will be determined by the relationship of its practitioners to this Bourgeoisie. Its personnel will include those who have not been included among, or saw fit to join, the reigning crowd. What ties the two

¹⁴Adolph Reed, Jr., "Scientific Socialism: Notes on the New Afro-American Magic Marxism," 1 *Endarch* (Fall, 1974), 21-39.

factions of blacks irrevocably together is that we compete for the same constituency: the mass of black people. Those who miss this point and gaze off into a haven of a - racial revolutionary toiling masses are merely refusing to accept the real challenge and capitulating to reaction. The result is a bogus effort to separate what is really inseparable namely the sustained rise of the black bourgeoisie and the series of defeats inflicted on the black left at least since the persecution of Paul Robeson. The consequence of ideologizing has been most pernicious and misunderstood in relation to this process. Thus instead of developing a strategy to meet the real situation we shift ideologies and pretend that that was the problem.

In terms of ideology the criticism has been that the new elite is "neo-colonialist." Yet for reasons noted above, the Black Bourgeoisie constantly complains about America and the data they use--social welfare statistics--are the same ones that the would-be critics appeal to. In the long run the criticism will not clarify theoretical differences and reduces to a call by the black left that the elites go further and/or be sincere. The new critics are not sensitive enough to the changed character of the ideology of the new elite. Again a comparison to Washington is necessary because there has, since that gentleman's death, grown up a myth that his was a philosophy resigned to satisfaction with Negro life. He was, it came to be said, "against change." Yet such an interpretation is strained at best.¹⁵ The appropriate critique of Washington is precisely the image of change he had a very practical one which called for the assimilation of the virtues of the American national bourgeoisie. American society during the Age of Washington was not a settled entity against which calls for change could be raised--rather it was at that time resettling itself and adjusting to new conditions. Everybody was for change. Thus in order to function critically against a change ideology a qualitative selection is necessary which calls for new data, claims and competes for definite constituencies, promulgates new models, and develops a fighting spirit vis-a-vis ascendant definitions of social ills. The new criticism in the black community suffers from an inability to transcend the categories of liberal ideology. Implicit in such a situation is an inadequate model of left praxis which is limited to sincerity and guided by a myth that there exists a quota of moral ideals which are accepted by all and only need application.

We do not get around this problem by selecting a new non-Bourgeois ideology of "new communism," anti-imperialism" or by fanciful beliefs that America is falling under its own weight. On the contrary there must be a dialectical

¹⁵See Louis R. Harlan, "The Secret Life of Booker T. Washington," *37 Journal of Southern History* (August, 1971), 393-416; Judith Stein, "'Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others': The Political Economy of Racism in the United States," *38 Science and Society* (Winter, 1974-75), 422-463.

critique growing in contention with the specifics of the prior model directly linked to mobilizing in relation to the present social structure and grounded in a comprehensive vision of a liberated individual or people. The resolution of the question of the relation of black people to a viable socialist movement in America is dependent on such analysis. Without it socialism merely becomes one more ideology to annoy people with.

Politics

We can understand better the political obligations facing the new black left by tying its ideological and political changes to its increasing elimination from mainstream Civil Rights activity since about 1966 or about the time of Black Power. Since that time criticism has been tied to ideology selected in increasing isolation from the new electoral/administrative experience developing in the black community. Nor has such ideology fared well in gaining mass support. The new black elite is now distinguished both by an actual devolution of authority and a community base. They accepted the constraints of that authority and became legitimate participants in America in the name of black people generally. Those who rejected these constraints longed for a different settlement but have taken a round about route since 1966 to the confusion of the mid-70's in which impotence threatens to become a permanent condition of left criticism.

The relations between these two sectors have been wrought with interest in the last several years of the sixties and early seventies. When the left adhered to various make-shift racial pride-type ideologies, the black bourgeoisie rode chitterlings right into the Waldolf-Astoria to consolidate things with cosmopolitan America. Yet as the black militant has shifted to an ostensible anti-bourgeois stance it has come only to the social welfarism already monopolized by the black liberals. When the black left tried a sort of crypto-terrorist tactic ("off the pig") it found itself resorting to the black liberals to negotiate their "demands" for amnesty or to shorten jail sentences. In 1972, desiring to meet in general session, the Critics had to go to the liberals to call a National Black Political Convention.

In those places where confrontations have occurred we see the same pattern. In the black universities-- from Southern University, Texas Southern Jackson State, Orangeburg, Howard--the liberals are in smooth command and much more enlightened now about their roles; black studies programs are rapidly confirming the most dire predictions of Martin Kilson. The pragmatists control the labor unions. While all American liberals shout hosanna about the way the system worked to "free" Angela Davis, the black left is burdened with the painful reality that H. Rap Brown remains in jail (and faces still further prosecution) and numerous others are exiled in Cuba, Tanzania etc. while lives have been lost, and

uncompensated for, from the university campuses to otherwise obscure apartments in Chicago. With all of this it is amazing that that same left would propagandize itself into locating the "left" and the "right" of the black community on the central committee of the African Liberation Support Committee! It was a tacit admission that they did not want to join the real battle and had conceded a war that never really was declared. In the face of it all we are supposed to turn to the latter day Deweyites in the blue-collar sector of America.

In terms of constituency the criticism has been that the black bourgeoisie has none. They lack, so it goes, a "mass base." Yet in terms of the one unambiguous index of support for leadership among blacks--the vote--liberals have taken the day in every case. The rallies, demonstrations, etc. called by the left have, on the contrary been paltry by comparisons. The failure to recognize this basic fact prompts two observations: (1) that the call for principled ideological debate did not correct earlier errors calling for "operational unity" or "unity without uniformity." Those slogans had obscured the fact that the assembled constituency was really accountable to the liberals. Yet the call for principled debate was naive by virtue that it promoted internecine conflict. (2) It is the critical sector that lacks a competitive base and there seems little reason now not to expect that the black left would join any movement generated if it had a few people participating (and some media coverage). This seems certainly to be the case in the Boston school demonstrations of 1974-75. Long gone are the days when interracial contentions were such that Washington was shouted off the speaker's podium or Malcolm was relegated to the role of spectator at the 1963 March on Washington! Thus the Black Bourgeoisie has a monopoly on the vote and enliven any given protest demonstration through their selective participation. Such a situation is vivid testimony to the hegemony of this sector of the black community and to the squalor of the Negro left.

Several specific tactics have been tried by the left to impact on the black community. We can identify the following five for discussion: (1) the forming of counter-institutions, (2) the move to rejoin allegedly mass-based community institutions, (3) the tactic of "unity without uniformity," (4) the resort to incest, and (5) electoral competition. There are several others that we could identify including independent party organizing a la the Black Panther Party (BPP), continuing protest demonstrations, and specific campus movements including the demand for Black Studies. However, the character of the overall strategy can be illustrated by reference to the basic five.

The first tactic was that of building counter-institutions. It is symbolized by Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) started in North Carolina. Other examples include the Center for Black Education and the Institute of the Black

World, in Washington and Atlanta respectively. Of all the tactics this one provides the most direct link with the Civil Rights dissidents because of the close relationship then between Owusu Sadaukai, who organized MXLU, and Stokely Carmichael and Willie Ricks both of whom were on the Meredith March in 1966.¹⁶ The counter institution tactic illustrates the danger of undialectical shifts among the black left. For in spite of the fact that confrontations had occurred at both A and T State and Duke Universities suggesting the limits of traditional black and white schools for significant social action, MXLU always stood as an entity whose authenticity was to be determined by the purity of its ideology rather than any engaged relationships with institutions in which blacks were actually being socialized. Thus the struggle for counter institutions directed attention away from adjustments people were forced to make on a daily basis. Political party building could be included here but there were few cases of that outside the BPP.

It was during the demise of the BPP however, that we get an articulation of the second tactic: the return to mass based black institutions. Huey Newton concluded that the Panthers had become isolated from the people. His correction for that problem was to have a Grand Return. He suggested two tactics: a focus on the American South and a return to the black church. Such a suggestion was useful insofar as it explicated the isolationism of the counter-institution strategy. What it did not address was the problem of gaining support from the people in these institutions, nor the reactionary basis on which these institutions are maintained. The black preachers in the National Baptist Convention, the Roman Church and, increasingly, the Nation of Islam illustrate the elites operative there and none seem anxious to subordinate themselves to secular politics.

The third tactic, closely related to the previous one, was that of "unity without uniformity." It is symbolized by the Pan-racial movements such as the Congress of African People-Atlanta, the National Black Political Convention, Gary, Little Rock and the first African Liberation Day-Washington, 1972. In one sense it might be seen as the corruption of the prior tactic of returning to the people. For in effect the Return was used as a rationalization to form questionable coalitions with elite elements who claimed to have mass constituencies yet pursued reactionary politics. The experience under "unity without uniformity" certainly illustrates the relative ineffectiveness of the left in these coalitions, however.

A fourth tactic is incest. This tactic resembles the earlier counterinstitution but can be distinguished from it both by the time and ideology involved. It focuses

¹⁶Stokely Carmichael, *Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism* edited with an introduction by Ethel Minor (New York: Random House, 1971).

essentially on internal purification. The two most recent examples were the purges in the BPP and the "principled ideological struggle" on the African Liberation Support Committee. What happens is the increasing circumscribing of political discussion to smaller factions. Such incest eventually developed in each of the other organizations formed under the "unity without uniformity" tactic i.e. the Black Assembly or the NBPC and the Congress of African Peoples. To the extent that Post Civil Rights criticism aimed to make use of the most effective anti-capitalist critique available (i.e. marxism) there must be disappointment that such analysis has been so closely associated with black incest. It is in just such situations that political discussion can take on an increasing significance.

The final tactic is electoral competition. Here the left competes with the new black elite in direct challenge for public office. This tactic has not occurred too often where there is a real chance of winning. Two outstanding examples continue to be Bobby Seale's campaign in Oakland and the efforts of Baraka in Newark. The related tactic of nominating a candidate who has no chance of winning (historically associated with the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party) is not significant enough to be considered. In assessing the tactic of electoral competition the results are mixed. It is clearly important because such competition is a possible way of placing contrasting ideologies before the people, and to get a "realistic" feel for the practical adjustments that they have made. How effective either of the actual campaigns have been is open to question. On the other hand, the electoral arena is a briar patch for the rabbits of the new black elite, and any oppositional candidate or party starts with a major disadvantage.

The future political behavior of the black left will be dependent on rethinking those past tactics. It seems to me that such rethinking should be disciplined by two concerns. First that the black Bourgeoisie not be allowed to monopolize the experiences now available to the black community for the first time. Secondly in the process of reversing this pattern structural situations need be identified where "anti-bourgeois" analysis can be effectively generated in relation to the new adjustment patterns. In this regard the only solution is the development of a secular party instrument. It is the obligation of the black left to retrigger the Fanonist process and carry it through. To fall back, at this time, on unimaginative slogans, is, to paraphrase the opening paragraphs of the EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE, more farce than tragedy!

Conclusion

This then is the key problem suggested by the title "ideology and politics." It suggests that in the first place for all practical purposes the problem of the left among blacks has been the artificial separation of social criticism and politics and

the limiting of discussion to a caricature of the former. Secondly it calls our attention to the possibility that real politics is now a matter outside of such discussion having to do with the adjustment of the masses. From the Gary and Little Rock NBPC's, the Congress of African Peoples, The African Liberation Support Committee, etc., black political discussion has lost its capacity to be dangerous by disconnecting itself from the real adjustments of the people and occupying, instead, an incestuous world in which are manufactured a "left" and "right," bitterly in contention between themselves, but impervious to living conditions except as these are filtered through Bureau of Labor data. When we speak of the problem of "ideology and politics" for the present or future of black people it is this problem of separation which we must find a way to resolve and integrate, as it were.

A Final Comment On Our Social Scientists

Through it all we can only lament the cringing role of the social and political scientists in these changes. Their refusal to fulfill the promise of social analysis has had two consequences: (1) their own models of the world remain stagnant reflections of the social science developed by the white petty bourgeoisie and (2) impassioned social criticism has passed increasingly to activists and poets and other literati of the black community whose ideologizing remain embarrassing indications of their innocence of the constraints of political analysis. Withal because of the servility of the social scientists, academia stands even more in opposition to our people contributing nothing nor giving respite from the reigning ideologues who take advantage of the splendid possibilities of our cultural ambiguity.

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¹Wayne Arden et al., "The Impact of Redistricting on African American Representation in the U.S. Congress and State Legislatures in the 1990s" in Georgia Persons ed., *Race and Representation*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 43.

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