U.S. population lives within a culture of poverty. According to Lewis, the “Negro” in the culture of poverty has “the additional disadvantage of racial discrimination” (1966: xlii). Nonetheless, he asserts that “Negroes” in the U.S. have taken steps to bring about a transformation of their conditions, which Lewis sees as a process that removes a people from the culture of poverty.

Aside from Lewis, many other authors have articulated the premise that persons living in poverty are plagued by either individual or community-wide pathologies and deficiencies (Frazier [1939] 1951; Myrdal [1944] Moynihan 1965). Even William Julius Wilson, who rejects the notion that urban poverty is a function of deleterious behaviors, nonetheless acknowledges that “social pathologies” such as violent crime, teenage pregnancy, and out-of-wedlock births exist in ghetto communities. Instead of arguing that the poor suffer from a culture of poverty, however, Wilson asserts that impoverished people suffer from social and economic dislocations (Wilson [1987] 1990).

In particular, Lewis does not argue that the subculture of poverty exists in a vacuum. Rather, he says, it is part and parcel of society as a whole. “Indeed, the subculture of poverty is part of the larger culture of capitalism, whose social and economic system channels wealth into the hands of a relatively small group and thereby makes for the growth of sharp class distinctions.” Lewis further argues that he “agree[s] that the main sources of the persistence of the subculture are no doubt the pressures that the larger society exerts over its members and the structures of the larger society itself” (Lewis 1969: 199). Finally, Lewis (1966: ii) also proposes a structural solution to help end poverty. In more developed countries like the United States, he suggests that social workers (who are government workers) can be employed to address the problems arising from the culture of poverty. However, in less developed countries he states that fundamental and revolutionary structural change, such as a redistribution of wealth, may be necessary to deal with poverty. Still, he again cautions that revolution may only eliminate some aspects of the culture of poverty and may not necessarily eradicate poverty itself.

Although the post–Civil Rights theories, by and large, do not use the term culture of poverty, they rely on its core concepts to explain European assessment of African demands for broadening the band of liberty, equality, and justice, the next section illustrates.

POST–CIVIL RIGHTS THEORIES CONSIDERED

The previous section examined several theories that most scholars now consider old and/or insufficient to explain the social conditions of today. The old theories were new at one point and professed to unravel or debunk
Shell/Core Embedded Conflict Theory

their predecessors, now the newer theories make similar claims. The problem with this tradition, with regard to new racism theories and the lack of the development of a broad theory is the absence of a holistic structural framework in which to understand the evolution of racial conflict and struggles for liberty, equality, and justice by subordinate peoples. The result is that the newer theories, although important and useful, may not be new and theorists may have missed opportunities to develop deeper levels of analysis because of their absent holistic structural framework. As discussed below, several authors have leveled similar critiques against symbolic racism for this very problem (see Bonilla-Silva 2003, Chapter One).

One possible holistic structural framework for examining systemic inequality or oppression of a particular group in society is to focus on the tools of oppression and discrimination, and the oppressor toolbox(es). Others have pointed out the importance of focusing on the oppressor’s tools (Bonilla-Silva 2001); this analysis aims to extend that contribution.

In a society where adversarial politics, racial animus, and racial oppression are highly prevalent, the superordinate group utilizes a diverse set of strategies to maintain its position, which is explain in Step 8A of the principle attainment process (See Chart II & Chapter Seven). We refer to these strategies as tools, which the superordinate group, the oppressor in this case, uses to maintain control and power. Structurally and figuratively these tools reside in a “toolbox.” The toolbox represents the reservoir of resources the oppressor has at his disposal to control the subordinate population. Subordinate groups in society have experienced various types of oppression. The type of oppression depends on the tool of oppression being used at that time. Each time the subordinate population takes a step toward liberation they erode a barrier to liberation. Each step suggests that one of the tools in the toolbox has been removed, which limits the tools available to the oppressor and indicates that the oppressed population has achieved yet another gradation of liberation, which theoretically moves them closer to “final freedom” (Vorenberg 2001: 3) or “full racial equality” (Bonilla-Silva 2001: 202).

Potentially, however, the oppressor could then take a new tool from the toolbox that has been less used or unused and employ it. Using a holistic structural framework helps us to see this and see the negative implication of pre–and post–Civil Rights era thinking, which merely leads to more new gradations of liberation, where “new racism” was encountered. This is not to suggest that those transitions were not important and that true elements of oppression were removed. Rogers remarks how “slavery was an awful thing” ([1937] 2001; Appendix 2). So, the fact that legal slavery, Black Codes, or forced segregation no longer exist are all positive policy
and social transformations; however, the absence of a holistic structural framework limits our ability to distinguish between the tools and the toolbox. In other words, if the oppressed population struggles to remove a barrier of oppression, but misinterprets a tool as the toolbox, they expose themselves to perpetual resubjugation. Which begs the question, at least in theory, how do we reach final freedom? We think the objectives of the oppressed should be to look at their oppression in five ways: 1) try to identify all the tools in the oppressor’s toolbox and thereby remove those tools prior to the oppressor being able to utilize the next tool, or at least have an understanding of the tools that the oppressor may attempt to use; 2) take a step back and try to understand the totality of the toolbox, and either destroy or remove the toolbox, so that the tools are no longer available to the oppressor; 3) negotiate with the oppressor to understand and alleviate oppression; 4) develop and institute countermeasures to confront the tools of oppression; and 5) destroy the oppressor and his ability to control the oppressed (for us this is a theoretical assertion and not an advocacy of violence, but it has had literal application elsewhere). Our five strategies are designed to break the cycles of gradations of liberation, by providing a holistic structural approach for understanding and confronting oppression and discrimination. Potentially one or a combination of these strategies will move the oppressed closer to full equality or final freedom.

As an aside: Oddly enough, to a certain extent, the Bush administration is in many ways is operating under these five premises with regard to their war on terrorism. One could argue that the administration has assumed the role of the oppressed. They are oppressed by terrorism itself and those whom the administration has identified as the terrorists. They have refused to negotiate with their perceived oppressors. And, the Bush administration and their allies have dedicated endless resources to the other three strategies. They have entire governmental divisions and the military dedicated to analyzing the tools in the oppressors’ toolbox, trying to determine the size location and other nuances of the toolbox, as well as devising strategies to destroy the oppressor himself. That is, they have traced bank accounts and studied organizational configurations, family structures and membership, and military strategies. They have also endeavored to destroy the oppressor by military means. Being oppressed in this figurative sense is unique and interesting, because as a military and financial super-power the United States government has the means and authority to execute its objects, to understand, define, and destroy the oppressor’s tools, toolbox(s) and the oppressor, nearly unabated. To date resolution has not availed itself in these measures. Premise number three has yet to be sought, but it may avail more fruit than the Bush administration and others are willing to
admit, particularly in conjunction with the strategies 1, 2, and 4. Lastly, however, it is hard to destroy an idea or ideal possessed by millions of people; and since terrorism is, in part, the oppressor and terrorism is a manifestation of ideas and ideals, a global superpower with its unlimited resources and power may not be able to destroy its oppressor.

Looking at the toolbox analogy and the discourse about the new racism theories, it could be suggested that the superordinate group has developed a new racism—that is, they put new tools in the toolbox. While there is the potential for something new to be placed in the toolbox, we suggest that the old tools that have not been used are merely being pulled out of the box. More importantly, the oppressed population needs to develop strategies to understand and confront new or old tools, new or old racism, and develop countermeasures to keep the tools from being utilized. Another perhaps more thorough way of addressing the problem, although we are not sure if this is possible, is to take the toolbox away. Additionally, we could think of a countermeasure as developing one's own toolbox. Not a toolbox of oppression, but a toolbox of liberation that has these countermeasures in it. We will utilize the holistic structural framework of the toolbox of oppression as we consider the new racism theories.

One caveat: it is possible that theorists and others classify contemporary tools in the oppressor’s toolbox as new because these tools were obscured from the view of theorists of an earlier generation by the prevalence of and magnitude of the tools being used at that time, or these social analysts misinterpreted the tools as the toolbox. For example, the power to enslave others could be seen as a tool of oppression. As we discussed earlier, when that tool, that power, was removed through emancipation, protest, rebellion, and war, it was believed that Africans in America and South Africa would then be free. However, it is clear that that was not the case. For instance, although in South Africa the legal slave trade was abolished in 1807 and all slaves were “emancipated” by 1838, Elizabeth Eldredge, Fred Morton, and their collaborators (1994) document that various forms of forced and/or coerced labor—slavery, inboekstelsel (“apprenticeship” or household slavery), bijwoners (Boer sharecroppers), Mafisa-holders (African sharecroppers), and others—occurred in southern Africa from the seventeenth century, throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Likewise, emancipation did not truly end slavery in the United States for Africans.

During the war [the Civil War] years Negroes had moved significantly in the direction of freedom. Many of them were among the first, however, to realize that it had not been achieved. Even after the Proclamation was
issued there were more than 800,000 slaves in the border states untouched by it, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands if not millions in the Confederacy who were not even to hear about the Proclamation until months later. Political and economic freedom, moreover, the Negroes had neither in the South nor in the North. (Franklin [1947] 1969: 284)

In fact after the abolition of slavery in the United States, the “first decade was merely a prolongation of the vain search for freedom” (Du Bois [1903] 2003). In Black Reconstruction, Du Bois exclaims:

It must be remembered and never forgotten that the civil war in the South which overthrew Reconstruction was a determined effort to reduce black labor as nearly as possible to a condition of unlimited exploitation and build a new class of capitalists on this foundation. The wage of the Negro worker, despite the war amendments, was to be reduced to the level of bare subsistence by taxation, peonage, caste, and every method of discrimination. This program had to be carried out in open defiance of the clear letter of the law . . .

. . . . the white laborer joined the white landholder and capitalist and beat the black laborer into subjection through secret organizations and the rise of a new doctrine of race hatred. . . .

. . . . When to all this you add a servile and disadvantaged race, who represent the cause of war and who afterwards are left near naked to their enemies, war may go on more secretly, more spasmodically, and yet as truly as before the peace. (Du Bois [1935] 1995: 670)

Du Bois goes on in the chapter cited above, entitled “Back Toward Slavery,” to describe some of the atrocities and initiatives involved in the resubjugation of “freed” Africans. Zuberi (see 2001a, Chapter One,) points out that the illusion of freedom in emancipation was a trend in most other places where Europeans enslaved Africans (e.g., Jamaica and Brazil). The exception to this pattern was Haiti, where Africans defeated Europeans in war and established the first new independent African state since the beginning of European expansion, exploration, and exploitation in fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (James [1963] 1989; Zuberi 2001a).

New Racism
One of the fundamental concerns of the more recent theories is: Why, in general, do Europeans resist the implementation of policies and programs designed to bring about greater equality in society, even though they, by
and large, support in principle the necessity of a more egalitarian functioning society (Bobo 2000; Krysan 2000; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000). A plethora of diverse theories have emerged during the post–Civil Rights era to address this divergence. The majority of these theories have been categorized broadly as addressing the “new racism” (Bobo 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2001), “modern prejudice” (Pincus 2000), or “subtle prejudice” (Meertens and Pettigrew 1997). We will refer to them collectively as new racism theories, although as we will see later, this classification is not without its own problems. The theories that have been developed to address new racism are social dominance theory (Sidanius et al. 2000), racial formation theory (Omi and Winant 1994), symbolic racism theory (Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000), subtle prejudice theory (Meertens and Pettigrew 1997), laissez-faire racism (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997), frustration-aggression theory (Kinder and Rhodebeck 1982), realistic group conflict theory (Jackson 1993), politics and principles perspective (Sniderman, Crosby and Howell 2000), and colorblind racism theory (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2003).

Two social psychology theories from the 1950s that still resonate and are often examined in conjunction with the various new racism theories are frustration-aggression theory and realistic group conflict theory. Kinder and Rhodebeck (1982) test the ability of these two theories to explain the divergence of opinions on racial matters of public interest. The latter theory, broadly speaking, argues “that self-interest lies at the heart of prejudice and discrimination against many groups, whether racial, national, sex, or religious. It is assumed that greater intergroup competition for scarce and valued resources intensifies prejudice among these groups” (Stephan and Stephan 1996: 39). However Kinder and Rhodebeck consider a narrower version of this position that focuses on race relations in the United States. In this case, realistic group conflict theory suggests changing patterns of European support for or against racial equality in American society based on Europeans’ perception that, because of limited societal resources, goods, and services, competition with Africans for these things threatens their well-being. The authors argued that this theory did not provide a framework that adequately explained changing behavior and belief patterns of Europeans. Although this may accurately represent the finding from the dataset used in their study, we believe the limitations of the questions available from the panel data, or at least those chosen by the researchers, had a negative impact on the outcome of the study and provides an inconclusive test of the theory. Frustration-aggression theory says that European support for or against racial equality in society is pendulously tied to the stresses and strains of their individual lives. If there is less personal stress and
strain, not related to race, in the lives of Europeans, then they are more likely to favor broadening the base of racial equality in society; however the converse is also true (Kinder and Rhodebeck 1982). Even if we were only to look at affirmative action where issues of race were concerned, these theories have not convincingly explained the conflict in the debate, although they do help us to think about it more broadly. The underlying difficulty here is that these theories never get to the “core” of the affirmative action debate’s conflict.

Social dominance theory, it is argued, explains more accurately the difference between European beliefs and actions about “race-based” policies (Sidanius et al. 2000). The underlying concepts of this theory are that: 1) societies are hierarchically organized based on a group model where the dominant group enjoys most of the benefits, 2) intergroup competition over scarce resources is largely an exercise of politics, and 3) societal value systems and ideologies serve to benefit the dominant group. The novelty of this theory is not apparent. The third position is similar to the analysis of religion as an agent of social control, primarily by the dominant class (Mills 2000; Wilson 1966). The first point seems to be a partial restatement of Marx’s critique of the capitalist state to which the second position is merely a component (see Marx 1959). Astonishingly Sidanius and his colleagues (Sidanius et al. 2000) argue that anti-black animus has “little, if anything” to do with American racism (p. 230). They criticize the symbolic racism and political values theorists, who argue, “at least at one point in history, anti-black affect was actually at the heart of American racism,” for holding such beliefs (Sidanius et al. 2000: 233). Such an ahistorical analysis is to deny that Europeans enslaved Africans, established Black Codes, legalized Jim Crow policies, established and operated hatred groups like the KKK, or engaged in heinous activities, specifically directed at African people, such as lynching, raping, castrating, torturing, branding, not to mention the psychological effects. Antiblack animus was central to these acts. For instance the raping and impregnating of African women for capital gain was commonplace during slavery. Hattie Rogers says, “My father was Levin Eubanks, a white man. . . . I called my father Marse [sic] Levin. We belonged to Allen Eubanks of New Bern, N.C. and his sister’s son was my father. . . . Marster [sic] didn’t care who our fathers was jest so the women had children” ([1937] 2001, see Appendix Two). In Chapter Three, Col. Mallory’s story illustrates the psychological and physical tortures committed by European Americans against Africans. Similarly, Rogers recalled, “I remember seeing some of the slaves almost beat to death. . . . John Ellis whipped Lucy. . . . He made her strip to her waist and then he made her hug a tree. He whipped her with a cowhide whip until she could only say in
a weak voice, ‘Oh pray! Marster John.’ Major Thomason was there, and he went to Marse John and said ‘John, don’t kill the dam nigger’ “ (see Appendix 2). Major Thomason’s seemingly redemptive comment suggests four things. First, European attitudes and actions—violent, tortuous, degrading, and controlling—toward Africans were acceptable. That is, it was acceptable to parade Lucy, half naked, in front of all other people present, tie her to a tree, and “almost beat [her] to death.” Second, there was divergence within the European-origin population about the acceptable boundaries of control and abuse over the African-origin population. In this case, and under the given conditions, one thought was that it was acceptable to beat a slave to death for the presumption of theft, in this incident the presumed theft of a pickle. Whereas the other thought was that the severe beating and humiliation were acceptable, but murder was not, here “kill[ing] the dam nigger” was seen as problematic. Third, African people and their lives were not respected; the humiliation, questionable proof of the crime, and the extensiveness of the punishment serve as evidence. Finally, inegalitarian beliefs and practices toward Africans were the norm for Europeans.

Antiblack animus, inverted power relations, and European ideas of superiority and dominance were central Master John’s belief that the beating of Lucy was acceptable. Having made the above overly generalized and erroneous assertion that antiblack animus has not been at the heart of American racism at some point in U.S. history, Sidanius and his colleagues continue by arguing “racial animus and classical ‘prejudice’ have relatively little, if anything, to tell us about American public opinion concerning race-targeted social policies” (Sidanius et al. 2000: 233). They immediately contradict this very statement, but in a veiled fashion, stating “while white public opinion regarding race-targeted social policies is not driven merely by group-interested, antiegalitarian motives, they are clearly centrally important” (emphasis added, p. 233). First the “group-interested” and “antiegalitarian motives” in a racialized society to which they refer seem to simply be another way to describe racism. Second, in the previous two quotes they argued that these very motives have nothing (“relatively little, if anything”) to do with the discrepancy between Europeans’ stated views on equality and their commitment to policies to bring about equality, but in this last sentence the motives have become “centrally important.” That they have become more noticeable is obvious. Their centrality, however, is yet another question. Their thesis in the end is confused and confusing.

A similar critique has been made of another new racism theory—symbolic racism. David Sears and his colleagues (Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000), who argue, like Sidanius et al. above, that since the beginning of the post–Civil Rights era antiblack elements of the American creed have
become central to the new racism, advance this theory. The criticisms of symbolic racism are that its underlying premises are not clearly defined and, like the critique of Sidanius and his associates above, their contention that a combination of antiblack attitudes, beliefs, and actions with the values of the American creed is now central to the resistance to egalitarian initiatives is not new or completely accurate (Bonilla-Silva 2003).

In contrast to our argument that conflicting notions of liberty, equality, and justice are at the heart of racial conflict and aversion to affirmative action–type programs and policies, symbolic racism theorists argue that there is general agreement that there should be equality of treatment in society, but disagreement over and opposition to policies and programs targeted at bringing about greater equality of outcomes. “Opposition to them [the policies] . . . arises from individualistic values about working hard and putting forth effort to succeed. Racial policies that seem to promote more equal outcomes are often perceived as illegitimate interferences with the fundamental individualistic principle of meritocracy” (Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000: 83). Their central contention is that “[b]eliefs about equality of outcomes . . . are likely to be more contested and politicized than beliefs about equality of opportunity because . . . equality of outcomes violates individualistic values” (Ibid., p. 84). In some ways we agree with these authors, however, we are not arguing that the debate is over these things. In fact, our contention that the conflict rests within divergent worldviews can most likely be seen in concert with this specific concern of theirs. That is, by pointing out the differences between equality of outcomes and equality of treatment, it is possible that these theorists have pointed our attention to a more specific place in the debate where divergent worldviews are more important and come to bear on the various interpretations of core principles, in this case equality, or more pointedly, equality of outcomes.

The symbolic racism theorists also argue that although racial animus remains a part of the society, the Jim Crow racism of the pre–Civil Rights era mostly disappeared (Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000). Their position is that in place of the blatant racism of the Jim Crow days, the most dominant racial themes about the African-origin population in the United States are that they have not adopted or do not live by certain American values, primarily working hard, obedience to authority, and control over impulses; and that Africans demand and receive undeserving privileges from the government and others. Lastly, Sears and his associates (2000) make a distinction between two groups of Europeans who reject affirmative action–type policies and programs—those policies designed to bring about greater social equality—the “elite critics” and the “mass critics” (the latter term is
Our construction). They argue “Elite critics of affirmative action sometimes do indeed justify their positions with egalitarian rhetoric, as in the quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr., calling for a colorblind society that were used to bolster the 1996 California initiative campaign to repeal governmental affirmative action programs” (Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000: 112). By contrast they find that mass critics are “inegalitarians who . . . oppose affirmative action” (p. 112). Inegalitarianism is an assessment they devised to measure the European expression that “we’ve gone too far,” that is, society has gone too far to accommodate the ever-increasing demands for a more egalitarian society. Removing the rhetoric from the toolbox of the elite critics would seem to implicate them as inegalitarians also. Similarly others have argued that the elite critics are antiegalitarianists who are “the primary engine behind resistance to redistributive policies, such as affirmative action” (Sidanius et al. 2000: 196).

The racial formation theorists take another approach. They focus on the process by which the content and relevance of racial categories are determined by a combination of economic, political, and social forces (Omi and Winant 1994). They furthermore argue that these are historical racialized processes. We have suggested elsewhere cultural forces are key in this formation (Khalfani et al. 2005; Khalfani and Zuberi 2003). Omi and Winant suggest that there is a racial project that is responsible for reorganizing racial dynamics and that neoconservatives are behind this reorganization. This notion is similar to the symbolic racism theorists’ argument about the elite critics, but racial formation theory is a little broader. Additionally the racial project conceptualization is similar to our notion of the European project discussed in Chapter Seven. Their conceptualization of this project is narrower than ours. They state that a segment of the dominant group is responsible for the reorganization of race relations or dynamics. We argue that the European project is about the effort to establish and/or maintain a particular cultural hegemony based on a historic Eurocentric ontology, which the dominant European group presents a universal (Frankenberg 1993). In essence, the European project is the institutionalization and systematization—the method of making a system, a belief, or a process systemic—of European thoughts, beliefs, values, and cultural norms without Europeans necessarily abiding by or being fully committed to those very thoughts, beliefs, values, or norms. The European project is essentially a tool of control and domination. Bonilla-Silva (2001) makes an important criticism of racial formation theory. He argues that the authors over-emphasize the role of race and neglect to address “capitalists—as well as the patriarchal—character of the state” (p. 31). That is, by neglecting the state’s role no theory can hope to fully address the problems of racial conflict because the racialized nature of
the state informs, institutionalizes, and enforces the desires and beliefs of individuals and groups who affect it.

In contrast to some of the other theories, subtle prejudice theory endeavored to test if subtle prejudice was in fact a form of prejudice at all and whether prejudice, if present, existed in various countries, as theorists looked at four countries. While these authors discuss race to some extent, they mostly looked at out-groups as opposed to race per se. They conclude that “subtle prejudice is genuine prejudice and that the distinction between it and blatant prejudice is highly useful” (emphasis theirs, Meertens and Pettigrew 1997: 67). “Blatant prejudice,” they argue, “is the traditional form; it is hot, close, and direct. In contrast, subtle prejudice is cool, distant, and indirect” and inevitably covert they found (Meertens and Pettigrew 1997: 55). They identified a sameness between the two forms of prejudice. Namely, “on BLATANT PREJUDICE, left-wing respondents were far less prejudiced than right-wing respondents, but, on the SUBTLE PREJUDICE measure, there was no significant difference between the two groups” (emphasis theirs, Meertens and Pettigrew 1997: 65). This finding has potentially significant implications. It suggests that prejudices of less conservative individuals or groups are potentially indistinguishable from those who are more blatantly prejudice. This point demonstrates the importance of establishing a holistic approach to understanding oppression and the oppressor(s), because in this case a tool in the oppressor’s toolbox may be the subtle or cloaked nature of the tools of control and domination. Lastly, Meertens and Pettigrew found that both forms of prejudice demonstrated opposition to immigration, but that only those exhibiting blatant prejudice rejected nominal remedies to oppression and inequality. One problem with an out-group assessment like this is that it is unclear if the authors merely identified xenophobia or some other type of prejudice.

The subtle prejudice theorists’ finding, that only those who maintain blatant prejudice views resist remedies to oppression, runs counter to the argument of the laissez-faire racism theorists, that one of the tenets of post–Civil Rights era racism is that there is “resistance to meaningful policy efforts to ameliorate U.S. racist social conditions and institutions” (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997: 16). “Laissez-faire racism [also] involves persistent negative stereotyping of African Americans [and] a tendency to blame blacks themselves for the black[/white gap in socioeconomic standing” (Ibid., p. 16).5 The tendency to blame Africans for their lower position in socioeconomic standing in the United States found its origins in the logic of the culture-of-poverty school of the pre–Civil Rights era. The underlying concern, which we addressed in the previous section, rests on the assertion that poor, African in particular, communities have developed specific cultural traditions
that are self-deprecating. In this vein, Moynihan argued that at the center of “the tangle of pathology is the weakness of the family structure” (1965: 30). Furthermore, he suggests that the matriarchal structure dominant in African families exacerbates pathological behaviors and leads to children growing up in poverty, being exposed to “slum life,” and achieving lower levels of educational attainment. Lastly he attacked Africans and other non-Europeans for relying on extended family networks as opposed to nuclear family structures.

It is possible that the divergence between laissez-faire racism and subtle prejudice theories suggests that the European model tested by Meertens and Pettigrew (1997) is not applicable to explaining the traditions of discrimination in the United States. The laissez-faire racism theorists argue that blatant racism of the pre–Civil Rights era is not needed to ensure “white privilege and black disadvantage. Yet in the popular mind, racism is narrowly equated with cross burning, hooded Klansmen, and Jim Crow ranting of the likes of George Wallace and Lester Maddox” (Bobo 2000: 159). This claim, if substantiated, helps us to see how some individuals could argue that there is no more racism today (not that we agree with this assessment), because they may be incapable of seeing the more subtle and less-direct forms of racism and discrimination. The past images of the Jim Crow era, and earlier, racial discrimination may be so emblazoned on the minds of individuals as a portrayal of what “real” racism and discrimination are that they cannot comprehend or see the racism of the post–Civil Rights era.

As an analogy, two individuals could be holding a burning match and they have to agree collectively to extinguish the flame or the match would continue to burn eventually burning both of them. However before agreeing to put out the flame, they first have to agree that the match was lit as they observe it from two perspectives. One individual was looking for the flame of the match with the sun in the background. Consequently, he will not be able to see the flame because the image of the sun is too bright and overpowering. However, the match is burning bright and if he argues that the match is not lit and refuses to try to extinguish it both will get burned. The other observer is looking at the match from the side where the sun is not in the background; she sees the flame of the match with no difficulty and knows that there is a potential to get burned. A dispute between the two observers could arise about whether or not the match is burning. The second observer must convince the other of the imminent danger and take collective action or they will get burned. The outcome of the conflict could have real and grave consequences. Although they may typically engage in a dispute about whether or not the flame is burning, there is no winning that
debate and they will both get burned. The debate needs to be reframed. The more constructive discourse is about perspective first and then content. If the person with the side view was able to convince the other observer to look at the match from a different perspective then they would both see that the match is burning and make a constructive collective decision. They are both tied to the match and needing to make a collective decision because the benefits or consequences of their decision are societal and not individual. That is, if they do not collectively make the correct decision, then they both get burned, as will the others in society whom they represent. Let us not be burned.

By comparison, we suggest new racism could be seen as the flame on the match. And considering Bobo’s (2000) assertion that the impression of Jim Crow racism remains on the minds of the masses as a depiction of what racism is, this Jim Crow impression represents the sun. So as tools in the oppressor’s toolbox both Jim Crow and new racism can oppress. Jim Crow racism has almost been completely been removed some argue (Sidanius et al. 2000; Sears, Henry, and Kosterman 2000). So the conflict over the prevalence of new racism or racism in general can be more accurately understood as a conflict over perspective rather than substance; or at least perspective first then substance. New racism is obscured for some observers because in the background is Jim Crow–era racism, apartheid, and slavery. A more complete historical analysis and an open and honest debate on conflicting values and beliefs may allow those who question the existence of new racism and sustained racial discrimination to see the flame, to shift their gaze, so that current oppression and discrimination, although present, are not shrouded by ahistorical impressions of racism. As a societal-level social problem, the flame of racism can burn us all if not extinguished.

Lastly, Bobo (2000: 138) argues, “It is much easier to envision changing [beliefs about policy costs and benefits] than ending racism or fundamentally reshaping values and ideological identities.” This line of thinking contrasts with our examination of core societal values or principles; our present effort takes the more challenging road of developing an understanding of core principles to provide a framework for discussing liberty, equality, and justice. We endeavor to shift the gaze of the debaters. We think this is a more sustaining approach, and that it takes a collective approach, because “each of us has an individual role, but together we have a greater role in the pursuit of racial justice,” equality, and liberty (Wu 2002: 315).

Sniderman and his colleagues argue that the solution to racial conflict and the affirmative action debate is to focus on the commonality of the “American Creed” or values (Sniderman and Carmines 1997). Their
argument is frequently referred to as the principled policy theory or some
derivation thereof. We refer to it as the politics and principles perspective,
which is similar to Bobo’s (2000), however our critique is different. We
understand that “the achievement of equality under the law was a monu-
mental victory. But legal equality did not, as the passing years have made
plain, automatically translate into economic or social equality” (Sniderman
and Carmines 1997: 466). The politics and principles theorists’ questions
are: “to what extent is opposition to affirmative action tied up intrinsically
with the issue of race? And to what extent is it rooted in quintessentially
American values” (Sniderman and Carmines 1997: 468). Stated differently
and elsewhere they ask, “Why do so many white Americans accept the
value of racial equality at the level of principle, but not at the level of pol-
cy?” (Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000: 257). They conclude that
Europeans reject the implementation of affirmative action and other such
policies and programs because these programs violate their, as well as oth-
ers,’ value system, particularly their sense of fairness.

If Sniderman and his collaborators had read Cox’s ([1948] 1959, see
Chapter Twenty-Three) critique of Myrdal’s (1944) An American Dilemma,
it is probable that they would not have made this assertion, as Cox adeptly cri-
tiques the underlying premise of the American Creed values discourse that
Sniderman adopts. The central problem with the politics and principles theo-
rists’ assertion is that it assumes that values are racially neutral and/or univer-
salist, when they are not. Living in a racialized society where the founding of
the discourse on these principles was highly racialized (see Part I), and where
an open and honest debate on these principles has not occurred all but ensures
sustained discongruence in the interpretation of these principles.

Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell (2000), furthermore, argue that the
cleavages over racial policies are not fundamentally racial. The circuitous
nature of this argument almost seems acceptable, but its basis is its execu-
tioner; the fact that the cleavage is over racial policies, racial concerns, and
racial differentiation in society point to its racial foundation. If the cleavages
were not racial at their core, we would not be talking about racial policies;
we would be debating economic, housing, educational, or other social poli-
cies and problems. Furthermore, the authors make another problematic
assumption that the divergence over these policies cannot be centrally racial
because “white Americans themselves differ as to what should be done”
(Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000: 272). Their assumption is that Euro-
pian Americans must have a singular voice if we are to understand the
cleavage as fundamentally racial. But to the contrary the diversity of Euro-
pian views and beliefs is what has both supported and challenged the coex-
istence of discriminatory and antiegalitarian racialized practices and policies
since the beginnings of African and European adversarial contact (this does not suggest that the contact was always adversarial, we are pointing to when the adversarial relationship began as discussed elsewhere.). The factions within the European-origin population that possess the most power and influence at a given epoch has determined what specific policies and social behaviors have prevailed at a given time. So a more useful point of inquiry may be to focus on whiteness studies or the role of the politically powerful in the decision-making of the European masses in the United States. Obviously, some of these steps have already been taken and have provided some fruit, but the combined elite studies of Domhoff (1967, 2002), Dye (1986), and Mills (1956) with the whiteness studies of Levine-Rasky (2002) and Frankenberg (1993), and the theoretical base of Bonilla-Silva (2001) and our effort here may result in mending of the cleavages.

Considering the following questions, Sniderman and Carmines (1997) conducted a study to test their assertions about race and affirmative action: “To what extent is opposition to affirmative action tied up intrinsically with the issue of race? And to what extent is it rooted in quintessentially American values?” (p. 468). However, the basic study design is flawed, as the questions they ask in the study will not allow them to disaggregate these unstated questions. Their questions do not actually help us understand the problem for which they seek answers. It seems as though the authors are actually trying to assess the following: 1) What are the influences behind the European American masses’ decision-making processes with regard to the institutionalization of policies designed to bring about a more egalitarian society? 2) What is the respondent’s commitment to his/her racial beliefs? 3) What is the relationship of these commitments to the discourse on affirmative action and the driving force behind their decision-making (i.e., question 1)? Furthermore, their question on affirmative action assumes that the interviewees share a common understanding of the term affirmative action in addition to the problem of questionnaire effects. Although Sniderman and Camines (1997) claim to have resolved the latter because of the advent of a computer assisted interview process—we are not so convinced. “Asking general questions . . . about attitudes and beliefs toward affirmative action “is problematic because respondents have different ideas about what affirmative action is and is not. . . . White opinion is also affected by the context in which preferential treatment takes place and the target group. . . . They are . . . more accepting of preferential treatment for women than for blacks” (Pincus 2003: 5–6).

The politics and principles argument neglects to see the historical interconnections of core societal values, not just “American values,” with
culture. Divergent cultural backgrounds, traditions, and worldviews, particularly between African-origin and European-origin populations, are key to understanding how a people came to understand and experience core societal principles. A historical approach to the understanding of preferential treatment policies would have demonstrated that historically, as we demonstrate in Chapter Nine, Europeans were particularly supportive when they were the beneficiaries of such policies. Their rejection of them is recent in American and South African history.

The logical basis of their argument turns out to be one of substitution as the following quotation reveals:

It is possible to argue for a policy—say, job training programs to increase employment opportunities for badly-off African Americans—by pointing to the historic injustices that blacks have suffered in America. Alternatively, one can argue for exactly the same policy on the grounds that this is the kind of helping hand that should be extended to those in need regardless of race. (Sniderman and Carmines 1997: 470)

These arguments are one in the same, because if in the end it is the African-origin population that is largely in need of these very programs, the argument and complaint returns to its origin where there is resentment and rejection toward those Africans who, by circumstance, are the beneficiaries of specialized values-based policies and programs based on class. The problem has not therefore been resolved. This argument is in the end the same as Wilson’s ([1987] 1990) argument for universal programs. He says, “By emphasizing universal programs as an effective way to address problems in the inner city created by historic racial subjugation, I am recommending a fundamental shift from the traditional race-specific approach of addressing such problems” (p. 153–154). This quote could have almost come from Sniderman’s book; the only difference is that Sniderman is replacing class or impoverishment with a commitment to “American values.” Wilson’s assumption was that because of the universality of the proposed programs or policies there would be broad and maybe universal acceptance of them, however this has not occurred in recent years and the discussion still rests on racial differentiation. Sniderman and Carmines (1997) make a similar assumption when they say, “If this constitutes a call for a colorblind politics, so be it”; it is almost a challenge or threat to others who may question their usage of the colorblind concept (p. 471). However, the underlying problem remains that their theory begins where Wilson’s did ten years earlier.

So in the end, Sniderman and his colleagues have it only partially right. They are correct that an alternative paradigm or strategy is needed.
They are also correct that we need to focus on core societal principles, as Bonilla-Silva (2001) is correct that we need a clear understanding of what is in the superordinate group’s toolbox of oppression and dominion. However, Sniderman’s assumption that we should adopt a principle-based agenda is problematic when you start to look at the principles in relationship to the history of European dominance. As we will see below, we must ask, for instance, what liberty was George Washington talking about? What is meant by equality, and for whom in society is justice being championed and defended? We are not saying to simply refocus our attention on a demand for a principle-based agenda. We are saying; individuals and groups interested in transforming societies for the benefit of all its citizens must take these very principles to task. We need to stop assuming that there is a universalism of the so-called “American Creed.”

We will explore the various meanings of these principles in-depth in Part I of this study. The discussion here will help us begin to understand the role the principles of liberty, equality, and justice can play in both the discourse on affirmative action and broadening the band of liberty, equality and justice in society.

Outside of the problems already discussed with regard to Sniderman and his colleagues reliance on a principle-based explanation for social conflict, in her analysis of democracy and education, Amy Gutmann ([1987] 1999) points out another important distinction between various theoretical considerations of principles, namely those that political philosophers make between cosmopolitanism and patriotism. “Cosmopolitanism is often invoked by its advocates as a synonym for moral universalism, and patriotism as a synonym for moral particularism or parochialism.” However she does not see them as moral perspectives, but as “sentiments referring to attachments and identifications of the self” (Gutmann [1987] 1999: 311).

Although, cosmopolitanism refers to universalism, it is not necessarily utopic, authoritarian, or elitist because at its foundation cosmopolitanism is open to diverse input—economically, racially, educationally, etc. So the universalism of cosmopolitanism is an emerging, ever-evolving one. And although we think, in part, a cosmopolitan approach is closer to our understanding of the attachment the principles have to individuals and groups, we heed Gutmann’s cautionary note:

Cosmopolitans are worldly individuals who identify with many places, rather than solely with a single state, as their homeland. Although they are worldly, cosmopolitans cannot avoid discriminating in their attachments... When philosophers recommend cosmopolitanism over patriotism, they generally are presuming a morally admirable kind of
egalitarian cosmopolitan: someone who is attached to human beings wherever they may live and, therefore, is prone to accord equal respect to all human beings, whatever their nationality, ethnicity, religion, race, or gender. . . . It is important to acknowledge . . . that not all cosmopolitans are so egalitarian in their attachments. Cosmopolitanism per se does not define an egalitarian attachment to all human beings. The particular kind of cosmopolitan sentiment that is conducive to extending the reach of reciprocity worldwide is one that reflects an egalitarian commitment: an attachment to all human beings regardless of their more particular identities. (emphasis added, [1987] 1999: 311)

The contrasting value orientation is related to patriotism, of which there are two types—nationalistic and republican. The latter is most similar to the value orientation to which Sniderman refers, but as Gutmann points out there are difficulties with both perspectives.

Patriotism, like cosmopolitanism, is a sentiment rather than a moral perspective. Patriotism is commonly defined as love of (and therefore devotion to) country, where country is either a nation or a state. . . . Love is a notoriously difficult passion to control. Lovers are relatively unqualified in their loyalty to loved ones. But the danger of such unqualified loyalty in the paradigm case of love—one person’s love of another person—pales in comparison to the danger of the unqualified loyalty of millions of people to nations and states. This is the danger of patriotism. Nations and states possess massive institutionalized powers to kill, torture, maim, starve, humiliate, demean, and otherwise deny people the most fundamental prerequisites of a decent life. Nations and states not only frequently threaten to employ these powers, they actually do employ them with terrifying and devastating frequency. Love of country, commonly understood as “my country, right or wrong,” is therefore extraordinarily dangerous. (Gutmann [1987] 1999: 312)

This type of patriotism asks the adherents to think about, organize, and operationalize their lives from a morally principled perspective around a nationalistic agenda. Republican patriotism is similar but it reorganizes the value attachment, it is:

a patriotism that entails love of principle [in our case liberty, equality, or justice] tied to love of country. Republican patriots . . . love their country because it is a republic that uniquely permits the pursuit of liberty and justice for all. . . . Liberty and justice will be forsaken without
the active support of citizens, and citizens’ active support will not be forthcoming unless they love their country (because liberty and justice are demanding moral causes).

Patriots of the republican sort are therefore persons who love their country because it makes liberty and justice possible. Because republican patriotism is fueled as much by love of justice as by love of country, republican patriots are more discriminating than ordinary patriots in what they will do for their country. They will oppose injustices such as slavery, ethnic cleansing, anti-semitism, racial segregation, and gender discrimination. They will also oppose nationalistic forms of patriotism that subordinate justice to the nationalistic cause of creating states that are thought to be ethnically, religiously, or racially pure. . . .

But republican patriotism is not therefore without dangers due to its over-evaluation of the republic relative to the individuals that constitute it. Republican patriotism does not fully respect the basic liberty of persons. (emphasis added, Gutmann [1987] 1999: 312–313)

Herein lies the difficulty for Sniderman and colleagues: by focusing on the American Creed and having an ahistorical analysis of these values, as discussed earlier, the politics and principles theory they proposed becomes less clear than they suggest and ill-focused. That is, because they do not look at the core principle collectively as we do in Chapter Seven nor do they consider Gutmann’s cautionary remarks on patriotism, they erroneously assert that principles such as equality compete both with other principles and with themselves (Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000). It is not that equality, for example, is in conflict with itself; the conflict rests with different groups interpreting the principles in different ways. So Sniderman and his colleagues misunderstood the locus of the conflict. Had they employed a shell/core embedded conflict analysis and read Cox’s ([1948] 1959, see Chapter Twenty-Three) critique of Myrdal ([1944] 1962), the locus of the conflict would have been clearer. Furthermore, the advent of a political philosophy analysis would have provided a better framework for their understanding of principles. In the end, although there is value brought to the discussion on principles by looking at cosmopolitan and patriotic attachments, we see the importance of the of Gutmann’s contribution as helping us to avoid focusing the discussion on liberalism versus conservatism as others have done (Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000; Bobo 2000; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Sidanius et al. 2000). A debate of liberal versus conservative views and beliefs becomes a debate of rhetoric over substance, similar to that of cosmopolitanism versus patriotism; such a debate serves to stultify the needed debate over disagreements about the content of social conflict.
The rhetorical debate is more about the debaters and what they get from winning—fame, political or social capital, or some other reward or benefit.

Illustrative of this point, we believe Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell’s (2000) focus on polemics distracted their attention from the real problem, which may have negatively affected their study. First, they acknowledge that the adversarial nature of the debate can have an adverse impact on the discourse. “Recognizing that offense has been given on all sides, it sometimes seems as if people are turning somersaults in order to disagree” (Sniderman, Crosby, Howell 2000: 266). Second, an example of the negative implication is illustrated in the authors’ debate with Bobo (2000). In critiquing the oddity of Bobo’s logic at one point, the authors are actually critiquing his literature review, but presenting the idea as though it was one of Bobo’s findings or conclusions (see Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000: 271). This is either an error or intellectually dishonest; regardless it speaks to the implications of the polemical debate. We will not make a judgment call here, but will use this as a lesson to avoid making the same error in our own scholarship.

Finally, Sniderman and Carmines (1997) suggest that a coalition of “blacks and whites” needs to be established. We concur, as will be shown in Part III, that a coalition of people wanting to develop a new understanding of liberty, equality, and justice needs to be established, but the “black/white” dichotomy needs to be abolished to envision a more inclusive and holistic approach to resolving social conflict, disparities and injustice. We challenge Sniderman and others to put their new methodologies and theories to task and ask their respondents to identify, define, and explain what they mean by liberty, equality, justice, or any other core societal principle. The results from such a study would provide very useful data for trying to understand resistance to programs like affirmative action.

The last theory examined here looks at the work of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. Although his first text White Supremacy & Racism (2001) is a theory book, in many ways it is a study of linguistics. His analysis cogently demonstrates the power of the superordinate group, wherein we learn that through their ability to frame, classify, define, undefine, and redefine terms, concepts, events, and people they wield power. He discusses how superordinate groups overtly and covertly maintain power and control in racialized societies through their ability to control language. Lastly he also discusses how to unmask the voice(s) of domination and to retake control of language with the overall objective being, the empowerment of subordinate populations. The shell affirmative action debate a prominent place where the power to define terminology can create conflict and confusion. For instance, the California Civil Rights Initiative and former US Senator Dole’s
bill the “Equal Opportunity Act of 1995” both attempted to eliminate some component of affirmative action or the recognition of race, and were seen by many as attacks on civil rights and equal opportunity (Stewart 1995; Trujillo 1995).

Bonilla-Silva’s approach takes the discourse or battle to the frontline and confronts, as he puts it, the “enemy” face-to-face and with the adversary’s language. This represents the initial difference between Bonilla-Silva’s (2001) argument and that of other scholars who have produced theories to understand racism, race relations, and racial ideologies in the post–Civil Rights era. He uses the term “colorblind racism” because [it] fits better the actual language used by whites to defend their racial views” (emphasis in original, p. 12). In other words the terminology he uses is specifically designed to understand and combat the inherent deceptiveness of the colorblind argument. To this point, although people refer to and see themselves as maintaining a colorblind position on race, individuals or groups do not refer to themselves or others as “symbolic,” “laissez-faire,” “social dominance,” or for that matter “shell/core embedded,” so this is a point well taken if we hope to bring our discourse to a mass audience, and begin the process of reclaiming control of the language used for domination, control, and oppression.

Colorblind racism is like the other post–Civil Rights era theories in that it argues that Europeans, for the most part, no longer engage in blatant racism as a standard practice, using biological explanation for racialized social differentiation. The author contends that “whites have developed powerful explanations—which have ultimately become justifications—for contemporary racial inequality that exculpate them from any responsibility for the status of people of color” (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 2).

The theory of colorblind racism is built on four ideological frames that Europeans use to shelter their racist or discriminatory beliefs and practices: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism frames. Although there is always more to see inside and outside of a window frame than meets the eye, these racial frames only allow the nonracist and in some cases antiracist portion of an individual or group to be seen; however, colorblind racism theory suggests that actually behind these window frames lies racism and/or racists masking their beliefs inside one of these four frames. For abstract liberalism, economic and political liberalism are used in abstract ways to explain racial concerns. “By framing race-related issues in the language of liberalism, whites can appear ‘reasonable’ and even ‘moral,’ while opposing almost all practical approaches to deal with de facto racial inequality” (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 28). The naturalization frame is based on the structuralist-functionalist or even
the social-Darwinist premise that social inequality exists because it exists naturally (almost biologically) and serves a purpose in the social structure. However the author states it in more practical terms. He says, for example, “whites can claim ‘segregation' is natural because people from all backgrounds ‘gravitate towards likeness’ “ (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 28). The cultural racism frame can be seen as an attempt by racists to blame the victim or blame the target of racial discrimination and oppression for their social condition using so-called or actual cultural traits to explain their inadequacies or failures in social mobility. The final frame, minimization, posits, “discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances” (Bonilla-Silva 2003: 29). Under this frame Europeans hide or downplay their racist beliefs while up-playing (usually under false pretenses) or exaggerating African or non-European sensitivity to or focus on racist actions or behaviors. Stated differently, European's attempt to minimize the significance and affect that racist events, behaviors, or practices have on non-Europeans.

Bonilla-Silva (2001) also says that we need to understand the tools of the “enemy[, who are] the majority of the people in the United States who . . . resist change fearing that they will lose their” privileges, advantages, and benefits for being members of the superordinate group. In addition to helping the dominant group maintain control and power in society, these tools help them to keep from being blackened (a concept we develop in Chapter Six). Earlier in this chapter we suggested that the oppressed need to develop countermeasures to the oppressor tools, Bonilla-Silva (2003: Chapter Eight) suggests six such tools that are couched in his call for a “new civil rights movement” that will confront the “new racism”: 1) “blacks” and their allies must form a core and establish the new civil rights movement, 2) a group of antiracist “whites” must be nurtured to confront colorblind racism, 3) researchers and activists must provide counter-ideological arguments to the frames of colorblind racism, 4) the inherent flaws in colorblindness logic and thinking need to be exposed so that “whites” can see when their actions are racist (i.e., removing the colorblind veil [or as we point out earlier in this chapter, in many cases colorblind rhetoric]), 5) the practices of white privilege should be challenged, and 6) the struggle must adopt a militant stance as in the 1960s, while taking the position of demanding equality of outcomes, as fighting for equality of opportunity has proved to be unsuccessful.

We give one brief example of the value of Bonilla-Silva's countervailing toolbox. In his book *Privilege, Power, and Difference* Allan G. Johnson (2001) says that he is a “white” male and is writing and thinking from that perspective, however he writes:
I'm aware that some readers—whites in particular, and especially those
who don't have the luxury of class privilege—may already feel put off by
my use of the words like racism, white, and even worse, white racism.
One way to avoid such reactions is to follow the advice I was once given
to not use the words at all. . . . however, if we dispense with the words we
make it impossible to talk about what's really going on and what it has to
do with us. And if we can't do that, then we can't see what the problems
are or how we might make ourselves part of the solution to them. . . .

. . . [T]hings are not what they seem. The defensive and irritable
feelings that whites often experience when they come across such language
are based on some fundamental misperceptions of the world. (p. 2)

We applaud Bonilla-Silva’s efforts and courage to think broadly and
to challenge the assumptions made and language used both by those strive
to maintain their privileged positions in society and those trying to under-
stand how that privilege is maintained in order to remove the doors that
block some individuals’ and groups’ access to liberty, equality, and justice.

Reading the most recent works by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Racism
Without Racists (2003) and White Supremacy & Racism (2001), and
Tukufu Zuberi’s, Thicker Than Blood (2001), one sees numerous similari-
ties with the present effort, in ideological conceptualization, theoretical
construction, and historical groundedness. The differences rest on method-
ological approach, analytical and empirical subject matter, and theory.
Although, Zuberi’s book is more a book of analysis than theory, we include
it here because he makes important analytical and historical observations
that are useful for our analysis.

Zuberi’s (2001) endeavor documented the racialized and racist origins
of modern statistics. He articulated the dangers and implications of con-
sciously or unconsciously using racialized thinking and tools in statistical
analysis. He discussed, as do we and Bonilla-Silva, the origins of racial con-
flict and its relationship to the concepts of liberty, equality, and justice. As
we have done elsewhere, in Thinker Than Blood, Zuberi also points out
how empowering the ability to classify and define the other is for the dom-
inant group (see Khalfani and Zuberi 2003; Khalfani et al. 2005).

Our works ardently push for broader critical analysis of social con-
flict particularly where race is concerned. This critical analysis is over: 1)
how racial statistics are understood and used (Zuberi 2001), 2) how the
power of language controls racial conflict (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2003), and
3) how we conceptualize the locus and structure of social conflict to end
racial domination (the present study represents this point). These texts taken collectively represent a powerful countermeasure for that which resides in the toolbox of oppression and domination.

All the variously defined racial analyses, in general, have in common this objective: to develop more robust and accurate methods or/and theories to describe, understand, and/or deconstruct racial conflict, disparities, and oppression in society. However, most often, sorely missing are proposed non-policy-oriented solutions to the overly identified social challenges experienced by subordinate populations, particularly in racialized societies. Elsewhere it has been argued that patterns of oppression and conflict experienced as a result of racism in American society is recurrent in social science and educational research, and that generation after generation of scholars and others have re-identified and re-stated the same problems without producing the same volume of scholarship on possible solutions to these very problems (Jenkins 1950; Khalfani 1988). For instance, the Du Boisian maxim, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line,” a century later still rings loud (Du Bois [1903] 2003: 15). Most recently this maxim has been voiced in the discourse on colorblindness (Bowman, Muhammad, and Ifatunji 2004; Brown et al. 2003). At the time Du Bois wrote this statement it was profound, and although in the year 2005 making such a claim is no longer profound, its essence remains important. However, we scholars need to challenge ourselves to work as hard if not harder at identifying and developing theoretical and practical solutions to these problems. In the face of criticism or the failure of any developed solution, let our critics be satisfied that we failed trying. But let it also be known that each failure puts us that much closer to success; and as we have over time consistently refined and reassessed our theories and methodologies of the various problems we study, let us not be dissuaded by minimal success, failure, or criticism of our efforts to focus on strategies for resolution. We would much rather read, “The problem of the twentieth century was the color-line, but the solutions for the twenty-first century are . . .” In this present effort we have two praxis-based objectives: 1) eliminate the impasses in the affirmative action debate, and 2) help eliminate or minimize social conflict based on differing interpretations of three core societal principles—liberty, equality, and justice. These objectives contain both theoretical and practical solutions. Our success or failure will be judged by time; regardless of the outcome, we will stay the course to positively effectuate change in society—reassessing, refining, and reapplying our proposed solutions over time.

Shell/Core Embedded Conflict Theory