Studies in American Racial Development: An Interim Report

Rogers M. Smith

Race and the Making of American Liberalism. By Carol A. Horton. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 312 p. $39.95.

When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America. By Ira Katznelson. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005. 256 p. $25.95 cloth, $14.95 paper.

What a Might Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality. By Theda Skocpol, Ariane Liazos, and Marshall Ganz. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. 310 p. $27.95.

The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement. By Richard M. Valelly. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. 348 p. $58.00 cloth, $22.50 paper.

A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America. By Aristide R. Zolberg. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. 672 p. $39.95.

Introduction

In 2004, Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek argued that the subfield of American political development, or APD, was becoming "a veritable cottage industry."[1] Its laborers shared critical perspectives on prevailing scholarship that "suggested new lines of inquiry" on many topics, including "race relations."[2] However, Orren and Skowronek worried that shared critiques were not enough to sustain this emergent intellectual enterprise, whose diverse scholarship increasingly made it hard to say anything about "the development of the American polity overall."[3] In response, without offering a "full-blown theory of American political development," they sought to lay out "the ground on which theory building might now profitably proceed."[4] Soon after Desmond S. King and I contended that the APD literature especially lacked "theoretical frameworks adequate for analyzing race." Drawing on Orren and Skowronek among other scholars, we sketched what we see as a promising approach, focusing on the role of evolving, contending "racial orders" throughout U.S. history.[5]

We may all have spoken too soon. As these assessments were being produced, a number of scholars more or less closely associated with APD were in the process of publishing books that give significant attention to the place of race in the nation's development. In this essay, I survey five of these recent contributions with two chief goals. The first is to assess how far they advance theorizing by APD scholars and other political scientists on race and the making of America, through either applying existing frameworks or devising new ones. The second is to consider what these works imply for a normative vision and attendant policy measures that might help the United States to achieve a better record in regard to race in the twenty-first century. My arguments are that, alas, the concerns previously expressed are not obsolete: Despite their substantive contributions, these books make only modest progress in the academic endeavor of enhancing theoretical understanding of the relationship of race to American political development. Yet modest progress is still worthwhile, and there is a brighter side. Though for the most part, these works are not focused on delineating a positive vision or program for the nation's racial future, individually and collectively they do provide promising perspectives that might help make that future a healthier one.

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Orren and Skowronek listed among the shared critical themes of APD scholars first, a stress on the persistence of institutions that pluralists tended to neglect; second, heightened attention to ideological conflict and historical political alternatives, instead of presuming a "liberal consensus" view of America; and third, greater concern for the dimension of time, especially for discovering historical "patterns" that can illuminate processes of political change, in place of quests for timeless regularities in political behavior.[6] King and I argued that to grasp the relationship of race and politics in American development, scholars needed to recognize that U.S. history displayed a pattern of contestation between rival coalitions of political actors and governing institutions, bound together by conflicting ideologies of race tied to policies on what they saw as the main racial issues of their day. When one previously subordinated racial alliance achieved enough institutional power to prevail decisively over its rival, then the issues in dispute shifted and new conflicting racial orders formed.[7] Whether or not we were correct in our specific claims, it seems likely that any adequate theoretical framework for analyzing American racial development must attend to institutions; the political coalitions that seek to control them; the impact that institutions and institutionalized policies have on racial statuses and other dimensions of American life; the ideological views involving race that coalitions, institutions, and policies advance; and any historical patterns we can discern in any and all of the above. How well do these books do these things?

Race and Civic Associations

Start with the book that is least ambitious in these regards, the fascinating survey of African American fraternal groups provided by Theda Skocpol, Ariane Liazos, and Marshall Ganz in *What a Mighty Power We Can Be.* Skocpol is of course a major theorist of historical institutionalism and the only two-time winner of the J. David Greenstone Book Prize, the top award available to APD scholars. In this work, one of many fruits of her monumental scholarship on large-scale American voluntary associations, the main goals are first to document the rich history of African American fraternal groups and second to show their contributions to the modern civil rights movement.[8] Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz are not seeking to make more general statements about the roles of coalitions, institutions, ideas, and historical processes in politics generally or about the place of race in America in particular. The detailed accounts they provide of Elks, Odd Fellows, Prince Hall Masons, the Knights of Tabor, and many other associations are intriguing and invaluable. They make a convincing case that such groups were important participants in the civil rights movement, even if their evidence suggests that the associations most often provided support, not autonomous leadership, to groups such as the NAACP, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the National Urban League, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.[9]

Yet when it comes to the political coalitions, institutions, and ideas that gave rise to these African American associations, most extensively in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the book leaves much unaddressed. In stressing how fraternal organizations were "mainstays" for African Americans against "the imposition of Jim Crow," Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz give only oblique attention to how these groups were in fact necessitated by the post-Reconstruction spread of formal and informal systems of segregation.[10] The politics that beat down the "optimistic political self-assertion" among late-nineteenth-century "African Americans newly empowered by amendments to the U.S. Constitution" are beyond what they seek to describe or explain.[11]

This restriction renders their analysis of the contributions of black fraternal organizations to the civil rights movement less illuminating than it might be. They maintain that by joining efforts to "vindicate their basic rights as equal citizens in U.S. democracy," the black fraternalists waged a "lengthy struggle" on behalf of "the ideals of all Americans."[12] One wonders in that case whom they were fighting against. The "major white male fraternal groups" who "had explicit racial clauses in their constitutions" would probably have insisted that they had somewhat different ideals than their black counterparts.[13] The authors do suggest, moreover, that the African American fraternal orders had some internal variance in their central ideas, with those that were not constructed in parallel to white groups especially likely to respond to the conditions of Jim Crow America with a "more missionary tone, a greater emphasis on collective purpose," and a stronger propensity to engage in "charitable" work that served anti-racist political ends.[14] Though the authors repeatedly stress the fact that the fraternal groups by and large endorsed "human rights universalist" values, not separatist ones, they do not explore what role these perspectives played in the internal debates of civil rights coalitions.[15] The possibility that there are more complex political phenomena to be analyzed is suggetsted by a quotation the authors include without comment: the urging of Mrs. Joe Brown of the Order of the Eastern Star that the organization create juvenile departments to instill young people with "black ideals."[16] Perhaps for Mrs. Brown black ideals were "universalist" ideals, but her reasons for her phrasing merit attention.

The book is also written with a nostalgic tone, as if African American fraternal organizations were things of the past, like the old Negro Leagues. Even though these organizations, as much and more than white fraternal groups, have lost members, many still exist. How do today's black fraternal associations understand their decline in the post–civil rights movement era, and how do they conceive their relationship to struggles for racial justice now? These questions are not raised. The book effectively ends with

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the civil rights triumphs of the mid-1960s and does not explore the difficult questions that these groups and, yes, all Americans face today.

As a result, despite its contributions, *What a Mighty Power We Can Be* too often reads like a high school textbook, cheering on civic-minded black Americans working shoulder to shoulder on behalf of the universalistic, inclusive values of all Americans, against forces of racial injustice that remain largely mysterious but lose finally to the civil rights movement. The book does an invaluable service in putting striking, fresh research on the table. Still, there is more to be done to understand the complex coalitions, policies, and ideas that made separate racial organizations necessary historically and the variety of perspectives within them; the full role they played in internally as well as externally contested modern civil rights struggles; and their subsequent development, in an America where racial inequalities are still vivid realities. That fuller understanding will probably be important for constructing a richer sense of how we might address racial issues today than this book seeks to provide.

Race and Voting Rights

In contrast, Richard Valelly's multiple award-winning *The Two Reconstructions* is explicitly concerned to grasp why racial egalitarian endeavors failed in the late-nineteenth century but had much greater, if still incomplete, success in the late twentieth. His focus is the core democratic institution of voting rights, which African Americans lost to Jim Crow disfranchisement tactics in the 1890s and regained via the 1965 Voting Rights Act and its amendments. The book's contributions are abundant, including its demonstration that partisan-minded late-nineteenth-century Republicans fought for black voting rights long after they retreated on other matters, so that disfranchisement seemed far from inevitable; its account of how the prospects of easier roads to electoral success finally led the GOP to abandon that effort; and its analysis of how the modern Republicans' strategy to break up the Democratic Solid South actually benefited from maintenance of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), so that modern black voting rights have had enduring bipartisan support. These points should now be fundamentals of any credible analysis of the politics of race in U.S. history.

Valelly's articulation of the theoretical framework that helps to yield these vital insights is somewhat less satisfactory. The engine that drives the politics it studies is said to be "political entrepreneurship," both by elite politicians and African American movement leaders. These entrepreneurs are understood to engage in coalition making, which Valelly promises to analyze via "rational choice concepts," and they then shape the operations of institutions, such as Congress and the Supreme Court, which are to be understood via "historical institutionalism."[17] Valelly especially stresses how, after some initial favorable signs, the Court from the early 1870s on imposed roadblocks to Reconstruction efforts that made sustaining a coalition in support of them more difficult, whereas the modern Court has generally facilitated energetic enforcement of the VRA.[18]

The enticing fusion of rational choice and historical institutionalism offered at the outset, however, never really appears. Valelly presents no formal models and invokes few concepts distinctive to rational choice scholarship except William Riker's notion that entrepreneurs will seek only a "minimum winning coalition"—a claim that Valelly says is not borne out in the politics he analyzes. Instead, enduring success appears to require complex, supermajority coalitions. Valelly also contends that it is not just elite entrepreneurs but also nonelite activists whose strategies shape coalition building, in ways Riker's formulations do not capture.[19]

Valelly's stress on the importance of the Court as an institution that can generate favorable or unfavorable jurisprudence is better developed, but it is still unclear whether he sees its members as largely autonomous entrepreneurs in their own right; as agents of unique institutional interests; or as instruments of dominant political coalitions. More generally, it is hard to judge from his analysis just how strongly "institutionalist" Valelly's historical institutionalism is. Were forms of white privilege so broadly institutionalized in the late-nineteenth century that, despite what many Republicans thought at the time, they were bound eventually to abandon their coalition built on black voting rights? Could they have succeeded, if they had had a more receptive Court, different tactics, perhaps some other favorable circumstances? It is not clear, and so it is unclear whether in Valelly's framework successful entrepreneurial coalition building can always override established institutional arrangements, as optimistic pluralists have believed, or whether institutions are substantially more "sticky." He does not invoke any of the work of either rational choice institutionalists or comparative historical institutionalists that seeks to help us gauge "stickiness." Admittedly, little of that work has thus far yielded decisive results, but that is only to restate that really successful theory building of this type is still, at best, in its incipient stages. Valelly's framework reflects that reality.

He also does not seek to explore the ideas or motives of his various political entrepreneurs—were they driven by power, class, ideological interests, or some mix? Nor does he attempt to capture the full consequences of the politics he studies for race in America. Of course, it is only one book, and it achieves Valelly's central goal. He gives us a much clearer sense of the political struggles over African American voting rights that have been so central to racial statuses and much else in America. He therefore earns our attention to his closing advice: Despite the successes of the VRA, the "second reconstruction" has been only "a gradual solvent of economic and educational inequality."

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Because much more needs to be done to address "the hateful inequalities that disenfranchisement did so much to create or to entrench—in housing, jobs, medical care, and education," Valelly believes Americans must sustain the VRA or similar protections for political rights if the United States is to continue to make racial progress.[20]

Race and Immigration

Aristide Zolberg's *A Nation by Design* concludes with a somewhat more extensive normative vision for America's immigration future that has great bearing on its racial future; but then Zolberg's book is extensive in every way. It is the magnum opus of one of the discipline's leading students of immigration, and its synoptic review of American policies and practices from the colonial era to the present will be an invaluable resource for the next generation of scholars. It is explicitly concerned to correct "recent institutionalist scholars of American political development" and scholars of race and immigration, among many others.[21] Though its focus is American immigration, it is especially pathbreaking in the ways it expands the analytical frame to clarify international events and the domestic political and economic developments abroad that at different times generated greater or lesser immigrant pressures on the United States and shaped the relationship of immigration to American foreign policy goals. Its theoretical framework is still not very fully or clearly articulated, and some of its main claims are undermined by the very evidence that Zolberg copiously provides. Even so, Zolberg's work, like Valelly's, provides a strong foundation for the largely compelling arguments about the policies needed for today and tomorrow with which he concludes.

Though Zolberg invokes some historical institutionalist notions, most often "path dependency," he does not regard that concept as "a testable 'theory.'"[22] He does not in fact identify with any particular methodological school, nor does he undertake any sort of systematic hypothesis testing. However, he does structure his analysis around the sorts of historical "patterns" that Orren and Skowronek identify with APD scholarship.

In addition to stressing that American immigration policies interact with global political and economic factors, he argues that domestic political actors have generally been arrayed along either an "economic" dimension ranging from those wishing to attract labor to those wishing to exclude it, or an "identitarian" dimension ranging from those who welcome ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse newcomers to those who oppose them. Zolberg contends that political coalition building among the memberships of these two dimensions has often produced a "strange bedfellow" politics, with employers and free-market conservatives frequently aligned with proimmigration ethnic groups and the cosmopolitan Left in favor of relatively open admissions, while citizen workers have often joined with cultural and national security conservatives in favor of restrictions. The results of this strange bedfellow politics have come to be arrayed into a three-part structure: a "main gate" of policies structuring most immigration, now with preferences for relatives of citizens and residents and the highly skilled; a "side door" of access for refugees and asylum seekers; and a "back door" through which guest workers and undocumented laborers arrive.[23] Contextually explicable shifts in the size, intensity, and sometimes the preferences of the groups arrayed along the two dimensions account for changes in the nation's immigration policies over time.

This delineation of coalitions and political patterns is convincing, but it is also more or less explicit in the great bulk of modern writing on American immigration by scholars such as Lawrence Fuchs, Daniel Tichenor, David Reimers, Mae Ngai, and others, on many of whom Zolberg relies. In addition to rich documentation, he adds to this standard framework some distinctive interpretive themes, as suggested by his title, *A Nation by Design.* He wishes to show that more than in most political communities, American governments have all through history used immigration policy to engage in self-conscious "nation-building," structuring America with the economic and identity features that Americans wished themselves to have.[24] This governmental nation building goes back further than many APD scholars have recognized, to the country's very origins.[25] He also contends that many recent scholars, including me, have placed too much emphasis on the undeniable racial dimension of America's nation building and not enough stress on economically inspired efforts to restrain entry of the poor, the diseased, and the ideologically undesirable in some eras and to recruit foreign labor in others.[26]

Yet Zolberg's evidence provides ample grounds for maintaining beliefs that, though governmental immigration policies certainly shaped the American nation, most of the efforts aimed at exclusions on economic and national security grounds have been ineffective. It was the major attempts at racial and ethnic restriction that succeeded. When the United States instead began to accept more diverse immigrants who have made it "the first nation to mirror humanity," this was a demographic transformation that few if any of the proponents of the 1965 Immigration Act imagined, much less "designed."[27]

Though Zolberg devotes five chapters to what he sees as "underestimated" antebellum governmental policies affecting immigration, he does not unsettle the conventional wisdom that these did not have much real impact. He calls attention to the federal Passenger Act of 1819, but acknowledges that it did not prevent immigration from going up in the 1820s, leading to state efforts at deterrent regulations, which also proved "largely ineffective" even before they were declared unconstitutional by national courts.[28] He insists that restrictionists pushed for the 1847 and 1855 federal Passenger Acts but concedes

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that they won only "pyrrhic" and "hollow" victories.[29] Business interests, joined with Democrats seeking immigrant votes and southerners fearing national power over slavery, all prevented effective federal action—which is very much the standard story. In a similar vein, Zolberg notes that despite restrictionists goals, the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act proved to be merely "symbolic politics" with little impact; the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act failed to stop substantial undocumented immigration; and the immigration laws of the 1990s denied immigrants social welfare benefits and legal protections, but they did nothing to reduce either legal or illegal immigration.[30] In relation to their repeated efforts to regulate against employer interests, the legislators of the American "nation by design" have mostly failed.

What has been effective historically? The foundational 1790 naturalization law limited access to American citizenship to "white" applicants. Violations of this restriction are essentially unknown, and Zolberg does not deny that it helped build the new nation as a "white republic."[31] However, he emphasizes its requirement that those seeking citizenship be "free," excluding "paupers" bound to temporary servitude—though as he notes, few of those were likely to be able to pay naturalization fees in any case. Zolberg also insists that in a "contemporaneous international perspective," the striking feature of the 1790 naturalization act was its "inclusiveness, indicated by the absence of religious or national origin qualifications" and its creation of standardized process in place of the special legislative acts required in the colonial era.[32] Yet as he acknowledges, the 1790 law actually represented a *retreat* from the more inclusive Northwest Ordinance's provisions for citizenship. He also does not offer any "contemporaneous international" or "comparative" examples of naturalization policies. Peter Sahlins and Patrick Weil have shown that monarchical France had in fact offered naturalization without official national, racial, or religious restrictions from 1660 to 1789, accepting Chinese, Turks, and "Mesopatamians."[33] Then in 1790, the revolutionary French Constituent Assembly created an automatic naturalization process for all foreigners, including Jews, who had resided in France for five years or married a French woman, at exactly the time their republican counterparts in America were pioneering racial restrictions on citizenship.[34] A comparative, contextual perspective does not make that effective and consequential racial requirement any less significant.

Even though antebellum regulations designed to keep out the poor largely failed, Zolberg acknowledges that late-nineteenth century measures aimed at Chinese exclusion achieved "the only successful instance of 'ethnic cleansing' in the history of American immigration" (accompanied, of course, by completion of the near-genocidal "ethnic cleansing" of the indigenous peoples).[35] Yet, if this "identitarian" goal was achieved, the allied goal of excluding competition from cheap foreign labor emphatically was not. Again employers got their way, now in the even more desirable form of Mexican workers, who could be kept so long as their labor was needed, then deported as vagrants when they were not.[36] As Carey McWilliams later wrote, growers knew that they could say to Mexicans, more effectively than to Chinese: "When we want you, we'll call you; when we don't—git."[37]

Similarly, Zolberg believes recent scholars have overplayed the very real "racialization" of exclusions aimed at southern and Eastern Europeans in the national origins quota system of the 1920s and that greater accord should be given to its acceptance of "an overall quantitative limitation on European immigration."[38] However, it is hard to see why this quantitative limit on Europeans matters more than the racial goals, when the absence of a quantitative limit for the Western hemisphere remained in place, keeping the flow of cheap, exploitable Mexican labor coming. Zolberg believes that "path dependent" adherence to quotas and the overall European limitation was the major contributor to the U.S. government's failure to provide relief to European Jews during World War II, but he also acknowledges that the government found reasons to exclude German Jews even when the quota for their country, and the overall limitation, had not been reached.[39] Finally, Zolberg stresses that the 1965 Immigration Act set the first ceiling to immigration from the Western hemisphere, even as he also commends it for turning America into the "mirror of the world."[40] Both points are correct but both tell against the "nation by design" thesis, because the Western hemisphere limit has proven so porous, and because it was only "inadvertently" that the 1965 act opened the door to heightened Latino and Asian admissions, by giving preferences to immediate family relatives (who turned out not to be Europeans) and then to the highly skilled (including many Asians).[41]

I am not persuaded then, either that scholars have greatly underestimated the degree to which American policymakers effectively "designed" their nation or that they have greatly overestimated the degree to which the design "winners" were, for much of U.S. history, racial restrictionists and acquisitive employers. The latter are most dominant in U.S. immigration policies today, due in part to successful civil rights struggles that Zolberg documents but seems to find perplexing (because blacks have voted with Hispanics on immigration issues "despite their economic interest").[42]

Yet if his massive scholarly labors have done more to provide us with evidence on immigration and race than to shed theoretical light on their interactions, they still underpin some thoughtful normative conclusions. Zolberg argues that when we recognize that the American state, like all others, is a "historical construct," forged by many questionable means, we realize that we cannot regard today's structure of nations as "the definitive outcome of history." We cannot freeze "the current distribution of political membership" without explaining why it is justified—which means our question must not be "Whom Shall We Admit?" but "Why Not the Whole World?"[43]

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Zolberg believes there are realistic replies—to throw open the gates completely might only swamp the islands of affluence and democracy in today's world without uplifting much of mankind—but the burden of proof must be on those who would impose various limits. Priority should be given "to those in greatest need, people who cannot survive in their country of origin because they are the target of persecution, because of life-threatening violence, or because there is no possible way of making a living," instead of putting our own economic interests and cultural preferences always first and foremost.[44] Doing so would, of course, help make the United States even more the demographic "mirror of the world," this time on purpose. If Zolberg is not convincing in all his interpretations of how Americans have "designed" their nation in the past, he speaks with moral force tempered by extraordinarily well-informed realism when he turns to how they should seek to design their future.

Race and Social Policy

Zolberg's long-time colleague, Ira Katznelson, has current American policy debates even more squarely in mind in his stimulating and accessible *When Affirmative Action Was White.* Among the founders of APD scholarship, Katznelson has always been most attentive to racial issues, and this book draws on his important continuing studies of how the power of white Southerners in Congress constrained New Deal reforms. His core argument is that concessions to the white South meant that a great variety of New Deal and Fair Deal policies operated to give massive new economic and educational assistance to whites but not blacks, so that American governance in those years must be seen as "a program of affirmative action granting white Americans privileged access to state-sponsored economic mobility."[45] Congress structured early emergency relief programs and many Social Security Act provisions either with reliance on discretionary local administration, permitting white Southerners to give lower or no benefits to blacks, or else with eligibility requirements that most African Americans employed as farm or domestic workers could not meet. Although World War II expanded employment opportunities for all Americans, the military refused to take blacks far more often than whites, making African Americans disproportionately ineligible for the postwar benefits of the GI Bill, even though, as Suzanne Mettler has stressed, that measure was structured to be racially inclusive. Southern whites also assisted postwar Republicans in adopting laws, notably Taft-Hartley, that made it far harder for unions to organize; furthermore, because many unions had long excluded African Americans, most blacks continued not to benefit from the worker advocacy that unions provided.[46] As a result, in the postwar era, "the Gordian knot binding race to class tightened," and as the nation entered periods of growth and prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s, many educational and economic gaps between blacks and whites actually widened.[47]

As Katznelson acknowledges, little of this story is really new, and there are no theoretical or methodological innovations here, simply solid historical institutional analyses of coalitions, institutions, and policies. Yet he puts it all together with unusual clarity, concision and, especially, purpose.[48] He wishes to reorient today's debates over affirmative action to focus on how far race-conscious measures today are necessary as specific remedies for the racially skewed governmental policies of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. He believes that some such measures can be shown to be appropriate, that indeed affirmative action programs have been "the most important tool that the federal government has endorsed and used since the heyday of the civil rights era to promote a more equitable society."[49] At the same time, he insists that the bar for their legitimation must be set high. General appeals to a history of slavery and discrimination will not suffice. Remedies must be to specific problems traceable to racially biased governmental policies; they must be effective; and they must not contribute to any permanent distribution of government benefits by race. Instead, every "violation of color-blind norms . . . must be justified with the goal of a just color-blind society in mind."[50] In offering these principles, Katznelson believes he is restating the standards Justice Lewis Powell provided in his famous 1978 *Bakke* opinion on the permissibility of affirmative action, and Katznelson thinks he is advocating a view that "can appeal to the broad middle of the political spectrum."[51]

These are arguments well worth taking seriously, but there are also reasons for reservations. By showing so sharply how political coalitions and the structure of national, state, and local institutions and policies fostered today's racial economic and educational disparities, Katznelson makes an important contribution to the APD literature and understandings of American life more broadly. Yet in his desire to stress the importance of New Deal and Fair Deal policies for modern racial patterns, he risks understating the governmental role in structuring racial identities and statuses as systems of inequality throughout U.S. history. He speaks of these years as "the moment when affirmative action was white," but "affirmative action" in the sense of racially skewed governmental benefits has not been confined to this "moment." It ran all through the national, state, and local economic development measures of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. It may be politically savvy to focus on relatively recent decades to make at least some race-conscious remedies seem more clearly called for now, but it does not clarify the realities of American racial developments to imply that these years were aberrational. To be sure, the "aberration" Katznelson wants to highlight is the era's expanded social assistance measures, which were new and did help whites disproportionately. However, other governmental "affirmative action" measures,

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including the racially skewed availability of government charters, public employment, and especially land grants (and, for that matter, access to citizenship and voting rights) all go back to the nation's founding.

It is also not clear that it really is so politically savvy to insist that race conscious measures be specific remedies to particular governmentally fostered inequalities, in the service of achieving a color-blind society. Justice Powell's opinion in *Bakke* did not, after all, prevent anti-affirmative action forces from gaining increasing power over time, and it has also been nearly 30 years since he wrote his opinion. The policies of the New Deal and the Fair Deal now seem far remote to most Americans, not recent injuries that might justify temporary race-conscious measures. Finally, it is also far from certain that most Americans really want a literally color-blind society, as opposed to a society in which racial and ethnic identities are acknowledged, often valued, but are not systematically associated with higher or lower positions in economic, educational, and political hierarchies. Yet even if its analysis at the level of policy principles is not wholly convincing, Katznelson's book does much to shift the terrain of debate over race-conscious measures toward concrete analysis of the political sources and the material consequences of governmental policies, past and present. That is a signal contribution.

Race, Class, and Liberalism

Of all these works, I find Carol Horton's *Race and the Making of American Liberalism,* with its self-conscious effort to analyze the politics of race in APD in ways that can guide future policies, the most fruitful for understanding America's racial failures and considering what is needed to do better. That is in part because, unique among these books, Horton's focus is on the policy ideas and broader political visions that political actors engaged in coalition building and operating institutions deployed and by which, at least in part, they were motivated. This fact suggests that, particularly if they seek to have continuing political as well as academic relevance as all these works do, scholars need to pay careful attention to the political power and practical consequences of ideas.

Ideas seem particularly important when scholars deal with matters such as race, which Horton plausibly views as a "complex social construct" built to respond to peoples' "innate need to locate themselves in a meaningful structure of individual identity and social relations."[52] Though one may well be tempted to add, "and a sustaining structure of economic relations," for Horton "social relations" include economic ones, and she sees class identities as social constructs crafted as contingent means of meeting innate needs fully as much as racial ones. The central thesis of her book is that Americans have constructed racial identities in ways that have "severely constrained the development of class as a meaningful social category in the United States," thereby contributing to excessive, unjust systems of both race and class inequality.[53] She therefore focuses relentlessly on the historical interactions of "identity" and "economic" concerns. Her analyses culminate in a call for "creating and sustaining more unifying understandings of these primary political identities," and her work as a whole serves at least to suggest what the shape of those understandings might be.[54]

Let me acknowledge a disagreement that is not of great ultimate importance. For my tastes, Horton's book would have been better entitled *Race and the Making of American Politics.* Like her great mentor, the late J. David Greenstone, Horton strives to see American "liberalism" as providing the effective bounds of American political discourse, though she does not in the end conclude that American liberalism is too narrowly bounded to contain the sorts of race and class understandings she believes to be needed (indeed, she terms it "radically plastic").[55] She defines "liberalism" as a socially constructed political language prioritizing "the value of individual rights and liberties, limited and representative government, private property and free markets, and constitutionalism and the rule of law."[56] Horton does not indicate just how she arrived at these specifications. They excise Louis Hartz's contentions that if persons are considered human at all, liberalism demands that they "receive full equality," so her definition of liberalism has lots of room for inequalities.[57] Not unlimited room though: She specifies that "white nationalism," which is not committed to "political individualism, free-market capitalism, or constitutional government" for all races, "cannot be considered part of an even broadly defined liberalism." Still, it and other "nonliberal" positions, right and left, "have generally occupied a relatively small corner of the American political landscape."[58]

Again, the author's own evidence tells against her. Horton identifies "multiple liberalisms" in America's past; but the most important for this issue is late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century "Darwinian liberalism," whose adherents believed in superior and inferior races. They remain liberals in Horton's view because they did believe inferior races should receive at least free-market economic rights, confident that they would nonetheless end up at the bottom of the material hierarchies that would result.[59] So they may well have thought; but where in Horton's definition of "liberalism" are the sources of their beliefs in higher and lower races? As her quotations show, the ideological roots of these notions are in fact in nineteenth-century religious and scientific doctrines that have no necessary connection with any of her defining features of liberalism.[60] Thus she correctly defines her Darwinian position as combining "two ideological currents," the "paired ideologies of white supremacism and laissez-faire liberalism," which sounds suspiciously like a mix of "multiple traditions."[61] However, she insists this combination is indeed liberal because it "extended the rights of

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citizenship to all individuals regardless of race."[62] The contrast is again to "white nationalism," which did not.

Yet Horton also concedes that her Darwinian liberals "were usually willing to violate these minimal guarantees" of black rights when "political expediency demanded it."[63] She notes that in any case, "during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries," this Darwinian position "was largely eclipsed by the even more violent politics of white nationalism and racial terrorism."[64] Despite her earlier talk of a "small corner," she insists that this white nationalism opposed to even minimal black rights "was not . . . a marginal phenomenon, in either ideological or practical terms."[65] Indeed, Horton says that by the mid-1890s, "the idea of actually enforcing the amendments" that guaranteed blacks basic economic and citizenship rights "was no longer seriously entertained by anybody in a position of power."[66] Not just African Americans, but Chinese, too, "were deemed inherently incapable of assuming the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship."[67] This white nationalism was widely implemented via "disfranchisement," jury exclusion, and segregationist restrictions on free markets, along with "racial terrorism," "torture and lynching," "repeated campaigns of violence, intimidation, bribery and fraud."[68] Yet even though she shows that views denying nonwhites the most minimal "individual rights and liberties," "free markets," "constitutionalism and the rule of law" had come to power in ways that would endure in many respects up until the 1960s, Horton avers only that "liberalism" had become wholly "racially exclusive," so "claims of common American citizenship no longer had to be honored even in theory, let alone in practice."[69] If we are to heed her definitions, these triumphant positions have to be called instead versions of nonliberal white nationalism. (She then goes on to struggle in similar ways to fit agrarian and labor "producer republicanism" and later more social democratic positions into her very plastic liberalism).[70]

What difference does all this make? Not a lot, because Horton rejects from the outset the notion that liberalism as she defines it has set impervious outer boundaries to political action in America. Her story is one instead of contingent political contests in which reform-minded American actors repeatedly take paths of apparent short-term convenience, decoupling struggles against racial and economic injustices from each other. Radical or "anti-caste" Republicans in Reconstruction abandoned the controversial but necessary cause of land redistribution in favor of more conservative economic positions.[71] Neither agrarian Populists nor radical labor movements "consistently pursued interracial organizing," believing it made organizing more difficult.[72] Those committed to social democratic policies in the New Deal and Fair Deal eras compromised with powerful white Southerners, as Katznelson describes, while many white civil rights leaders in the 1950s championed anti-Communism in ways that led them to neglect "the more economic dimensions of racial inequality."[73] Horton believes that most African American leaders of the modern civil rights movement favored "a broader set of social democratic policies," though she quietly agrees with their critics that such Great Society programs did not work well in practice.[74] Even so, she contends that Republicans have since used racial controversies as the fuel for their rise to prominence, stalling most efforts to pursue egalitarian reforms more effectively.[75]

All these arguments have force however one chooses to use the term "liberalism." To be sure, Horton's accounts of the coalitions, their unifying ideas and objectives, the conduct of the institutions they managed, and the consequences of the policies they implemented are far from definitively supported. At times, she writes as if "race" were itself an independent variable that has "reinforced the dominance of relatively inequitable forms of liberalism" and "produced" shifts from more social democratic to more narrowly reformist forms of politics.[76] If race is indeed a social and political construct, political scientists need to treat it most often as a dependent variable. Like Horton at her best, scholars should analyze how political actors have built alliances and adopted policies in ways that drew on prevailing notions of race and racial interests, often modifying the conceptions and persons' actual experiences of race in the process, and thereby creating new racial contexts that fostered further political struggles.

However, in the end, Horton has done a great deal to give historically specific, compelling content to a crucial claim about "the development of the American polity overall": Champions of racial and class inequality in the United States have repeatedly succeeded in thwarting egalitarian reform alliances, making Katznelson's "Gordian knot binding race to class" a central feature of American political life. If her presentation of both race and class identities as politically constructed in intertwined ways throughout U.S. history has one clear lesson, it is surely that it remains risky to seek to promote class or race equality one-sidedly to the exclusion of the other. Instead, Americans must seek policies that consciously aim to lessen entrenched forms of racial hierarchy as integral components of regulatory and redistributive efforts aimed at improving educational and economic opportunities for all. In an era when labor unions have learned that they can organize more effectively by upholding affirmative action and the rights of immigrants, while Republicans have made increased federal funding for education contingent on showing progress among all racial and ethnic groups, this formula may not be so politically unrealistic as it sounds, or as it has been in the nation's past.

Both to discern the interrelationships of race and class systems of inequality empirically and to assess better the prospects for political alliances forged around policies consciously aimed at addressing them together, it will probably prove beneficial to pursue the sorts of analyses of

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intersecting "institutional orders" that Orren and Skowronek have advocated and that King and I have sought to advance. By mapping out the allied political actors, institutions, and policies that have historically constructed racial and class statuses and then exploring their interactions, it should be more possible to analyze race and class within a common frame and to appraise the potential for building more closely aligned political coalitions. However, as the historical analyses of all these valuable books emphatically demonstrate, there is no reason to expect development toward egalitarian justice in an America where all can prosper to come automatically or easily, without intelligent, energetic, concerted political struggles. The good news is simply that, both in understanding the place of race in American history and in thinking about how progress might be made, development has not yet come to an end.

Notes

1 Orren and Skowronek 2004, 1.
2 Orren and Skowronek 2004, 3.
3 Orren and Skowronek 2004, 4.
4 Orren and Skowronek 2004, 5.
5 King and Smith 2005, 79.
6 Orren and Skowronek 2004, 2–3, 6–7.
7 Orren and Skowronek 2004, 79–84.
8 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 5.
9 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 135–217.
10 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 13–14, 31.
11 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 11.
12 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 20.
13 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 32.
14 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 130, 135.
15 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 94, 226.
16 Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz 2006, 79.
17 Valelly 2004, x.
18 Valelly 2004, 112, 203.
19 Valelly 2004, 15, 192–93.
20 Valelly 2005, 250.
21 Zolberg 2006, 4, 9.
22 Zolberg 2006, 19, 272, 291, 482 n. 43.
23 Zolberg 2006, 11–23.
24 Zolberg 2006, 1.
25 Zolberg 2006, 2.
26 Zolberg 2006, 4, 33, 86, 99, 115, 146, 194, 245, 308, 417.
27 Zolberg 2006, 23, 336.
28 Zolberg 2006, 99, 105, 114, 119, 141, 143.
29 Zolberg 2006, 146, 158.
30 Zolberg 2006, 317, 375, 385.
31 Zolberg 2006, 3–4, 86.
32 Zolberg 2006, 4, 87.
33 Sahlins 1994, 89, 102.
34 Weil 2002, 23.
35 Zolberg 2006, 192.
36 Zolberg 2006, 197–98.
37 Quoted in Zolberg 2006, 257–58.
38 Zolberg 2006, 245.
39 Zolberg 2006, 285–92.
40 Zolberg 2006, 332, 337.
41 Zolberg 2006, 338.
42 Zolberg 2006, 617 n. 123.
43 Zolberg 2006, 455–56.
44 Zolberg 2006, 456–57.
45 Katznelson 2005, 21.
46 Katznelson 2005, 37–38, 42–43, 71, 129, 134.
47 Katznelson 2005, 143.
48 Katznelson 2005, xiv–xv.
49 Katznelson 2005, 149.
50 Katznelson 2005, 159, 171–72.
51 Katznelson 2005, 152, 159.
52 Horton 2005, 7–8.
53 Horton 2005, 8.
54 Horton 2005, 229.
55 Horton 2005, 232 n. 5.
56 Horton 2005, 5.
57 Hartz 1964, 16–17, 49–50, 60–62, 94–99, 102.
58 Horton 2005, 5.
59 Horton 2005, 37–38.
60 Horton 2005, 39, 47.
61 Horton 2005, 44–46.
62 Horton 2005, 51.
63 Horton 2005, 38.
64 Horton 2005, 57.
65 Horton 2005, 54.
66 Horton 2005, 57.
67 Horton 2005, 81.
68 Horton 2005, 71, 110, 114.
69 Horton 2005, 59.
70 Horton 2005, 62, 65, 70, 122, 139.
71 Horton 2005, 16, 19, 29, 35.
72 Horton 2005, 63–64, 67.
73 Horton 2005, 122, 127, 130–38.
74 Horton 2005, 139, 282 n. 34.
75 Horton 2005, 191, 194, 219, 221.
76 Horton 2005, 4, 11, 127.

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