

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Volume I

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**Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details**

The voting behaviour of black minority groups in advanced industrial states appears to confirm this point. Crewe (1983), Studlar (1983), Williams (1982) and St Angelo and Puryear (1982) have all pointed to variance in black voting patterns in Britain and the United States. They show that black voters do *not* respond uniformly to their shared experiences as subjects of discrimination. Williams (1982:78–99), for example, notes that regional concentrations of black voters in the United States in 1980 produced great variance in (though only limited correlation with) the successful election to office of black candidates: southern states comprising more than 50 per cent of the nation's black population returned over 60 per cent of all black elected officials, whilst in the north-east the comparable figures were one in ten yielding one in twenty. However, what is equally important is the generally high level of similar voting patterns among minority racial groups. Using survey data from the late 1970s, Crewe (1983:272) reports that the British Labour Party held the support of 44 per cent of white voters compared with 95 per cent and 92 per cent of West Indian and Asian voters respectively.

Of course, racial differences are not only significant in terms of their impact on formal political participation, but are also closely intertwined with the distribution of power. Indeed, in several polities that have been characterized by overt legal discrimination on racial grounds, underlying power relations have served to exclude certain groups from key social and economic resources. In doing so, the skewed picture of control and influence below the level of formal participation served to reflect what was already apparent at the level of mass party politics. Moreover, as Wilson reminds us, the power relationship between racial groups is invariably uneven: 'Differential power is a marked feature of racial-group interaction in complex societies; the greater the power discrepancy between subordinate and dominant racial groups, the greater the extent and scope of racial domination' (Wilson 1973:18). But why should domination necessarily extend beyond the political realm? The response to this question must point to sociological and historical understanding of power as a multi-faceted concept which goes further than the use of coercive force in the face of interest confrontation. Economic and cultural dependency, for example, are both key forms through which domination has occurred 'and facilitated the emergence of still another, more sophisticated form of control: psychosocial dominance' (Baker 1983:80). This historical process was exemplified by the South African and Rhodesian cases, but it is important to note that, despite great emphasis placed on coercive and structural dominance, it has perhaps been the psychosocial that has had the most enduring consequences (Baker 1983:81). The counterforces of black African nationalism have been conspicuous by their diluted impact in both these societies compared with numerous other post-colonial African states. Moreover, as many writers have commented, white

hegemony in terms of cultural awareness and discussion of inter-race power relations has transcended the nominal southern African divide, and is manifest in several diverse multi-racial societies. For example, the adoption of European-based parliamentary systems by a number of black African states following post-war struggles for independence has inevitably shaped political development in ways that have sometimes been in conflict with local circumstances. The relative inability of these states to reform their political infrastructures—beyond that associated with large-scale political violence—is perhaps further testimony to the persisting dominance of European-based philosophical assumptions concerning representation and individual rights. Moreover, as Smith (1986:223–25) notes, considerable problems of political instability have occurred in many black African states owing to their diverse plural compositions and structures; in a number of cases such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ethiopia and Chad this mismatch has been closely linked to the colonial legacies of past European-imposed constitutional-legal settlements (Davidson 1983). Elsewhere, a succession of civil rights leaders in the United States have observed, and created issues over, the lexicon of race in political debate. In the 1960s radical black leaders in the United States fashioned a new rejectionist philosophy of anger leading to positive mobilization of black communities. Central to their analysis was opposition to perceived white-dominated cultural categories that had historically viewed black thought and contributions as marginal to mainstream society. In this context a campaign was launched for black self-awareness in which it was declared, ‘I am a man—I am somebody’, a cry echoed during the 1980s by the Revd Jesse Jackson’s call for the term ‘Afro-American’ to displace ‘black’ as the collective reference for the black minority he (partly) aimed to lead.

Some of the sharpest and most interesting political conflicts based on race have been the product of inequalities in public service provision. The policy process, whilst rather neglected as a focus of empirical investigation outside the United States (see also ‘Race and political power’, p. 543), serves as a useful arena of study for those interested in questions ranging from the formation of policy agendas through to evaluation of programme outcomes. Studlar and Layton-Henry’s (1990) recent work in relation to the former in the British context has highlighted the comparatively limited resources of non-white citizens to affect the agenda of race policy. Rather, the agenda has been highly crisis-led, *ad hoc* in treatment of specific race-related issues, and atomized in the formation of clearly identifiable policy networks or communities. Saggart (1991a) has argued that the origin of many of these problems can be traced back to the liberal settlement in British race relations which served to constrain public policy debate away from overt discussion of racial inequality and instead placed a premium upon the attainment of short-term racial harmony.

Policy-oriented research in the United States has been fairly substantial. But even here it seems, researchers are aware of the problems associated with examining modes and scales of participation in isolation from wider political analyses of power and influence. In their major study of political participation in the United States, Verba and Nie (1972:172–73) concluded that sharp black-white disparities were apparent, particularly in the area of the establishment and maintenance of direct contact(s) with government officials. However, the blocking of black citizens from a key channel of influence occurred in the context of generally poor and ineffective black participation; but the race factor itself, they argued, appeared to provide a major, often underutilized factor around which group consciousness could be ‘a great resource for political involvement’ (ibid.).

Sharp disparities in black-white experience in employment, education and housing in the United States have been confirmed by empirical evidence. Freedman (1983) has shown that black members of the labour market suffered widespread discrimination in applying for vacancies as well as in attaining similar status and remuneration to their white counterparts once in work. For example, whilst the period 1964–79 shows there to have been a one-third improvement in the representation of black male graduate managers, they still remained under-represented in relation to their white counterparts by a factor of one-quarter. Despite continuing significant levels of labour market discrimination against black workers, the scale of reduction in discrimination achieved since the 1964 Civil Rights Act has impressed some commentators. One such commentator, William Wilson, has viewed this process as part of an irreversible absorption of black Americans into the mainstream class structure. In *The Declining Significance of Race* he argues that:

Race relations in America have undergone fundamental changes in recent years, so much so that now the life chances of individual blacks have more to do with their economic class position than their day-to-day encounters with whites.

(Wilson 1978:1)

This important thesis has been generally greeted with controversy in the debate on black-white relations in the United States. For one thing, it appeared to challenge the established view that saw black political participation in purely or largely racial terms. Moreover, it provided the groundwork for a neo-conservative attack on existing perceptions of racism hindering the socioeconomic progress of black Americans. Wilson’s alternative explanation for lower black performance in economic competition with white Americans claimed that such differential attainment was broadly in line with differences in educational and other skills associated with the promotion of individual life chances. Certainly Wilson has not stood alone in advancing such a neo-conservative perspective and was joined by the publication of David Kirp’s *Doing Good by Doing Little* (1979) and *Just Schools* (1982). In these books Kirp contended

that both British and US educational policy makers (Kirp 1979 and 1982 respectively) ought to return to so-called 'colourblind' approaches to publicly funded school programmes. He emphasized in particular three factors working against the use of racially determined public education programmes in the United States: first, since their high water mark in the early 1970s, there had been a general decline in the public's faith in government intervention to ensure integration; second, the period had also witnessed a secular fall-off in public perceptions of government having a strong role to play in many aspects of society; and third, and most crucial of all, the black constituency itself reported increased disillusionment with the prospects for, and necessity of, an integrated system of public education (Kirp 1982:100-1).

INSTITUTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CONCERNS

In common with the major trends in political science since the 1950s, specialist studies of race and politics have tended to follow mainly institutional and behavioural frameworks of enquiry. That is to say, the rise of racially plural societies—most notably in European and north American countries—have had a number of important consequences for the operation of different political systems. These consequences, commonly impacting on areas such as party competition, labour migration and civil rights policies, have captured the attention of researchers and have been at the forefront of research in this field (see for example Welch and Secret 1981; Layton-Henry and Rich 1986; Welch and Studlar 1985; Pinderhughes 1987). Institutional and behavioural approaches have thus dominated investigations of the race-politics nexus and, to that extent, the literature does not present us with any new or particularly novel questions for the understanding of this topic.

This guiding framework includes a number of specific areas of study involving the political impact of race. An example of one such area has been that of state immigration policy, which has resulted in a veritable trove of research on the Western European experience in particular (Rogers 1985; Freeman 1979; Castles *et al.* 1984). The policies of various national governments to fill domestic labour shortages through foreign recruitment in the 1950s and 1960s came to have an increasingly politicized dimension by the 1970s and 1980s. The popular-cum-electoral politicization of these policies came about not least because of the non-European origin of much of the labour force involved in this process, and the negative anti-immigrant backlash it provoked in many receiving countries. A number of writers have emphasized the economically related aspects of such immigration policies and their eventual reversal during the 1970s and 1980s. Writing on the West German case, Katzenstein has argued that the appearance of the immigration issue in domestic politics compelled 'policy-makers to confront the social consequences of

decisions made largely for economic reasons' (Katzenstein 1987:213). Elsewhere the electoral spoils of explicit anti-immigrant platforms have been seen most vividly in France, where, as Schain (1987) reminds us, the Communist party now competes openly with the far-right National Front for anti-immigrant votes.

Writers have not limited themselves to state immigration policy in a narrow sense but have also extended their interest to matters concerning the processes underlying and resulting from the politicization of immigration. Interest has grown, for example, in areas such as the political rights of immigrant labour (Layton-Henry 1989), the experience of racism and racially exclusionary public policies (Castles *et al.* 1984), and the anti-immigrant backlash of the right (Husbands 1989). However, the thrust of this literature has emerged from within the conventional lines that have shaped the discipline and, in general, has not attempted to challenge or reach beyond them. The interpretations of political scientists and commentators were thus able to note and dispense with the politics of race with comparative ease. Underlying conflicts and issues of power relations involving race have been largely neglected for the same reason that such broader critical approaches to political analysis were themselves overlooked and relegated to the fringes of the discipline for so long. For example, writers on British politics such as Dearlove and Saunders (1984) have argued that preoccupations with narrow views of politics will preclude fuller understanding not only of British politics as a whole but also of key interlocking aspects of the broader picture (such as divisions of race, gender, and so on). The political analysis of race has usually taken as its frame of reference an unsatisfactorily narrow view of politics and, in doing so, has merely replicated the dominant scholastic frameworks of the discipline, but on a smaller scale.

RACE AND POLITICAL POWER

In recent years some researchers have begun to broaden their theoretical and conceptual starting points for the understanding of race and politics. At least part of this process can be attributed to underlying shifts of emphasis within the discipline away from the strong institutional and behavioural preoccupations of the past. The political analysis of social divisions and inequalities has been one area of renewed interest, reflecting the major reappraisals within the discipline that occurred during the 1970s. Undoubtedly, the most voluminous and significant research in the field of race and politics has emanated from the United States in the half-century since the 1930s. But even here the chief locomotive of interest has been questions pertaining to US democracy and, in the last thirty years, the location of power in the mosaic of social, political and economic relationships which are to be found in US cities (Myrdal 1944; Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Greenstone and Peterson 1973).

Borrowing heavily from the findings of studies of social policy, a handful of political scientists have turned to examine the political causes and consequences of racial inequality stemming from discrimination and disadvantage. For example, Glazer and Young (1983) present a timely comparative exposition of the public policy considerations in the old (Britain) and new (United States) worlds. One of the more interesting conclusions of this comparison is the extent to which policy content and substance are shaped by underlying dominant philosophies and belief systems. The predisposition found in the United States towards the practice of making groups the principal subjects of public policy (in contrast to Britain where policy discussion remains stalled at the definition of policy subjects as geographic areas) is held to be one of the most significant factors explaining the differences in experience of race policy. Furthermore, Glazer notes that the US political system contains many more separate points at which policy can be created and carried out than in Britain; the result, he reports, is that US policy makers possess something of a head start in the development of issues of racial and ethnic pluralism in the policy process (Glazer 1983:1-7).

The transatlantic contrasts do not stop there. Indeed, they have been an important source of comparison for researchers interested in the underlying influence of political culture on policy choices and dilemmas involving race (Young 1983; Banton 1984). Debates have taken place at several levels, ranging from the theoretical discussion of liberal democratic power structures to empirically based policy studies. For example, Gordon observes the constraining influence—and indeed clash—of value systems between ‘the principles of equal treatment and individual meritocracy [and] principles that call upon group compensation for undeniable past injuries’ (Gordon 1981:181). The evolving pluralist tradition within the discipline has been a dominant and attractive paradigmatic starting point for writers such as Glazer who have somewhat over-celebrated the capacity of

Anglo-Saxon political tradition...to accept a remarkable degree of pluralism, not only in culture and society, but also in politics. It offers hope that we may yet manage to contain these problems of ethnic and racial diversity and to become richer societies as a result.

(Glazer 1983:6)

The restatement of the liberal, pluralist ideal of a multiracial society that this view embodied is, of course, a familiar feature of the literature not merely on race and politics but also on the distribution of political power. The inclusion of wider questions to do with power structures and relations underpinning pluralist views of the politics of race have generally been overlooked, although students of power in US cities have been keen to redress this imbalance (see for example Bachrach and Baratz 1970:3-16). In seeking to explore behind the political

structures inherent in cosy pluralist orthodoxies, they cite the following important remarks of Schattschneider:

All forms of political organization have a bias in favour of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because *organization is the mobilization of bias*. Some issues are organized into politics while other are organized out.

(Schattschneider 1960:71)

The pluralist interpretation contains important conceptions of the context and framework shaping public policy. These involve conceptualization of the relationship between race and politics at a very general level and issues of race in the policy process more precisely (Banton 1985: Saggar 1991a). There are at least four major problems associated with the pluralist approach to these questions. To begin with, as Bachrach and Baratz (1970) are at pains to point out, the unchallenged and comprehensive inclusion of race issues into urban politics and policy process cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, on the basis of their evidence from a medium-sized US city, the opposite seems to be the case. Urban politics may be conducted within a guiding framework which, put simply, leaves out race. This may be done through a combination of two processes. Policy makers may refuse to give explicit legitimacy to issues of race and ethnicity or, as is more usually the case, they may routinely absorb and effectively deflect such issues into the otherwise common 'colour-blind' approach of public agencies (Saggar 1991a). Another related difficulty emerges from the concept of non-decision making in urban politics. The maintenance of 'colour-blindness' constitutes a major mobilization of bias away from open recognition of the legitimacy of race issues and conflicts. In failing to give such recognition, urban policy makers can be said to be engaging in the 'suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to [their] values or interests' (Bachrach and Baratz 1970:44). Of course, the validity of this view remains to be empirically tested and it may be that the evidence suggests that non-decision making has given way to a new phase of highly active decision making which serves to incorporate formally the race dimension into the policy process. But, even here, a third problem can be identified whereby forms of co-optation and participatory democracy, as Selznick put it, 'gives the opposition the illusion of a voice without the voice itself and so stifles opposition without having to alter policy in the least' (quoted in Coleman 1957:17). Finally, recent research reveals that race-related policy debate has been focused towards questions of direct discriminatory behaviour at the expense of subtler questions to do with the indirect discriminatory impact of the routines, procedures and established norms of public policy. The primary factor responsible for this narrow conceptualization of race in the policy process, argues Saggar (1991a), has been the 'liberal policy framework' of British race relations

established in the 1960s. Racial harmony presided as the chief policy goal of this framework, something which Hill and Issacharoff (1971:284) remind us is by no means the same thing as—and may be detrimental to—racial equality. Writing about London local politics, Saggar reports that policy discussion remained restricted to comparatively ‘safe’ issues and ensured that:

direct [race] conflicts often failed to see the light of day and many issues were labelled ‘off limits’ even before they were discussed. It [was] often easiest to disarm rivals or challengers by claiming that they [did] not support the legitimate ‘ground-rules’ of the existing policy framework.

(Saggar 1991b:26)

These interpretations suggest that the explanatory emphasis should turn to focus more sharply on the factors that develop and sustain competing value systems—or the mobilization of bias as this variable is more commonly known. The routine and successful influence of such systems in politics and policy processes is, after all, an area that has gained greater exposure in the discipline in recent years. In short, these and other studies in the same vein represent an abandonment of the narrow institutional and behavioural concerns of political scientists interested in race. Recent studies of the policy process in particular have given the discipline a model for deeper and broader exploration of the relationship between race and politics. At least one result of this change has been to dissuade researchers from even further attention being placed on narrowly conceived and somewhat familiar questions about formal participatory politics. A greater degree of intellectual pluralism can now be observed in the literature which, like other aspects of the discipline, is less interested in how the system is said or supposed to work and more interested in how the system actually does work (Dearlove 1982; Dearlove and Saunders 1984).

MARXISM AND STATE THEORY

One of the central themes of cross-national social and political research on race has been the debate about the relationship between race and class formation. The links between working-class support for racist political movements and ideologies—notably in industrial liberal democracies—has been a major source of interest for researchers (Castles *et al.* 1984; Castles and Kosack 1985; Omi and Winant 1986). In at least one sense there is little that is new about the broad focus of this research, concerned, as it is, with the complex interrelationship between class and race politics as well as the underlying role played by the state. For example, Cox’s *Caste, Class and Race* sought to explore the divisive impact of race on the construction of working-class politics, arguing that racial inequalities constituted a special category of class-based inequality (Cox 1948). As the fairly exclusive community of neo-

Marxist writers in this field are only too aware, the model originally laid down by Cox has served as a major catalyst of further research and debate (Miles 1980, 1984; Phizacklea and Miles 1980; the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982; Banton 1986). Indeed, to the non-Marxist, non-North American scholar, Cox's arguments still seem to hold an inordinate degree of significance within contemporary debates about race and class relations. Thus, much of the recent writing on race and politics in liberal democracies from a neo-Marxist perspective represents a familiar return to questions first raised almost half a century ago.

That said, there is most certainly a great deal that is new and incisive in recent contributions to this debate to warrant further discussion. In keeping with the general thrust of Cox's work (1948), more recent work has retained an essentially sociological approach to the debate. Consequently, the first and possibly most significant development worthy of comment is to note the relative *absence* of theoretical political analyses of the relationship between race and class relations. Of course there are a handful of exceptions to this general pattern, with Phizacklea and Miles's (1980) work on the British situation being a case in point. Additionally, segments of neo-Marxist writing have served to advance political science understanding of the role of race in wider class-based political processes. In particular, the analysis of the state in the context of mature industrial capitalism has been at the forefront of this literature. The attention given to the role of racial divisions and conflicts within this analysis has grown markedly (see for example Hall 1980; Jessop 1982; Coates 1984).

Such state-centred modes and levels of explanation must, by definition, add to the contribution of political-sociology research. However, the conventional approach taken by political science has, as noted previously, tended to adopt the behavioural and institutional aspects of race as its starting point. The study of what some writers have termed 'state racism' (i.e. the racialization of the role and activities of the state in both political and public policy terms) has been a relatively new addition to the literature (Hammar 1985; Miles 1990). The main impetus behind much of this work, however, has been the broader and longer-standing theoretical interest of political-sociologists in the state in capitalist societies (Jessop 1982). The extension of this debate into the area of race and racism is to be welcomed for its contribution to the *political* analysis of race. However, one of the problems with this literature seems to be its confinement within traditional Marxist points of debate to do with the state's role in facilitating exploitation (Nikolinakos 1973). It does not require too great an intellectual leap to realize that an exclusive concern with capitalist exploitation might be missing the mark. As Yinger correctly observes, 'this leads one to wonder why ethnic and racial inequalities have persisted in Communist states' (Yinger 1983:33).

The point being made is that, whilst the contribution of the largely Marxist literature on the state is clearly a step towards the fuller understanding of race and

politics, it is disturbing that most of this work lies outside the main institutional and behavioural focus of the discipline. Political scientists have only come to examine variables of race on the road to wider exploration of familiar political-sociology themes and debates. Even then, the overwhelming bulk of the work has been addressed to a debate internal to Marxist thought on the state. The specific contribution of political science to the political analysis of race has therefore been relegated to a somewhat tangential, almost proxy status. This characteristic of the literature may be less disturbing if allowance is made for the inter-disciplinary nature of much recent research. Even so, the tendency towards the 'piggy-back' phenomenon, so common in our survey, remains a serious weakness in the theoretical understanding of the relationship between race and politics.

COMPARATIVE RACE POLITICS

As already mentioned, comparisons between the experience of the politics of race in Western European countries and with the US case have been familiar features of research activity. But what of race and politics beyond this narrowly and hemispherically defined context? In one obvious sense it is worrying that consideration of what must surely be an important topic is so sharply compartmentalized—and even segregated—from the other themes of this essay. This is undesirable for a number of reasons, not least because of the opportunities it misses for comparison across the developed and developing world. Furthermore, it still remains an open question as to whether the guiding themes of research have been shaped by the priorities and developments within a modern discipline that has emerged from, and to this day heavily concentrated upon, the study of Western industrial democracies. The debates surveyed earlier concerning participation, power and class—to name just three—have of course been closely rooted to Western political-sociology, but this does not mean that their relevance or input ends there. It has been suggested that the broad brush approach of research in the developed world may be left conceptually and theoretically wanting in the context of studies of the developing world. Smith, for example, criticizes the tendency of most (Western) academics to jumble up what are considered to be distinct analytical categories:

To understand [racial and ethnic] relations...it is essential to distinguish them clearly as objects of study, and not to conflate them, as is now the dominant fashion among white 'experts' on race and ethnic relations, who treat inter-racial and inter-ethnic relations as one and the same for purposes of documentation, analysis and comparison.

(Smith 1986:191)

However, in another sense the choice of and demarcation between the themes of this essay can be defended as a fair reflection of the literature in this field. The

leading debates within many developing nations about race have been the subject of a body of literature largely separate from that discussed previously (Kuper and Smith 1969; Davidson 1983). For instance, there is an absence of studies of racialized state immigration policies, a topic that has preoccupied many researchers in Western Europe in recent years.

Furthermore, the theme of race in urban politics has largely emerged in the context of the development of the discipline in developed countries such as the United States. It is hard to spot a similar debate in studies of developing countries that compares with the works of Bachrach and Baratz (1970) and Key (1949). This literature in fact largely developed as part of a debate within the political science of industrial democracies concerning the distribution of power in these societies. The broader contextual setting of urban politics, however, may enable scholars to pursue similar questions about the location of power in developing countries. It would seem that, despite the seeming distinctiveness of much of this literature, there are clear and urgent comparisons to be made across the developed and developing world about the impact of race upon the conceptual understanding of political power. Indeed, these types of questions have been the mainstay of cross-national comparative work within the discipline in the developed world and there is little reason to suggest that they are any less relevant in African or Asian contexts (Kurian 1982; Taylor and Hudson 1983). Moreover, such comparative work is commonplace in the area of race and political behaviour, uncovering, for example, interesting distinctions between the experience of black African-Americans in the United States and lower caste Harijans in India (Verba *et al.* 1971). Finally, parallel bodies of literature exist on long-standing Marxist questions concerning race and class structures, making it much easier to draw together research findings both from the developed and developing world. The location of the South African case in all of this undoubtedly presents difficulties of classification, but the work of Wolpe (1987) has highlighted the complex interrelationship between race and class factors in that country.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDAS

The future research agenda of race and politics is likely to move beyond the traditional, strait-jacketed institutional and behavioural focus as illustrated by the recent growth of policy studies devoted to the so-called 'race dimension' in matters of mass public service delivery. These studies have served to shift the emphasis towards new areas of research and have concomitantly promoted the development of more theoretical analysis. Interest has moved to examining the impact of race in the policy process and, building on the impressive developments in the discipline in this field, a theoretical debate has begun on the problems of establishing coherent and sustainable race policy. Factors that

mobilize bias against, and deny full legitimacy to, race issues in public policy making have been of particular interest. In this respect, the discipline has played an important part in developing the theoretical literature on race and political power. The theoretical understanding of the relationship between race and politics can only benefit from this development rooted in the policy studies branch of the discipline.

Questions relating to political stability have previously played a significant part in research on race and politics and are likely to continue to do so. Racial and ethnic conflicts have never been far from the core of studies of nation building, particularly in post-colonial Asian and African states. But the issue of stability has been of considerable relevance in various Western industrial states where the political consequences of labour migration have produced new tensions and conflicts. With recent developments across Europe highlighting the long-term, underlying distinctiveness of these immigrant communities, it is likely that the attention of researchers will return to basic questions about social integration, cultural pluralism and political stability.

Finally, in whatever way the research agenda of race and politics evolves, future work is likely to be increasingly underscored by the conceptual heterogeneity of race. The political impact of race, as successive scholars have found, is not a single and easily identifiable phenomenon. Instead, the politics of race has many facets, which suggests that explanation will be aided by a multi-theoretical, multi-disciplinary strategy. Unfortunately, so much of the existing research has tended to box itself into one narrowly defined approach or another. The result has been that the many complex facets of the phenomena have not been fully appreciated or explored. The political analysis of race is therefore a little like the old story of the proverbial elephant: it is not always possible to describe it clearly or effectively, but its positive identification is rarely in doubt.

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CLASS AND POLITICS

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The idea that classes and the relations between them are fundamental aspects of political life has played an important part in the formation of the modern world. Two of the most influential political movements of the last hundred years, communism and European social democracy, have been based on some version of this idea and it is impossible to understand contemporary politics without taking their impact into account. Nevertheless, the precise significance of class in the modern world remains a matter of considerable dispute, and it does so for two distinct but related reasons. First, there is disagreement as to the nature of the concept of class and of the place it should play in a general understanding of society. Second, a number of recent developments have brought into question the understanding of society as a matter of classes and the relations between them on which the earlier successes of these movements appear to have been based: notably, the political weaknesses of European social democracy, the internal collapse of some communist regimes and the growing political tensions within others. The question of the role of class in contemporary politics is also, inescapably, a question of the role of ideas of class both in political analysis and in the practical conduct of politics.

On the conceptual issue we can distinguish two broad approaches. Both accounts of the relevance of class have been influential in Western social democratic and labour movement politics.

The first approach treats class simply as a category of persons (usually identified by reference to occupational characteristics) that may or may not prove useful for the purposes of distributional analysis. Here class is used as one of a number of variables (such as sex, age, ethnicity, union membership, or housing tenure) that may be related to the social distribution of income, health, attitudes and voting behaviour. In this view class may be regarded as relevant to politics either because it relates to the distribution of political attitudes and voting behaviour or because it relates to education, life expectancy, and other aspects of the life chances of the population that are thought to be important on normative

grounds. There are competing views as to how the categories of class themselves should be identified, giving rise to competing accounts of the political significance of class.

At the other extreme is a treatment of classes both as categories of persons and as major social forces that are characteristic of certain types of society, and of modern capitalist societies in particular. In this view classes and the most significant relations between them arise out of basic structural features of society and they inevitably have major social and political consequences. This approach to class has been influential in the politics of communist parties throughout the world and on the left wing of labour and social democratic movements. While there are considerable disagreements as to the precise conceptualization of class, there is nevertheless a common insistence on the importance of classes and class relations for the understanding of politics in capitalist societies. Marxism provides the best-known example of this type of approach, but there are also influential non-Marxist versions.

While the distinction between these two approaches is not always as clear-cut as the above remarks suggest, it is nevertheless important to recognize that one does not necessarily imply the other. In Marxist political analysis, class struggle would be regarded as an important part of politics in capitalist society even if class differences did not show up in the pattern of voting behaviour. On the other hand, the fact that the class variable has significant distributional implications in Britain and other capitalist societies does not establish that classes must themselves be regarded as social forces. Differences between the south of England and the north-west also have significant distributional implications but no one would regard those regions as social forces in the way that classes have often been seen.

This essay considers the idea of class as a social category that may be related to the distribution of political attitudes and behaviour, before moving on to consider the idea of classes as social forces. The latter has had greater significance in the modern period and will be given correspondingly greater attention here. On both accounts the practical political implications of class may vary over time and from one society to another but there are important differences in the way these changes are evaluated. In one, changes in the significance of class are an empirical matter, the consequences, as the case may be, of changes in the occupational structure, the character of party competition or other features of the society in question. In the other, changes in the apparent significance of class are either relatively superficial, masking a deeper underlying continuity, or else they represent a major change in the character of the society in question. All of these responses can be found in attempts to make sense of the changing fortunes of class-based political movements. These are examined in the third section of this essay.

CLASS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

In the period between the end of the Second World War and the late 1950s, it seemed clear to most commentators on British politics that the division between the working class (that is, manual workers and their families) and the rest of the population was the single most important influence on voting behaviour. Electoral politics were strongly polarized between the Labour and Conservative Parties, with only about a quarter of the electorate abstaining or voting for minor parties. Roughly two-thirds of working-class voters supported the Labour Party and the evidence of opinion polls suggested that most of them did so because they regarded it as being in some sense the party of the working class. Labour, it seemed, was the natural political home of the working class, and only the deviant, Conservative-voting minority posed a particular problem of explanation. The middle and upper classes were overwhelmingly Conservative, with only a deviant minority supporting Labour.

The class polarization of British politics was widely regarded as providing the clearest example amongst the larger Western democracies of the influence of class on political behaviour (Alford 1963; Rokkan 1970). In the United States, the absence of a major socialist party was seen as resulting in a somewhat weaker relationship between class and political behaviour. Elsewhere in Europe the class polarization of political behaviour was complicated by the influence of religious parties, significant regional and cultural differences, and divisions within the organized labour movement.

By the end of the 1950s, however, there were indications that this picture of the class character of British politics might be too simplistic. Some commentators had already noted signs of the slow but steady erosion of Labour's support that continued, with minor variations, into the 1980s (Abrams *et al.* 1959; Crosland 1960). Some years later a major study of political attitudes and voting behaviour found a marked weakening in the class alignment of electoral politics throughout the 1960s. It also suggested that the image of politics as a matter of conflicting class interests was most widely accepted amongst those who entered the electorate during and immediately after the Second World War. 'But such an image was accepted less frequently among Labour's working class supporters who entered the electorate more recently' (Butler and Stokes 1974:200-1). Subsequent studies found both that party allegiances within the electorate were becoming weaker and that the relationship between class and party affiliation was declining. By the time of the 1983 general election it was possible to argue that housing tenure had replaced class membership as the single most important social characteristic influencing voting (Rose and McAllister 1986:79). Surveys conducted at the time of the 1987 election indicated that Labour secured 34 per cent of the votes of the skilled working class, compared with over 40 per cent for

the Conservatives (*Guardian*, 15 June 1987). Rather than continue to vote on class lines, it seemed to many commentators that important sections of the working class were making a more pragmatic, hard-headed assessment of where their interests lay and that many of them were therefore voting Conservative.

The class polarization of British politics in the 1950s had been seen as reflecting an influence of class on political behaviour that was characteristic of the larger Western democracies. The erosion of that polarization was seen as part of a broader international development. This thesis is most forcefully expressed in the course of Peter Jenkins's reflections on the so-called Thatcher revolution:

everywhere in the industrialised democratic world the old manual working class was in decline, trade union membership was falling, old class loyalties were crumbling.... In southern Europe socialist parties might still have a role to play as agents of belated democratisation; democratic socialism survived in the small neutralist countries of Scandinavia; but across the whole swathe of northern Europe the mode of politics which had dominated the post-war period was in decline.

(Jenkins 1989:335)

In other words, European social democracy was on the way out, the Labour party in Britain was a victim of this trend, and Mrs Thatcher had helped it on its way.

However, it would be misleading to close the discussion of class and political behaviour at this point. It has been suggested that the declining significance of class in British politics is more apparent than real. The argument is that the traditional working class/middle class dichotomy provides too simple a model of class structure, and that a more refined model (with an intermediate class including many who would otherwise be regarded as skilled workers) is required to take account of the impact of significant changes in the occupational structure since the 1950s. This more refined model, it is claimed, would show that the relevance of class to politics is not declining (Heath *et al.* 1985; Marshall *et al.* 1989). The relevance of class, then, would appear to depend on how classes are to be identified. Against that view Rose and McAllister insist that however classes are identified 'most British voters do not have their vote determined by occupational class' (Rose and McAllister 1985:50).

This more refined model of class nevertheless shares with the traditional view the idea of a natural affinity between classes and political parties such that a relative change in the size of one invariably leads to a corresponding shift in the political fortunes of the other. That idea is difficult to square with the comparative success of social democratic and labour parties in parts of northern Europe and in Australasia. This shows that these parties may have greater sources of potential support than the pessimistic sociological determinism of that approach appears to suggest. The example of Sweden in particular, as we shall

see in the third part of this essay (pp. 564–5), has been used to argue that the relationship between class and politics may well depend on the conduct of parties themselves.

CLASSES AS SOCIAL FORCES

This idea of classes as constituting one set of social categories amongst others is in marked contrast with the idea of classes as major social forces generated by the fundamental structure of society. In the one case, class is a feature of social structure that may or may not have an impact on how people vote, and therefore on the behaviour of parties. In the other, the relationship of classes to politics is an essential feature of classes themselves. There are many different versions of this view, but perhaps the best-known formulation can be found in the opening section of *The Communist Manifesto*, first published in 1848:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf.... [I]n a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

(Marx and Engels 1848:35–6)

In this view of classes, their political significance is not primarily a matter of electoral behaviour. Class membership may be closely related to voting behaviour or it may not—but in either case politics has to be seen as really a matter of class struggle. In Marx's view, classes are the main contending forces in society. Classes, and the relations between them, are the key to the understanding of politics and, in particular, to the identification of the forces promoting or resisting progressive social change. Class struggle may be open or it may be hidden, but it will make its presence felt for as long as classes themselves exist.

The treatment of classes as social forces is most commonly associated with Marxist thought, but Marx insisted that he was not the discoverer of 'the existence of classes in modern society or [of] the struggle between them' (Marx 1852). Much contemporary non-Marxist political analysis has also been concerned with the identification of classes and the relations between them because of their supposed significance as social forces. For example, in his discussion of the implications of social mobility for the prospects of egalitarian social change in Britain, Goldthorpe takes care to distance himself from Marxism. Nevertheless, to 'this extent at least we would agree with Marx: that if class society is to be ended—or even radically modified—this can only be through conflict between classes in one form or another' (Goldthorpe 1980:29; see also

Dahrendorf 1959; Parkin 1979). What matters for these non-Marxist authors is not so much the existence of class divisions in Marx's sense, but rather the formation of classes as social collectivities capable of a significant degree of collective action. Social mobility is important in Goldthorpe's argument, for example, because of its effects on the development of class identification and the ties of solidarity required for the formation of classes as collective actors.

There is no space to consider the differences between the various Marxist and non-Marxist forms of class analysis here. For present purposes it is more important to concentrate on what they share: namely, an insistence on the importance of classes and class relations for the understanding of capitalist societies. Any treatment of classes as social forces involves some combination of two elements. One is a notion of classes as collective actors. The other is a conception of class interests as objectively given to individuals by virtue of their class location, and therefore as providing a basis for action in common. Both are problematic. The suggestion that classes play a fundamental role in politics involves the further claim that crucial features of political life can be understood in terms of the actions or the interests of classes themselves. We consider each of these issues in turn.

The problem with the idea that classes can be regarded as collective actors is simply that even the most limited concept of actor involves some means of taking decisions and of acting on them. Human individuals are actors in that sense, and so are capitalist enterprises, political parties, trade unions and state agencies. There are other collectivities, such as classes and societies, that have no identifiable means of taking decisions—although it is not difficult to find those who claim to take decisions and to act on their behalf. Actors' decisions play an important part in the explanation of their actions—and that is the most important reason for restricting the concept of actor to things that are able to take decisions and act on them. To suggest, for example, that the current crisis of the British welfare state could be explained as the actions of a *class* is to construct a fantastic allegory in which the factions, parties and other organizations involved and their often confused and conflicting objectives are reduced to the actions of a single actor. Such allegories appear to simplify our understanding of the state of affairs in question while thoroughly obscuring the question of what can or should be done about it.

What of the attempt to understand classes as social forces in terms of structurally determined class interests? These interests are supposed to be determined by the structure of relations between classes, and the parties, unions and other agencies of political life are then to be seen as their more or less adequate representations. Two features of this concept of interests are particularly significant.

One is that it appears to provide an explanatory link between the behaviour of individuals and their position in the structure of society: interests provide us with

reasons for action, and are determined by our position as members of a particular class, gender or community. Marxist class analysis suggests, for example, that the working class has an objective interest in the overthrow of capitalism in favour of a socialist society. The difficulty here, of course, is that the vast majority of those who are thought to have an objective interest in socialism rarely acknowledge those interests as their own. Far from providing an effective explanatory link between the structure of capitalist society and political behaviour, the idea of structurally determined class interests generates a host of explanatory problems. A considerable part of Marxist political analysis has been devoted to considering why the working classes in the capitalist West have not pursued their objective interests in socialism.

The other significant feature of this concept of interests is that it seems to allow us to combine a variety of discrete relationships and conflicts into a larger whole. In Britain, for example, the 1984–5 miners' strike, industrial action by transport workers, and the defence of the National Health Service against cuts could all be regarded as instances of a wider struggle between one class and another on the grounds that the same set of class interests was ultimately at stake in each of these conflicts. The use of class interests as a means of bringing together a variety of distinct relationships and conflicts suggests that the participants in each case be regarded as standing in for the classes whose interests are supposed to be at stake. It brings us back, in other words, to the allegory of classes as collective actors.

This brings us to the third issue, the question of reductionism. No serious advocate of class analysis, Marxist or non-Marxist, maintains that the analysis of class relations tells us all we might want to know about the political forces at work in the modern world. The allegory of classes as collective actors is nevertheless intended to provide us with a key to the understanding of political life. This is the point of the passage from *The Communist Manifesto* quoted earlier (p. 559).

Goldthorpe's study of social mobility in modern Britain provides a clear non-Marxist example of this device. We have seen that he regards class conflict as necessary to bring about significant social change. He therefore proceeds to examine the implications of social mobility for the patterns of 'shared beliefs, attitudes and sentiments that are required for concerted class action' (Goldthorpe 1980:265)—as if those implications could be identified quite independently of the actions of political parties, the media, or state agencies. What is involved here is a failure to take seriously the consequences of movements, organizations and their actions, both for political forces and the conditions under which they operate, and for the formation of the political interests and concerns which bring them into conflict. Political attitudes, beliefs and behaviour may then be treated as if they reflect other social conditions, in this case the strength and consciousness of the

contending classes. The implication is that these other conditions are in some sense more real than the political phenomena that reflect them.

This example brings out a general feature of the idea that classes provide the key to an understanding of political life. This type of approach claims to bring together two distinct but related levels of analysis. At one level are the factions, parties, ideologies and the like that constitute the political life of society. At the other level is the allegory of classes as collective actors, the key to our understanding of the mundane. Unfortunately, there is at most a gestural connection between these two levels. The class analysis of politics, in other words, combines an insistence on the irreducibility of political phenomena with the explanatory promise of reductionism. How the trick is done, of course, remains obscure.

PROSPECTS FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

Both communism and European social democracy have been based on some version of the idea that classes and class relations are fundamental aspects of the political life of modern societies. Supporters of both movements have been disappointed in their expectations. It is beyond the scope of this essay to consider the fate of communist regimes, but what of the responses of the labour and social democratic parties of the capitalist West?

Social democratic attempts to come to terms with the failures of their expectations can be divided into two broad clusters. On the one side there is the 'revisionist' response that class in either of the above senses has become less relevant to politics in the modern world and that labour and social democratic parties must therefore broaden their appeal if they are to succeed—that is, they must modernize and revise their doctrines and objectives to take account of the effects of social and economic change. The opposite view is that the political salience of class is, to a considerable extent, a consequence of the policies pursued by social democratic parties themselves and by the broader labour movement. The declining salience of class in Britain and many other Western democracies would then be, at least in part, a consequence of the failure of their labour or social democratic parties to pursue an appropriate form of class politics.

The revisionist response operates at two levels. One involves the general claim that classes are becoming less relevant as a consequence of economic development, at least in the democratic societies of the modern West. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the German socialist Edward Bernstein argued that capitalist economic development had brought about a situation in which 'the ideological, and especially the ethical factors, [had] greater space for independent activity than was formerly the case' (Bernstein 1961:15). The revisionist

argument here assumes a hierarchy of human needs: once material needs have been satisfied then people will turn their attention to non-material values. The appeal to class interests may have been important in the earlier stages of capitalist development, but it must now be replaced by a politics organized around the ethical appeal of socialist values.

A closely related argument about the effects of economic growth was set out in Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* (1956) and his Fabian pamphlet *Can Labour Win?* (1960). At one time class was the main determinant of voting behaviour, but with rising living standards 'we may find...as material pressures ease and the problem of subsistence fades away, people become more sensitive to moral and political issues' (Crosland 1960:22). More recently, the literature on what are often called 'new' social movements has given a new twist to the old revisionist argument by suggesting that conflict between classes has been displaced by feminist, environmentalist and other 'new' forms of politics in the more advanced societies of the modern world (Cohen 1985; Inglehart 1979).

This general argument in favour of developing a non-class political appeal is often supplemented by a second, more pragmatic level of revisionist argument. Bernstein used German census material to argue that the peasantry and the middle classes were far from disappearing, as orthodox Marxism appeared to suggest, and that the working class was far from being an overwhelming majority of the population. The implication, at least for the foreseeable future, was that there would always be a substantial part of the electorate, neither capitalist nor working class, whose votes could significantly affect the chances of achieving any major socialist objective. The social democratic party needed therefore to dilute its sectional appeal to the interests of a single class if it was to have any hope of winning power.

Similarly, Crosland's *Can Labour Win?* (published in 1960, following the Labour Party's third successive post-war election defeat) maintains that long-term social changes have eroded the significance of class differences in British politics, with the result, first, that a growing proportion of the electorate no longer votes on the basis of class identification and, second, that Labour's working-class image is a wasting electoral asset. Crosland argued that economic development was producing changes in the occupational structure. The relative size of the manual working class fell throughout the 1950s (by about 0.5 per cent a year) and it has continued to do so. Assuming a straightforward association between class position and voting behaviour, such a fall in the relative size of the working class entails a corresponding fall in Labour's class-based support. In Crosland's argument, Labour's difficulty is compounded by the gradual breakdown of that association as a result of increasing affluence, social and geographical mobility and the breakup of old working-class communities. In the more prosperous sections of the working

class, people had 'acquired a middle class income and pattern of consumption, and sometimes a middle class psychology' (Crosland 1960:12). This inexorable erosion of class as a basis for Labour's electoral support means that the party has to concentrate on other determinants of electoral behaviour, particularly on its image and performance in office.

The revisionist argument, then, is that the analysis of politics in class terms has become less informative as other, non-class forms of politics have come to the fore. Here the contrast between a past in which socialist politics could be conducted in class terms, and a present and future in which it cannot, serves as a rhetorical device. It is a means of arguing against the analysis of politics in class terms without directly confronting the conceptual weaknesses of class analysis.

In fact, the revisionist account of the implications of economic change is open to challenge on a number of points. First, many of those recruited into the expanding middle-class occupations came from working-class backgrounds. It is far from clear that they would be repelled by Labour's class identification. As for the affluent-worker explanation of political change, its advocates have been remarkably unclear as to the processes that are supposed to connect increasing prosperity with Conservative voting. Academic critics have shown that what might seem to be the most plausible mechanisms have little empirical foundation (Goldthorpe *et al.* 1968).

More seriously, the revisionist argument reproduces many of the problems noted above with regard to the analysis of classes as social forces. In particular, it treats the political concerns and orientations of the electorate as if they were formed independently of the political activities of parties and other political agencies, and ultimately as if they were a function of changes in the economy. The anti-revisionist case attempts to incorporate this point into its class analysis of society. It advances the argument that while politics is ultimately a matter of class struggle, the apparent significance of class in the political life of a capitalist society will itself depend on the strength of the working class in that society. Where the working class is strong it will be in a position both to force an accommodation on the ruling capitalist class and to insist on the class content of the political disputes in which it is engaged. Where it is weak, the class content of politics will be less apparent.

Many authors take Sweden as an exemplary case in point. Esping-Anderson and Korpi (1984) argue that classes develop parties, unions and other organizations in order to further their collective interests and that they will attempt to shape public institutions in their favour. In the area of social policy, for example, they suggest that the primary concerns of the working-class parties have been to reduce workers' dependence on market forces by developing a system of basic citizenship rights and maintaining full employment:

‘Among the Western nations since 1973, it is only the three with the most powerful labour movement—Sweden, Norway and Austria—which have utilized macro-economic, wage or labour-market policies in order to hold unemployment at relatively low levels.

(Esping-Anderson and Korpi 1984:205)

Whether the working class can impose such an arrangement will depend on the relative strengths of the different classes. Its aim then, must be both to defend its material interests and to promote social conditions that foster its organizational strength. It therefore favours universalistic forms of social security provision on the grounds that they promote solidarity within the population rather than the pursuit of sectional interests. The capitalist class, on the other hand, has an interest in limiting the political and economic strength of the working class. It therefore favours decentralized wage bargaining and forms of social policy that promote sectional divisions—for example, by separating manual workers from other employees and fostering the growth of private pensions and insurance schemes.

Where working-class politics are relatively unsuccessful, the class itself will be divided and class solidarity will have limited political appeal. Working-class parties will then be vulnerable to the revisionist temptation, that is, to seek electoral support on non-class grounds—thereby further reducing the appeal of class politics. In the British context, for example, Minkin and Seyd (1977) have suggested that the declining salience of class is partly a result of the Labour Party’s all too successful attempts to manipulate its image and electoral appeal in line with the recommendations of *Can Labour Win?* (Crosland 1960).

Nevertheless, it is far from clear that the comparative success of Swedish social democracy compared with the British labour movement need be interpreted as reflecting the relative strengths in these countries of different classes, considered as collective actors engaged in conflict. At most, the argument shows that *conceptions* of class interests may well be significant elements of political life. The strongest point in the anti-revisionist case is its insistence that the relative strength of class-based forms of politics in, say, Britain and Sweden, cannot be explained without reference to the outcomes of past conflicts within and between parties and other organizations.

In other words, class politics do not simply reflect changes in the occupational structure or economic growth, as the revisionist case suggests. What this last point shows is that the role of ideas in political life (in this case, ideas about the political significance of class) is never a simple reflection of social structure conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

Judgements about the political significance of class must depend first on whether or not classes are regarded as social forces. If they are so regarded, then the judgements then depend on whether classes are regarded as characteristic of capitalist (and possibly other) societies, as Marxism and much non-Marxist class analysis suggests, or as forces that have been superseded by non-class forms of political life, as the revisionist and 'new social movement' literature suggests. If classes are not regarded as political forces, then the significance of class is a matter either of the distribution of voting behaviour in the population or of the significance of class and related patterns of inequality in the political ideas of the major political parties. Since ideas of class are widely disputed and the role of such ideas in political life is not a simple reflection of social conditions there is little prospect of these questions being settled in the foreseeable future.

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FURTHER READING

The clearest accounts of what was once the standard view of the relation between class and political behaviour in Western democracies are Alford (1963) and Rokkan (1970). The shifting patterns of electoral support in Western Europe are surveyed in H.Daalder and P.Mair, *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change* (London: Sage Publications, 1983). There are numerous treatments of the apparent decline in the salience of class in British elections: see especially, M.Franklin, *The Decline of Class Voting in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Butler and Stokes (1974), Rose and McAllister (1985) and Marshall *et al.* (1989). The last two provide useful discussions of the implications of different definitions of class for the analysis of electoral behaviour. The idea of classes as social forces has generated an enormous literature and continues to do so. Marxist and non-Marxist versions are discussed in B.Hindess, *Politics and Class Analysis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987). P. Calvert, *The Concept of Class* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), is a general historical survey of various uses of the concept. The claim that class politics have become less significant as a result of economic development can be found in the writings of socialist revisionism (Bernstein 1961; Crosland 1956, 1960) and, in a rather different form, in the 'new social movements' literature (Cohen 1985). Variants of a contrary argument to the effect that the apparent salience of class is itself a consequence of the political strategies pursued by social democratic parties and by their opponents can be found in A.Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and several contributions to J.H.Goldthorpe (ed.) *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

ETHNICITY AND POLITICS

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Since the end of the Second World War, the world has witnessed the revival, intensification and stubborn persistence of ethnicity as an issue in politics, as a focal point of popular political mobilization, and as a source of domestic and interstate conflict. The political salience of ethnicity has endured not just in the former colonial territories of the Third World but also in the advanced post-industrial democracies of Western Europe and North America, as well as in the major communist nations of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe, and the People's Republic of China. The structural conditions that give rise to ethno-regional politics, the immediate causes that catalyse ethnic conflict, and the forms that ethnically based conflict assumes differ markedly both across and within the three worlds. What is apparent, however, is that the penetration of 'modernity' into all regions of the world has *not* led to the 'withering away' of ethnicity as a source of political conflict; indeed, its salience appears to have increased as a consequence of the diffusion of modernity.

What is perhaps most striking about the study of ethnic politics is that, with a few exceptions, the resurgence of ethnicity as a political force has been all but ignored in the mainstream academic literature on social change and political development. Walker Connor (1972:319–20) once noted that, among a sample of ten works that would now be regarded as among the classics of the development literature, none of them contained a section, a chapter, or a major subheading on ethnicity. Six of the ten contained not a single reference to ethnic groups, ethnicity, or minorities in their indexes, and the remaining four made only passing references to the subject in an occasional isolated passage. Thus, while there is a theoretically rigorous and empirically rich body of research on the dimensions and dynamics of ethnic politics, this literature has not been fully recognized by the mainstream scholarship on comparative social change and political development.

To some extent, the relegation of ethnicity to the theoretical periphery of contemporary social science is attributable to the paradigmatic competition

between modernization and Marxist schools of social development. Both have depicted ethnic identification as a primordial sentiment whose relevance would diminish with the expansion and penetration of the modern industrial society. Contrary to the expectations of both schools, however, we have witnessed a resurgence of ethnic politics at a point in time when the penetration of the global political economy and the diffusion of the modern culture into all corners of the globe had led mainstream comparative analysts to anticipate the imminent demise of ethnicity as an issue nexus for politics within nations. The frustration of these expectations is summarized by Walker Connor:

The preponderant number of states are multiethnic. Ethnic consciousness has been definitely increasing, not decreasing, in recent years. No particular classification of multiethnic states has proven immune to the fissiparous impact of ethnicity: authoritarian and democratic; federative and unitary; Asian, African, American, and European states have all been afflicted. Form of government and geography have clearly not been determinative. Nor has the level of economic development. But the accompaniments of economic development—increased social mobilization and communication—appear to have increased ethnic tensions and to be conducive to separatist demands. Despite all this, leading theoreticians of ‘nation-building’ have tended to ignore or slight the problems associated with ethnicity.

(Connor 1972:332)

Thus, we are presented with the questions that will serve as the focus of this essay. Why has ethnicity remained such a powerful focus of political identification in the contemporary global community? Why has the diffusion of global political culture, economic institutions and modernization processes not led to the anticipated decline in the salience of ethnicity in politics and perhaps even intensified its political relevance? What are the different forms that ethnic political mobilization assumes, and what structural, cultural and individual factors account for differences in the probability, form and issue focus of ethnic collective action?

This essay presents an overview of some of the more compelling themes in recent research on ethnic politics. By describing the theoretical principles upon which this body of research is grounded, this essay can perhaps illustrate the extent to which this research is in fact integrated theoretically into the broader paradigmatic terrain of collective political action. In this manner, we can perhaps highlight the relevance of research on ethnicity and politics to the evolution, refinement and elaboration of the major research traditions dealing with social change and political development.