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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 4, 1995

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT

HAROLD ICKES
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

MARK GEARAN
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Joan Logue-Kinder *JLK*
Assistant Secretary (Public Affairs)

SUBJECT: Winning with Honor

America is hurting. We see it in the militias, strange religious sects, gang violence and the like. Affirmative action backlash and Oklahoma City are not independent entities.

America has cut its teeth and developed around a Boom Town mentality. A land of opportunity. Now the West has been won, and the suburbs are an extension of the cities, factories and the corporate giants we have identified with, and been so proud of, as a sign of our national superiority, are downsizing with a vengeance. The Boom Town era is over, and the American public is uncertain and unsure. Not only uncertain about what tomorrow will bring but uncertain and unsure about even what to dream.

The American public knows the country has changed. But what has happened to us and why? What will it mean for the future and the future of the children? How many kids, regardless of gender considerations, still go through a phase saying they want to grow up to be rockbound firemen, policemen or nurses?

Yes, "it's the economy, stupid." We're in a global marketplace. Where the Japanese (whom we used to scoff at) are beating our socks off and the headlines blare about how the dollar is down against the yen and the mark. ("But Pop, didn't you win World War II?") And the man of the house who used to be "Father Knows Best" is being pressured to help with the laundry because "the little lady" has to get to her job; besides, he might get laid off and then.... But I digress, the economy. We know the budget deficit is too high and most

Americans will tell you, "We must get that deficit down." "Why?" "Because it too high!" "Too high?" "Yea, it's almost a trillion dollars." "My God!" Shocked more by the number than knowledgeable about what it means thus adding to our national anxiety level. The anxiety grows. Nothing is the same. Times change. "What is there to hold on to?" It's the economy, stupid.

America is not the country it used to be and the American public knows that; they know something has to be done and they have to be a part of it. But what is the "it"? Most of us are quite unsure about the depth and ramifications of the problems and the possible remedies. In the absence of the tools to make certain positive moves, many of us are still looking to familiar resources close to home. Getting new leadership in Washington, first Bill Clinton, then a new team in last November's election. But the uncertainty and the anxiety persist, the dollar declined to new lows against the yen and the mark. Just when J. Q. Public thought he, or she, could begin to dream about owning their own home or getting their debts under control, the interest rates went up! Yes, it is important the economy not over heat. But do we, as the general public, really have the tools to fully understand and buy into the concept?

How many Americans have been exposed to even a rudimentary course in economics? Using myself as an example. I went to a well thought of private school. I was schooled in Latin and Geometry. I know all about the concepts of photosynthesis. I was exposed to chamber music and opera -- no economics. I went on to college, again a well respected private institution. By a fluke, late in my college career, I took economics (I had not done well in statistics and I needed the credits). My father constantly referred to the "law of supply and demand" and I had always been fascinated by how often that concept could be applied. What of those hundreds of thousands of people with a lesser education or other opportunity to learn even the simplest concepts?

I have been reading *The New York Times* since I was in seventh grade, and it was not until I joined the Treasury Department as a spokesperson, where I had to understand the issues in order to be able to disseminate information and answer questions, that I fully became aware of just how much it is the economy. The issues are complex, and I have been one of those that has harped on the fact that "the American public does just not understand..." The President has said his Administration has not done a good job of communicating what this Administration has done with regard to the economy. This may be true, but part of the problem lies in having the tools and the access to information in order to have a clear understanding of the issues before one can process the information.

Other countries' Finance Ministries produce educational materials to explain budget processes, basic economic principles, concepts of trade and the like. Because of rightful concerns about using public funds to proselytize the achievements of a given party or administration, we, not only do not produce educational materials, we have regulations in place which restrict the kind of information that can be produced with public funds.

We have a proud country whose people are floundering in uncertainty and anxiety. In order to hold on, we grope for something to reenforce our need for empowerment and self worth. We dig deeper into fundamentalist religion and "feel good" evangelicalism. We develop a bunker style mentality to protect against those who are not "us" (witness: gangs, militias, anti-affirmative action tirades, increased anti-Semitism and general intolerance).

Yes it is the economy; and in a democracy, through the voting process, the public is ultimately responsible for making decisions for our stability and growth. Research shows an incumbent is almost unbeatable if people perceive the economy is sound. But, do our people have the tools to make the right decisions for the good of all of us, and to make constructive decisions? And at what point does our leadership take a stand to do what is right for the nation instead of what is "political" for re-election? More importantly, are we and our leadership going to take the easy way out and allow vituperative band-aid fixes and scape goats to be used to address a national malaise?

Our nation and its people have a proven capacity for flexibility, strength, good-will, and the ability to pull together and sacrifice for the common good. Through the tragedy in Oklahoma City we have been given a national wake-up call. Hopefully, the tragedy will serve as a focal point around which we can galvanize as a nation in a rare opportunity to take a more in-depth look at ourselves, our visions for the future, and how to get there together.

This President has a unique opportunity, and place in history, to take our nation on to a new level of understanding and through that understanding a new level of growth as one nation indivisible, with liberty, justice and opportunity for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The position of POTUS does not have the respect and awe that it once had. Part of this is due to over exposure. If you hear a person speak every day or his positions are leaked on a regular basis, then interest wains and there is a "ho-hum, there he goes again attitude" about Presidential pronouncements and appearances. The world no longer stops to listen when the President speaks to the nation. Just check any public location with a TV the next time there is a major Presidential speech. In order to bring more attention to the POTUS as our national leader rather a candidate for re-election, I strongly recommend the POTUS go into a deep introspective and planning mode. The people should see him as being deeply concerned, introspective and tying himself to the desk until he can come up with some solutions. The POTUS should broaden the scope of his much touted affirmative action speech. After a time when he has not been seen or heard from much, the POTUS should make an appearance to address the nation about us as a nation pulling together for the greater good. No one can do this better or with more conviction than he.

- The media is not the enemy. Get them involved. They are money making entities trying to get consumer attention. Get them involved in the dissemination of unvarnished information. The POTUS, win, lose or draw, should establish himself as the POTUS not the Democratic POTUS. America is hurting. He is our leader and he should be perceived as honing in, concentrating on leading the country for the good of all of its people instead of running for reelection for the Democrats. Remember what the film industry did during WWII? What the TV industry did during the 60s to prosclitize integration? They can, and will, become a part of the program if we declare war on the enemy. In this case, quite literally, we have seen the enemy and it is us. Let's change that.
- Develop a major campaign to educate the American public as a whole, not just the beltway crowd, on where we are fiscally, the importance of the global marketplace, why and how we reduce spending and down-side of tax cuts without pay-fors. This should be done in a variety of formats, simply cleanly and, most importantly, with a light touch (Sesame Street for adults). This can be done though the VPOTUS' program to make government more consumer friendly and to give the public greater access to information. Television, movies, and other media people should be brought in to be part of a constructive process. There are no villains, we are all in this together.
- We need to take control of the rhetoric! From here on in, no more blame games. The public is tired of the fight between the right, the left and who's in the center. They want results and a gameplan for the future. They must feel a part of the process, not be handed a complicated plan that is drawn up by, and haggled over by, ivory tower elitist who disregard the public except for the polls. From here on in, we talk about the American public, the true meaning of democracy, how we have to pull together to win our rightful leadership role in the new world order, the global marketplace. Instead of us destroying ourselves from the inside, we need to refocus the attention to one of us as a team and a nation, making sacrifices and adjustments to be the undisputed leaders of the world once again. Government is to be projected as a partner, a leader, not the enemy or some third party entity concerned only about its self-perpetuation and power struggles.
- Announce a bipartisan commission to look into intolerance and economic inclusion. This commission should hold public hearings for a general airing of the realities of the problems and the good news of Federal remedies, and, yes, let the Conservatives and fanatics be heard. Again, information and an airing of the realities will take the bite out of right wing blaming and race baiting.
- Start looking into advocacy advertising and campaign conduct. We have rules regarding truth and misleading claims in product advertising. Because we have these laws about truth in product advertising, people believe that what they see on TV is the unvarnished truth. No one is teaching or advocating any way to get around this. We

have nothing in place to prohibit blatant misuse of the airwaves and the telecommunications highways with regard to campaigns for candidates, ideas and issues. Libel laws do have some impact on blatant personal attacks but people are getting around this. We should seek to create an awareness and a sensitivity to using media for deliberate and unfounded claims and rhetoric. Take the sting out of talk radio by creating an environment for people to want truth not inflammatory rhetoric just for the sake of sensationalism. Again, no blame. Identify and publicize the problem and some doable guidelines for fixing the problem, not getting back at people who do not share our views.

- This POTUS is to be a latter-day Roosevelt. We have an economic crisis and a major war for survival. But the enemy has to be redefined. It is not about Democrat vs. Republican -- it's about America's place in the world and pulling together to be the champions of the global marketplace; conceptually, envision a John Wayne-type leader who is willing to sacrifice all for the greater glory of the nation as a whole. Bill Clinton can do this -- and win.

Attachments: WP Article "In 'Gump' We Trust"

Excerpts from Reasoning and Choice (Complete book with President's copy)

cc: Secretary Rubin
Dan Fowler, DNC
Senator Dodd

Attachment 1

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 1994 .8

The Washington Post

OUTLOOK

Commentary and Opinion

In 'Gump' We Trust

The Summer's Hit Movie Says a Lot About the Soul of America—and Gives Me the Willies

By Michael Lerner

SOME AMERICAN liberals are about to pass through another cycle of fear that the Christian Right will take over the United States. Their concern about the religious right is legitimate, not because it has no right to advocate its politics or because in some formal way it violates the Constitution, but because the America that it wishes to see is one that would embody a mean-spirited repressiveness.

But rather than fight for their alternative vision of what a good society ought to look like, liberals all too often rally to the same tired solutions: shore up constitutional restrictions on separation of church and state, preach tolerance, and pretend that these positions are somehow "value free." Put another way,

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they ignore the Forrest Gump factor, which I'll explain shortly.

This liberal strategy never asks, "What is it that we are failing to offer?" Instead, it assumes that the growing power of the Christian Right is a reflection of some fundamental irrationality or worse (sexism, racism, homophobia) that is mysteriously sweeping the country.

Yet in my work as a psychotherapist, I've found that many Americans who are attracted to the right are seeking a framework of meaning and purpose that will give them some sense of self-worth. Communities of meaning that have the greatest drawing power are those that provide validation to people for who they are (Americans, Russians, Christians, Muslims, etc.) not for what they have accomplished in the larger world.

Groups such as the Christian Right make people feel good about themselves without them having to prove anything. This unconditional acceptance provides a welcome relief from the competitive ethos of

the marketplace. It is why you can't counter the pull of the Christian Right with civil liberties warnings.

Which brings me to "Forrest Gump." Americans have made the movie the hit of the summer because it offers a new redemptive vision of American history and a reconstructed image of themselves. Gump is "less intelligent" than most people around him, but through dogged adherence to principles taught at his mother's knee and hard work at whatever task confronts him, he manages not only to get through but actually to do quite a bit better than his alleged "betters." He becomes rich, he "gets the girl" and he has a wonderful child. Gump becomes the embodiment of Americans' fear about themselves—that they really don't measure up, and that their failures are deserved. And his victory becomes ours.

Gump is a brilliant reconstruction of the guiding myth of America that was shattered in the 1960s: America as the well-intentioned though sometimes clumsy giant that muddled through the world, trying

See GUMP, C5, Col. 1

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GUMP, From C1

to do good, often shedding its own goodness in ways that it could hardly understand, yet ultimately the savior of a world that never could fully appreciate the benefits it was receiving.

Gump's America has no class divisions, no intractable history of racism, no genocide of Indians, no sexism or homophobia or anti-semitism or fundamental alienation. Gump walks through life with an innocence and kindness that redeems all. Everyone touched by him is eventually transformed, without ever having to work on anything in themselves, without ever having to confront the evil around them, without ever having to question the assumptions of their society, without ever having to make inner or outer change. It just happens, much the way that Gump becomes rich by chance when a hurri-

*Liberals ignore this pain
and are unable to see the
majority as more than a
group of know-nothings.*

can destroys all competing shrimp boats (we see nothing of what economic pain that may have brought to others), or the way Gump becomes richer through chance investment. Since everything is an act of God, nobody has to do anything to achieve salvation. One simply is, and by grace one is touched and favored.

We have here a modern and compelling civil religion that has served as the spiritual backdrop to much of 20th century American economic and political rapaciousness. Like Gump, many Americans have gone through the experience of the 20th century without ever comprehending how their good fortune was connected to the oppression of others. They are not people engaged in historical amnesia—they never knew or understood the world in the first place in any other terms besides the naive terms and vacuous categories supplied them by the dominant culture which they cheerfully and frenetically embraced.

Moreover, understanding history or recalling parts of it that seem "unpleasant" would force many people out of their own self-enclosed universe dedicated to individual fulfillment. They would be forced to take responsibility for a world that seems, on the margins of their consciousness, to be out of control, overwhelming. Overwhelmed with what I call "surplus powerlessness," unable to even imagine the conditions under which they might join with others to change the world, many Americans feel angered by liberals, progressives, black activists, feminists

or anyone else who would force them to confront the ugliness and pain of the world.

Yet this avoidance is not merely the selfishness of the self-satisfied, but the self-protection of people who feel pain (and shame) about their own lives. Surrounded by preachers and therapists who reinforce the self-blaming by interpreting psychic pain as a solely personal problem, many people rush to any philosophy, church or social movement that can "cheer them up" with messages that the only thing wrong about their world is the people who are telling them there's something wrong. "Gump," the movie, brings precisely this distorting cheerfulness to American history and to the misuse of American power, allowing us to celebrate how we got through it all and came out OK. It is Woodstock II in Southern drag, an opportunity to misremember and salve our beaten selves in the nostalgia that puts us to moral sleep. It fits well with the recent attempts to portray '60s antiwar activists as drug-crazed narcissists and to pretend that Richard Nixon was not someone responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands in Vietnam and Cambodia but only as a misunderstood and praiseworthy American hero.

Yet liberals are missing everything if they dismiss Gump's sweetness, integrity and search for love as "nothing but" window-dressing for American power. Americans have a good and wholesome desire for loving and moral integrity, and they respond to Gump not in a deceitful attempt to hide from others the evil they have done, but out of a sincere need for a redemptive community that can make sense of the craziness that surrounds them. To be sure, there are some who self-consciously screw others all week long, and then join the choir at their local churches or synagogues without feeling any contradictions. But for many more, the contradictions are lived unconsciously and never understood, and the quest for meaning and purpose is heartfelt and desperately real.

Forrest Gump unintentionally highlights what so many Americans seek from the communities of meaning: to be seen as valuable for themselves, as ends in themselves. If the only way they can feel this is to be part of a xenophobic, nationalist or Christian rightist community, they will enthusiastically embrace those avenues.

In a distorted fashion, that same desire gets expressed in the elevation of the fetus. As Tikkun's Peter Gabel has pointed out, the fetus is seen as an immensely pure and uncontaminated object, and destroying it is perceived by some antiabortion individuals as destroying the unborn potential within us—the Forrest Gump innocence that has never been given a chance. The disgusting acts of violence against abortion doctors and clinics may be a displacement of the anger that these people feel at themselves and at a world that has snuffed out the innocence within them as they accommodated to the dirtying realities of contemporary life.

Rush Limbaugh's success in mobilizing anger against gays, feminists and liberals may touch this same nerve: the frustration of those who feel that they are being judged as inadequate by the dominant society and who are grateful to right-wing radio commentators who allow them to externalize anger at some "evil Other." The "Other" is typically America's contemporary underdogs, who are now portrayed as the privileged recipients of unfair rewards.

The constant hunger to be "born again" is another, much more humane and spiritually grounded form that this same desire to escape the pollution of the modern world may take—another avenue to validate the good within.

Yet liberals ignore this pain and are unable to see the majority as more than a group of know-nothings. It is this very fact that ensures that the liberal and progressive forces will

never be heard—because the vast majority of Americans would prefer to be Forrest Gump than fast-talking elitists who, in the words of the right-wing fantasy, "don't know what love really is," and who have compassion for the poor but no compassion for ordinary working families.

The film's brilliance as a piece of political propaganda for the status quo is precisely in creating this kind of a dichotomy, so that salvation through "not knowing" is the only reasonable alternative to a world made filthy by those who seem so sophisticated and hip. But these are not the only alternatives. A progressive politics of meaning could provide a vision of community which validates the inherent worth of each American.

Had President Clinton consistently sought to change the dominant discourse of American society from selfishness to caring, and insisted that his legislative agenda and foreign policy

transparently reflect that "bottom line," he might have lost some legislative battles. But he would have won the heart of the country.

To validate the American majority while simultaneously wooing it away from reactionary forms of meaning sometimes seems an insuperable task. The instinctive goodness of so many Americans, reflected in the continuing commitment of the vast majority of Americans to universal health care as well as to involvement in heading off the genocide in Rwanda, should remind us that moral concerns remain a bedrock of American politics. Thus, when people turn from Clinton, it is not because he is seen as too naively idealistic but, the contrary, because he is understood to be practicing a politics of opportunism. And while Clinton hammers away at his legislative agenda, a Forrest Gump or a Christian Rightist may be slowly making his way toward the White House in 1996.

Attachment 2

REASONING AND CHOICE

EXPLORATIONS IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

PAUL M. SNIDERMAN

RICHARD A. BRODY

PHILIP E. TETLOCK

with

Henry E. Brady, John E. Chubb, Peter J. Feld,
James M. Glaser, Donald Philip Green, Robert Griffin,
Michael G. Hagen, Michael Hout, Ann Kendrick,
James H. Kuklinski, Diana C. Mutz, Thomas Piazza,
Mark D. Spranca, James E. Wiley, and
Barbara Kaye Wolfinger



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The likability heuristic

The heart of our research program centers on the notion of heuristics, and this chapter supplies the fullest specification we have managed of a judgmental shortcut – the likability heuristic.

So named to underline the role of likes and dislikes in impression formation, the likability heuristic has a property that deserves particular emphasis: Follow the rule of predicting what others believe by taking account of what you believe, weighted by your feelings toward them, and you will be right, by and large. In contrast, the customary account of how likes and dislikes shape impression formation provides an explanation of how people go wrong, particularly by exaggerating the similarity of others they like to themselves – the so-called false-consensus effect.

It remains for us an unexploited paradox that it can be easier, as a comparison of this chapter with Chapter 8 will suggest, to get a grip on people's political thinking by investigating what they think others think as against what they themselves think.

The study of public opinion consists, with few exceptions, of the study of the beliefs and preferences of individual citizens. This chapter explores a new subject: not what individuals themselves believe, but what they believe others believe. Two questions concern us. First, to what extent can citizens estimate accurately the position of politically strategic groups on major issues? Second, how can they figure out what such groups stand for, given how little they know about politics?

These two questions are worth considering. Citizens, it turns out, are remarkably accurate in estimating the issue positions of strategic groups in politics, including groups like liberals and conservatives about which one might well suppose the mass public to be ignorant. Given how much citizens do not know about politics, it is worthwhile establishing that there is an aspect of politics – and an important one – about which they are knowledgeable.

The analysis of attitude attribution, of how people estimate what others think, provides new insight into the workings of mass belief systems. The accepted view of their operation is, broadly, that most citizens do not understand political abstractions such as liberalism or conservatism and that they do not (because they cannot) put together a consistent, or constrained, set of opinions on issues of the day (e.g., Converse, 1964, 1975; Levitin and Miller, 1979). But in what sense,

then, do the beliefs of the mass public form a "system"? What is the glue that holds them together? What provides citizens with the means and motive to achieve a measure of coherence in their views about political issues, given how little attention they are likely to pay to politics and how little information about it they are likely to possess?

Our argument is that citizens can draw an impressively accurate map of politics, of who wants what politically, of who takes the same side and who lines up on the opposing side of key issues. Citizens can accomplish this, we argue, by relying on their political affect, their likes and dislikes of politically strategic groups.

We focus on the operation of an affective calculus or, as we call it, a *likability heuristic*. This calculus is organized around people's feelings toward groups such as liberals and conservatives. Clearly, many in the mass public lack a firm understanding of political abstractions. All the same, many know whom they like, and, equally important, they also know whom they dislike. If coherent, these likes and dislikes can supply people with an affective calculus to figure out the issue positions of strategic groups. We suggest that in this way many in the mass public can figure out who wants what politically without necessarily knowing a lot about politics.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES

Many, although not all, issues offer a choice between liberal and conservative positions, expressible in the familiar metric of the standard seven-point National Election Studies (NES) issue scale. In this metric, the smaller the number arithmetically (or the farther to the left graphically), the more liberal the position; the larger the number (or the farther to the right), the more conservative the position. After being asked to place themselves on these seven-point issue scales, respondents are asked to place others as well. In addition to being asked to locate the presidential candidates and the political parties on issues of the day, in 1972 and 1976 respondents were asked to locate a variety of groups, among them liberals and conservatives. Because respondents were also asked how liberal or conservative they themselves were, it is a simple matter (in principle at least) to compare the positions that liberals and conservatives characteristically take with the positions attributed to them.

Table 6.1 shows, first, the average position attributed to "most" liberals (and conservatives), then the mean position actually held by them,¹ on four issues: government guaranteed jobs, protecting rights of the accused, dealing with student unrest, and controlling inflation. Clearly, on all issues except controlling inflation, the public understands liberals to be on the left, although how far to the left varies somewhat, and they appreciate that conservatives are on the right. To this extent there is general understanding that liberals and conservatives represent distinguishable policy alternatives on a number of issues.

The impact of affect on perceptions, this suggests, is at least three times larger than the impact of perceptions on affect, and possibly as much as five or ten times larger.

CONCLUSIONS

It is only prudent to wonder if citizens have genuine opinions on issues involving abstract or ideological preferences (such as the role of government in housing) as opposed to doorstep concerns (such as busing) (Converse, 1970). If it is difficult to credit that citizens know what they themselves believe about such issues; surely it is harder still to credit the idea that they know what others believe about them. This skepticism is understandable. Certainly, many in the mass public have only a minimal knowledge about politics and hold many ideas about it that are only minimally interconnected. All the same, the general public is remarkably accurate at figuring out the issue positions of groups, including liberals and conservatives, who would hardly seem to be highly salient to the general public.

To be sure, the notion of accurately attributing attitudes raises complex issues. The fundamental problem is not the absence of standards of accuracy. Instead it is a plethora of them. Is the liberal position the position held by most liberals? Alternatively, is it the position held by the most liberal? Is the Democratic position the one reflected in the views of Democrats? Or is it the one embodied, in some sense, in the party itself? Is the position of blacks the position characteristic of most blacks? Or is it the one held by black activists, that is, by blacks who characterize blacks for whites. These are complex questions, but whatever their ultimate answer, we have seen that a substantial part of the mass public can correctly locate the positions of key groups as either on the left or on the right on a number of major issues. How is this possible?

Much of the answer, it seems to us, turns round the role of groups in organizing political thinking. This is, of course, far from an original hypothesis: It was at the center of the so-called sociological approach of the Columbia school (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954) and, although less central, nonetheless consequential in the so-called psychological approach of the Michigan school (Campbell et al., 1960). But it is not enough to say that relying on groups is a device for economizing on information, a way to get round the minimal knowledge that many citizens have about politics. Certainly it is not reasonable to suggest that groups, characteristically, organize the political thinking of mass publics by serving as reference groups, for there are many groups, and many of them (like liberals and conservatives) are not especially salient. How, then, can citizens make sense of groups – that is, know which is relevant to which issue and which stands for what – without having to know a great deal about them? Surely it is no more plausible to suggest that the average citizen monitors closely the political positions of an array of groups than to suggest that he or she attends carefully to other aspects of politics.

A portion of the mass public – not surprisingly, the best-educated portion – is capable of reality perception, of attributing attitudes to a group on the basis of knowledge of the group's true position, but they also accentuate their attributions by taking into account their feelings toward groups. Others must rely more heavily on an affective calculus, or likability heuristic, and to the extent they rely on this calculus, they can be remarkably accurate in figuring out the issue position of strategic groups in politics. It would seem worthwhile, therefore, to consider the properties of this likability heuristic and thereby perhaps to throw light on just how groups organize the political thinking of mass publics.

The likability heuristic has two components – first, a person's own beliefs on an issue, and second, the person's feelings toward the pair of opposing groups whose issue positions he or she is estimating. This heuristic can be an effective calculus, in the same sense that incrementalism in budgeting can be: In the one case, a person need only take last year's budget and add some amount to it; in the other, a person need only take where he or she stands, weighted by her or his feelings toward a pair of groups. In short, both are intellectual shortcuts, ways of effectively simplifying questions too complex to address in their own terms. But how, exactly, does the likability heuristic work? Why does it yield accurate estimates of what others believe?

There is, of course, no necessity that attributions be accurate. Indeed, often attributions are not accurate, as research on "false consensus" (cf. Ross et al. 1977) and on candidate perception (cf. Granberg and Brent, 1974; Page and Jones, 1979; and Brent and Granberg, 1982) testifies.¹⁶ There is, it seems, a strong tendency in the attribution of attitudes to suppose that others agree with oneself. Nor should this be surprising, considering that this effect is observed, characteristically, when people are asked about the views of "others like yourself" or "other people in this part of the country." Similarly, false consensus shapes the perception of candidates, thanks in part to the efforts of candidates to blur their stands on issues and thereby invite agreement from across a spectrum of positions (Page, 1978). In short, people are likely to exaggerate how much "others" – defined either positively or vaguely or both – agree with them.

Why, then, are many in the mass public able to accurately attribute attitudes to Democrats and Republicans, to blacks and whites, even to liberals and conservatives? Liberals and conservatives (and Democrats and Republicans) have, and emphasize, political identities; identities, moreover, that have been developed in contradistinction to one another (liberals vs. conservatives, Democrats vs. Republicans). Because they are competitors there are incentives – certainly, there is permission – for a person who likes liberals to dislike conservatives, and the other way around. What allows citizens to simplify political calculations efficiently is this two-sided, "us versus them" character of politics: the more attached they are to their side – and the more opposed they are to the other – the more they appreciate the differences between the issue positions of the two sides. What

counts, then, is not how people feel toward groups, one by one; rather it is how they feel toward *pairs* of opposing groups.

Admittedly, this is not the usual way to think of the relation between rationality and affect (or likes and dislikes). Customarily, the two are supposed to be opposed to each other, as though one obstacle to making sense of politics is having intense likes and dislikes. Our findings, however, suggest just the reverse. The person who has the least success in figuring out what the other side stands for is the one who does not dislike them; to understand that the other side really does stand for policies at odds with your own, you should dislike them. More fundamentally, taking account of your likes and dislikes helps ensure the accuracy of attitude attribution to the extent it accentuates the difference between your side and the other. Thus, a liberal who likes his side and very much dislikes the other tends to emphasize *both* how conservative conservatives are and how liberal liberals are. Otherwise, the tendency to presume agreement (false consensus) would get the upper hand, if not in a person's perception of the other side, then in his perception of his own.

The notion of affective consistency is potentially a fruitful one, or so it seems to us (Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986c). It seems, without it, hard to understand just what holds mass belief systems together, what serves as their glue. The mass public surely does not command much abstract knowledge of politics and as a rule does not even pay much attention to it. It seems implausible, therefore, to suppose that the general public is able, or at any rate willing, to assemble complex cognitive hierarchies of political ideas. In contrast, likes and dislikes are easy to form and, even more important, easy to remember. Accordingly, affect can be a quite efficient way of encoding and storing what is after all the most vital political information: Who and what one is for or against.

There should be no need of a lengthy warning on the dangers of reifying affect or of laying out a false choice between affective and cognitive consistency. It should suffice to observe that affect itself may be the residue of long biographies of cognitive transactions. Nonetheless, likes and dislikes can provide a certain cement to mass belief systems, and so supply a foundation, not only for estimating the preferences of others, but also for inferring one's own (Sniderman, Brody, and Kuklinski, 1984).

However that may be, the mass public is remarkably accurate in attributing positions to strategic groups on major issues. Partly this is a matter of reality perception, of having a knowledge of the group's actual position, but partly it is the result of an intellectual shortcut, a likability heuristic, which allows many in the mass public to figure out who stands on the left, and who on the right, without necessarily knowing a lot about politics or ideology. Accordingly, it may be a mistake to suppose that ideological reasoning, in this sense, is altogether outside the reach of many of the mass public – a mistake because ideological reasoning, at its core, involves an understanding of who wants what, and many citizens can figure this out, thanks to the role of groups in organizing their political thinking.

groups they like. But when it comes to those they dislike and fear, it is another matter altogether: Then the average citizen is all too likely to show just how intolerant he or she is (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979, 1982).

This revisionist thesis now dominates research on tolerance. However, we have become persuaded that it suffers a double weakness: On the one side, it overestimates the extent to which citizens' emotions – and their dislikes especially – dominate their political reasoning; on the other, it underestimates the extent to which they are capable of supporting a value like tolerance in a principled manner. This chapter, accordingly, has two major objectives – one negative, one positive. The negative objective is to rattle the bones of the revisionist thesis by establishing the extent to which, and the various ways in which, opinions of citizens on issues of tolerance are consistent. The positive, and more fundamental, objective is to demonstrate that substantial numbers of the general population are indeed capable of making a principled commitment to democratic values like tolerance – a demonstration of relevance to political psychology and democratic theory alike.

THE EMOTIVIST THESIS

Background

Americans now appear more tolerant politically than a generation ago. In 1954, only one-quarter of the population was prepared to allow an admitted communist to have a job even as a store clerk, hardly a sensitive position from a national security point of view; in 1973, 57 percent of them would do so – by no means an overwhelming consensus but a clear majority (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978, p. 43). But this change, which might seem to signal a growth in tolerance, is an illusion. Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979) have argued. It reflects not an increase in the public's tolerance of politically nonconformist groups in general, but rather a decrease in their concern about, and hence a decrease in their intolerance of, groups on the left in particular. Ask Americans about groups they dislike and fear now, as they once disliked and feared communists, and they will show that they are as intolerant now as they were a generation ago.

The problem with the classic studies of tolerance, it follows, is the problem of pseudotolerance: people appearing to be tolerant of particular groups because they like or are simply indifferent to them. Consider, for example, the familiar hypothesis that political liberalism promotes political tolerance (e.g., Lipset and Raab, 1970). But, Sullivan and his colleagues point out, studies of tolerance following the Stouffer paradigm (e.g., Nunn et al., 1978) have focused on toleration of left-wing groups – communists, socialists, and the like. This focus on groups on the left, they go on to suggest, gives an edge to people on the left; for it is surely easier to support the rights of a group on the same side of the fence as oneself. See to it that liberals are asked to put up with groups on the right, as conservatives have been asked to put up with those on the left, and it becomes

apparent, in the words of Sullivan and colleagues, that "the levels of tolerance among liberals, moderates, and conservatives are only *marginally* different" (Sullivan et al., 1982, p. 186, emphasis in original).

There is another consideration: the relation between education and support for civil liberties. The classic studies of tolerance (Stouffer, 1955; Nunn et al., 1979) claim that schooling is an engine for political tolerance. The revisionist analysis of Sullivan and his colleagues calls this into question. The relation between education and a genuine commitment to tolerance, they contend, is weaker than had been supposed – far weaker, in fact (Sullivan et al., 1982, pp. 114ff.). The less educated tend to dislike groups on the left; the more educated, groups on the right. Hence, when asked only about groups on the left, the well educated will, misleadingly, appear to be markedly more tolerant than the less educated.

The revisionist view, then, has a deeply pessimistic cast to it; a pessimism that invites cynicism about the willingness of the average citizen to embrace, disinterestedly and consistently, a foundational value of democratic politics – tolerance. It had been disturbing when Stouffer and others (e.g. Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, 1964) documented the general public's indifference or outright opposition to civil liberties in the fifties; indeed so disturbing that it prompted a reinterpretation of democratic politics in the form of the so-called theory of democratic elitism, which stressed the role of political elites as guardians of democratic values (Bachrach, 1967). Still, there was reason to hope for improvement. An increasingly educated citizenry might contribute to tolerance. So, too, might a more liberal climate of opinion. Not so, according to the revisionist view. Americans are more educated, while the overall climate of opinion – as reflected in laws and social practice – has become more open-minded. Yet the mass of citizens are no more tolerant now than they were in the heyday of McCarthyism (Sullivan et al., 1979).

If the revisionist view is valid, the principal contribution that citizens can make to a tolerant society is to disagree about whom they do not want to tolerate. It is thus worth examination.

Definition of the emotivist thesis

What is distinctive about the revisionist view? Not the contention that disliking or feeling threatened by a group promotes intolerance. Stouffer had himself pointed this out and, in truth, no one has ever supposed otherwise. Rather, what gives the revisionist view its distinctive cast is the idea that political tolerance is the willingness to put up with ideas or people you dislike. After all, the revisionists point out, it takes no tolerance to put up with people you agree with, who want to do what you in any case approve of.

This emotivist thesis, which holds that a person should not be said to be tolerant of a group unless he dislikes it, is intuitively appealing. Certainly, it would be odd to describe a person as committed to the value of political tolerance on the ground that he supports the right of fascists to hold a public rally, if he is himself

a fascist and wants to attend the rally. Hence, the acid test of commitment to civil liberties, Sullivan and colleagues contend, is an individual's willingness to defend the rights of groups he or she dislikes.

The emotivist thesis offers an empirically grounded and normatively provocative account of the nature and limits of political tolerance. It is, accordingly, worth scrutiny both at a descriptive and at a prescriptive level.

CONSISTENCY

For empirical guidance we rely on a uniquely comprehensive survey series, the General Social Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center.¹ The General Social Survey provides the best source of American opinion on diverse aspects of tolerance (political, racial, sexual, and social) over the past generation. The results are reported from the 1977 General Social Survey, and selectively cross-validated for 1980 and 1984. Since the analysis involves issues of racial tolerance, it focuses on whites only.

Our point of departure is political tolerance. Attitudes toward the rights of five groups were assessed: people who are against all churches and religion; people who believe that blacks are genetically inferior; people who admit they are communists; people who advocate doing away with elections and letting the military run the country; and people who admit they are homosexual. The five are heterogeneous politically. Some are on the left, such as admitted communists; others are on the right, such as militarists and racists; still others, though nonconformist, are not necessarily politically nonconformist, the homosexuals and atheists.

Attitudes toward the range of rights each group should enjoy were assessed. Specifically, respondents were asked three questions about each group: Would they support the right of a member of the group to make a speech in their community? Should a member of the group be allowed to teach in a college? And should a book written by a member of the group be removed from their public library if other people in their community wished it to be removed? All in all, then, the questions cover a range of groups and issues that have historically excited popular intolerance in America.

The minimalist version

In its simplest version, the emotivist thesis hinges on a double contention: first, that in making judgments about the rights of particular groups, people are fundamentally expressing their feelings, positive or negative, toward that group; and second, that how they feel toward one group has nothing necessarily to do with how they feel toward other groups. If so, there is no reason to expect consistency in people's attitudes toward civil liberties across groups.

One way of addressing this issue is to construct a series of measurement models and examine the relationship between the observed measures of tolerance and some underlying attitudinal dimension. Using LISREL, a factor analytic tech-



standing these, a judgment about how well the economy is doing enters directly in the voting calculus of the poorly educated.

The results for the well educated, however, are quite different. Look first at the role of candidate judgments. It is not the impression of incumbent performance that is the dominant consideration in voting; rather it is a comparison of the two candidates' qualities. So in this respect the kinds of considerations about candidates that drive the voting choice are different for the poorly educated and for the well educated: For the former it is incumbent approval; for the latter, comparative competence.

There is a second point of difference between the poorly and the well educated. As we saw, national economic conditions have a direct impact on the vote choice of the less well educated. Not so for the well educated: There is no statistically significant, direct connection between national economic conditions and vote choice for those who have some college education or more. Which is not to say their view of national economic conditions has no impact; for as Figure 9.2 shows, it is an indirect consideration for them, having an influence on the vote insofar as it has an influence on their assessment of the candidates and their views on policy. In short, by this standard as well, the poorly educated give direct evidence of retrospective voting, the well educated do not.

Consider, now, prospective voting. One expression of it is a vote based on policy orientation. There is no evidence for this kind of voting among the poorly educated. Certainly, there is no significant connection between the policy index and the voting decision for them. It is of course arguable that the poorly educated – precisely because of their lack of education – are unlikely to organize their opinions on issues in the unidimensional, liberal – conservative fashion the policy index presupposes. Accordingly, we analyzed opinions on individual issues, taken separately and put together in various combinations. These analyses, too, testify to an absence of prospective voting, as indicated by policy-driven electoral choice, among the poorly educated.

It is quite different for the well educated. Opinions on major issues are indeed a consideration of direct relevance to their vote. Moreover, the policy opinions of the well, but not of the less well, educated are rooted in broader, political orientations, as indicated by their tendency to put together ideological self-images and issue preferences consistently. This is a difference of no small significance; for it is complex, and burdensome, to vote prospectively, issue by issue, on an ad hoc basis. Making calculations instead in broad policy tendencies – liberal or conservative – economizes on the costs of information required and minimizes the uncertainty of predictions ventured. Finally, the impressions that the well educated form of candidates, and rely on in deciding how to vote, are grounded in their views on policy in a way that reactions to candidates among the less well educated are not. Thus, among the well educated comparative assessments of the relative competence of the two candidates are, in part, a product of policy opinions; in contrast, among the less well educated, judgments of incumbent performance – the crucial aspect for candidate evaluation for them – are not connected to policy stands.

These are some of the particularly salient differences between how the well and the less well educated decide for whom to vote. There are points of similarity, too – the role of party identification, for example. Still, it is worth asking what the differences that we have observed may amount to.

DISCUSSION

Some of our results suggest that the less well educated are more likely than the well educated to take advantage of retrospective voting. Fiorina (1985), of course, found just the opposite: that (so far as systematic differences are evident) retrospective voting tends to be the mark of the well educated, not the less educated; the person who is interested in politics, not the one who is disinterested in it; the person who is well informed about politics, not the one who is poorly informed about it. Why this difference?

Part of the explanation, as it seems to us, lies in the properties of (relatively) complex idea systems. It would seem obvious that the person who is well educated, who follows politics closely, and who has considerable information about it should be good at putting his ideas together – certainly as compared with the person who is not especially educated, attentive, or informed. But what does it mean to say a person is apt at putting ideas together? Among other things, that they see connections between different considerations, including considerations that may be relatively remotely (or at any rate not immediately or self-evidently) connected. And because of this tendency to see and to make connections among different considerations, decision making tends to be characterized by a broad focus of attention: Much is relevant in making up one's mind for whom to vote. Or, more colloquially, the better-informed voter tends to take account of nearly everything including the kitchen sink. And because of this "kitchen sink" quality of taking account of diverse considerations, the connection between any given consideration and the vote will tend to be strong for the better educated – when examined at a bivariate level. This credits the impact of any given consideration, which may be quite small, with some of the impact of all other considerations with which it is correlated, some of which will be quite large. Analyzed at a multivariate level, however, the picture will change, since the differential weight of (correlated) considerations will be evident.

There is another consideration. We have seen evidence of voting based on performance evaluation among the less well educated, and of voting based on policy direction among the well educated. It is tempting, then, to suggest that the former engage in prospective and the latter in retrospective voting. But this puts the distinction between these two kinds of voting too starkly; or more exactly, overlooks the difference between direct and indirect effects. Thus, the less well educated do take account of national economic conditions as a direct consideration in deciding for whom to vote; the well educated do not. But the latter take account of national economic conditions as a consideration in deciding their issue preference, which in turn they consult in casting their vote. Now, if taking account of the condition of the economy is a mark of retrospective voting, who

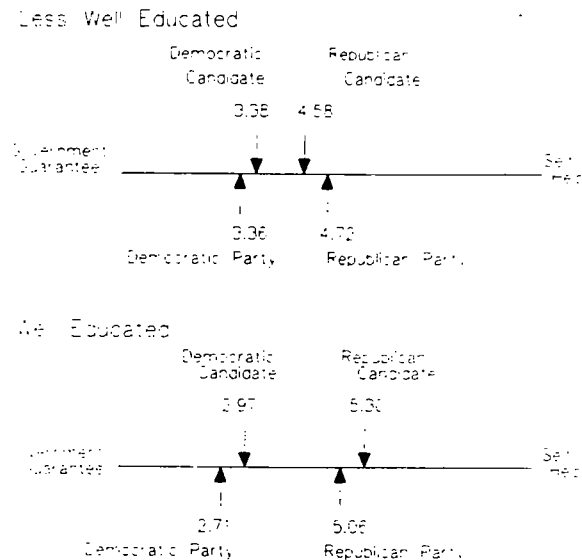


Figure 9.3. Mean positions attributed to candidates and parties, 1980.

should be said to be voting retrospectively: the less well educated who take account of it directly, or the well educated who take account of it indirectly? A false choice, as it seems to us.

Still, it seems worthwhile to consider what, more exactly, the notion of prospective voting entails. Consider, therefore, how well-educated persons tend to make up their mind. On the one side, they take as a prime consideration their views on policy. Also, they give great weight to how the two candidates stack up, compared with one another. On the other side, they attach less importance to their assessment of the incumbent's performance as an immediate basis for making up their minds. And, consistent with this, they do not take the condition of the economy as a direct consideration in casting their vote.

How, then, might the decision making of the well educated be characterized? It is not uncommon to imagine a Downsian space: Voters compare candidate issue positions and pick the one that best matches theirs. The emphasis, here, is on the perception of similarity between the candidates' issue positions and theirs. But one can look on this space from a different perspective, focusing not on similarities between candidates and voters, but concentrating instead on dissimilarities between candidates. From this angle, voters compare candidate issue positions with their eye on not how small is the difference between their views and those of the candidate they support but rather on how large is the difference in views between the two candidates. And looking from this angle provides a glimpse of how well-informed voters tend to make up their minds.

Figure 9.3 displays the positions attributed to the two presidential candidates and the two political parties, in 1980, on the issue of government guarantees for

bs. The (mean) positions attributed to the candidates and parties are shown separately for voters with different levels of education – first, the less well educated, then the well educated.

The differences between the well and the less well educated are striking. Thus, the well educated see the Democratic candidate and the Democratic party as further to the left than do the less well educated; and, what is more, see the Republican candidate and the Republican party as further to the right than do the less well educated. In a word, the well educated accentuate the differences between the parties and between the candidates; the less well educated minimize them.

This tendency to accentuate dissimilarities between candidates or parties seems us the mark of the well-informed voter; indeed, it may not exaggerate to say that the mark of the person who understands American politics is precisely that accentuates – that is, that he exaggerates – the differences between the parties and the candidates who represent them. This is not at all to say that it is always right to accentuate such differences. Quite the contrary. But the person who makes the opposite mistake, who minimizes rather than accentuates the differences between the parties, is very much worse off. For he winds up supposing that parties are centrist – a double mistake; for he perceives both the Republican party to be far less conservative than it in fact is and the Democratic party to be less liberal than it in fact is. In a word, accentuation enhances the structure of the conflict; failing to accentuate obscures it.

And accentuation matters because it provides a basis for prospective voting. Even the well-informed voter is sure to lack political information – lacks the information, certainly, to make confident predictions about future actions of successful candidates. Indeed, the very notion of prediction, in the face of so much uncertainty, has been hard to credit; accordingly, many observers have found it more plausible to suppose instead that the sophisticated voter will engage in prospective but retrospective voting. But in what sense does prospective voting involve a prediction about the future? Only in the sense that one candidate's policy direction is expected to differ from the other's. Now, it would surely be a matter of reading tea leaves to predict the policy choices of the successful candidate except in the context of the issue differences of the political parties. But as representatives of their parties, the candidates can be judged comparatively, in context, rather than absolutely, out of context. And, as representatives of their parties, the policy loyalties of the candidates can be predicted; for this fiction is grounded in the dynamic of the American party system. So the well-informed voter, operating as a prospective voter, exploits aspects of the record that are as definite and dependable as those aspects of the record on which the retrospective voter relies. In short, the difference between prospective and retrospective voting is not that the former involves a prediction about the future whereas the latter does not. Both involve a bet that the future will look like the

They differ only in the aspect of the past they focus on: The prospective voter takes account of dissimilarities in policy; the retrospective voter, of the performance of the incumbent.

Insofar as the well informed hinge the voting decision on a comparative assessment of the candidates, including their policy commitments as well as their personal characteristics, they may be thought of as optimizers. How, then, should the decision of the less well educated be characterized? What strategy, if any, are they following?

Consider how less well educated persons make up their mind. For one thing, they take as a prime consideration the performance of the incumbent, voting for him if they find his performance satisfactory, against him if not. For another, they take into consideration the state of the economy, voting for the incumbent if they find it satisfactory, against him if not. Moreover, in getting some sense of how the less well educated make up their minds, what they do not take into account counts as much as what they do. And especially notable in this respect is their failure to base their vote on their views on policy issues – even, it seems, on long-standing issues.

Accordingly, it would be farfetched to characterize the voting decisions of the less well informed voter as optimizing. For their decisions do not hinge on a comparative assessment of candidates with respect either to policy commitments or to personal characteristics. Rather, it seems fairer to describe their decision rule this way. Decide whether the incumbent's performance is satisfactory – a judgment that can be made either by focusing on his performance directly or on the overall state of the country, as reflected, for example, in the state of the economy. If his performance is satisfactory, support him. The less well informed, though not optimizers, may nevertheless be satisficers.

Now, the use of labels like optimizing and satisficing should certainly be accompanied by a warning. Partly this is because attaching one label to the decision making of the well informed and another to that of the less well informed carries with it a suggestion that the two are making qualitatively different kinds of decisions; and, as a general rule, an empirical analysis that requires demonstration of differences of kind rather than degree has one foot in the grave. So it is important to point out that it is possible to develop a quantitative and not merely qualitative account of voting along the lines we have sketched. Such an account would center on voters' focus of attention. Briefly: The better educated and more aware voters are, the broader their focus of attention – that is, the wider the range of considerations they would take into account in casting their vote; conversely, the less educated and the less aware voters are, the narrower their focus of attention.

But what, more exactly, might it mean to say narrow? What kind of considerations are included? What kind excluded? The less well educated voter, we would suggest, focuses on the terms of the choice, narrowly defined. So he or she, in a presidential campaign, takes the incumbent as primary consideration; and excludes considerations whose relevance is not immediate and obvious. In this sense, the calculations of the less well educated involve a strict calculus. In contrast, well-educated and better-informed voters have a wider focus. They take account of considerations that are at least one remove from the explicit choice. So

they see connections, for example, between their votes and anterior considerations like policy commitments that require some imagination and thoughtfulness to detect – anterior considerations, moreover, that are only imperfectly correlated both with one another and with more immediately relevant considerations. In this sense, the calculations of the well educated involve a loosely rather than strictly elaborated calculus.

There is another consideration. Analyses of voting are at risk of being framed in either–or terms – not always, but often. So it is sometimes asked: Do citizens vote retrospectively? Or do they vote prospectively? Such choices are false choices. The question is not whether voting is retrospective or prospective, but the conditions under which it tends to be the one or the other.

We have tried to illustrate what part of the answer to this question might look like. No doubt, also, the answer is debatable in parts. The measures were those at hand, not those we would have devised given a free hand. Moreover, the causal relations among variables may be conceived differently, and not just in the garden-variety sense of causal relations that supposedly run in one direction arguably running in another. Our model of voting choice hinges on a contrast between two variables, incumbent approval and comparative competence, both at the end of the causal chain. This is an instructive contrast, for a first cut at analysis. It is not, however, an obviously optimal approach for continued analysis. Part of the difficulty is this. The two variables, incumbent approval and comparative competence, are highly intercorrelated and the causal relation between them has not been specified. It is of course possible to overcome this by stipulation. But this is not an appealing strategy and indeed, in our judgment, concentrates on the wrong end of the causal chain; for the point to explore, we think, is the role of party identification, at the beginning of the causal sequence, as against candidate images, at the end.

This has been an exploratory essay, an effort to see what it might mean to say that the structure of choice and the process of choosing are interdependent. And we think our broad argument is a step in the right direction, for it seems to us unreasonable, and unenlightening, to insist that the well-informed voter and the poorly informed one make up their minds in quite the same way. If we are right in this broad argument, it is important to call attention to one of its implications for the study of voting.

That implication concerns the assumption of heterogeneity. To say that voters make up their minds in different ways and, further, that these differences may themselves be systematically accounted for is to say that voters are in some respect systematically heterogeneous. This contention may seem plausible on its face – we think so, certainly. But it flies directly in the face of current analytic practice. Thus, it is customary to elaborate a model of voting for voters taken as a whole. This is the approach that Shanks and Miller take, for instance; indeed, the approach that nearly all voting analysts have taken. This approach entails, of course, the assumption that there is no systematic interaction: that how voters decide for whom to vote does not systematically differ depending on some par-

ticular characteristic of theirs. And it is precisely this assumption that we believe is wrong: At a minimum, it is unreasonable to insist that a person who is extremely well informed about politics will make his voting choice in the same way as a person who habitually pays only minimal attention to public affairs.

It is of course tempting to suppose that this reduces to a matter of some making up their minds well, and others not. This is, however, a temptation to resist.

Elections organize collective choices. But as we have seen, these choices can typically be organized in two rather different ways. One alternative is to treat the decision to be made as hinging on a comparison of the two candidates; the other, as a judgment to be made about the incumbent. And, as we have also seen, the well-informed voter tends to organize the voting choice the first way; the less well informed voter, the second.

These are quite different ways of going about the business of making up one's mind for whom to vote. But the difference between them is not that the well-informed voter who practices the first is making up his mind the right way, whereas the less well informed voter who practices the second is doing it the wrong way. Whether voters are sufficiently informed to behave approximately rationally is a joint product, not just of their capacities for choice, but of the structure of the choice they are making. So the well-informed voter is able to locate the candidates against the background of the competing political parties and the points of view they represent; and it is this that enables him to bring to bear his preferences. Otherwise, he would be at sea; for he is only well informed by comparison with others who know even less about politics. But how about less well informed voters? Are they incapable of making a rational choice because of their lack of information? Not if our analysis is correct. The poorly informed voter, to be sure, lacks the information to make the kind of choice the well informed voter can – that is, a choice that turns on comparison of the candidates, for instance, with respect to their policy commitments. All the same, the less well informed voter may have the information he needs provided he treats the choice before him as a choice for or against the incumbent; for poorly informed or not, he is in a position to judge if the incumbent's performance is satisfactory – satisficing is, after all, the decision strategy par excellence given a lack of information. In these alternative ways, the choices of voters can be approximately rational because of, not merely despite, their shortfalls in information.

Ideology and issue persuasibility: dynamics of racial policy attitudes

As war is too important to be left to the generals, methodology is too important to be left to methodologists: The connection between how we carry out inquiries and what we want to inquire after is too intimate.

Chapter 12 offers testimony on the intimacy of the connections between substance and method. Our point of departure was substantive skepticism. Nowadays many say they are in favor of racial equality; surely not all are genuinely committed to it. But how can we tell who means what they say? And what might it mean for a person to mean what he or she says?

A test suggested itself. A person means what he says if he persists in it even in the face of pressure to take it back. Persistence, so understood, is a standard of sincerity, and sincerity is just what we should like to establish more firmly on the issue of race. And if that is our substantive goal, then a method for its accomplishment follows: First give people an opportunity to declare themselves in favor of assistance for blacks, then try to talk them out of it. The chapter that follows lays out the method of counterargument. The procedures are described in detail in our study of issue persuasibility that follows and so we want only to say a word about our general objective here.

Schematically, our objective is to have the survey interview selectively mimic conversation. Conversations in natural settings can involve an interplay of pressures—to take a position, to avoid taking a position, to give up a position. The conventional political survey interview, however, is deliberately designed to minimize such pressures. The result: a sample of behavior in a relatively uncommon situation. In contrast, our aim is to sample a wider range of situations, including those in which a person's actions actually evoke a reaction from another.

The counterargument technique is an initial stab at this. And it certainly has limitations, perhaps the most important of which is an inability to rank objectively the strength of alternative counterarguments. But of course every technique has limitations, and this one has at least the merit of opening up a new field for study—namely, political persuasibility: Who can be talked out of their positions on political issues, and why? We accordingly offer this chapter as prolegomenon: an introduction to a new approach to a new problem.

Traditionally, the aim of public opinion research has been to determine what positions citizens have taken on issues of the day, and why. In contrast, the purpose of this study is to establish how readily they can be talked out of the positions they have taken, and why.

A medium-sized mountain of research has shown that the average citizen's issue preferences are often shallow, and the organization of her or his beliefs

This chapter prepared by Paul M. Sniderman, Thomas Piazza, and Ann Kendrick.

more slovenly than systematic (e.g., Converse, 1964, 1975; Kinder and Sears, 1985; Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986c). It is, accordingly, not reasonable to suppose that mass publics are necessarily wedded to the first position on an issue they happen to espouse. On the contrary, there would appear to be maneuvering room aplenty for the average citizen to be persuaded to amend her or his opinion according to circumstance.

Racial policy attitudes, we would suggest, provide an ideal opportunity for a first cut at an analysis of persuasibility for two reasons. The first is this. It would, obviously, mean little to show that the average citizen can be talked out of positions on issues on which they had not taken a genuine position in the first place – by no means a rare occurrence (e.g., Converse, 1970, 1975; Erikson, Luttbeg, and Tedin, 1988; Schuman and Presser, 1981; McGuire, 1985). No one, however, supposes that racial attitudes are nonattitudes. At the very time Converse demonstrated the minimal levels of constraint characteristic of policy attitudes generally, he took pains to show the marked constraint characteristic of racial policy attitudes (Converse, 1964). Public attitudes toward racial issues, all agree, are deeply felt and highly organized; indeed, so much so, Carmines and Stimson (1982) suggest, as to be the glue that holds mass belief systems together.

There is a second reason to focus on racial policy attitudes. Barely a generation ago, only a minority favored racial equality; now, the principle wins majority support, sometimes overwhelmingly (e.g., Hyman and Sheatsley, 1956, 1964; Greeley and Sheatsley, 1971; Taylor, Sheatsley, and Greeley, 1978; Burstein, 1979; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1985). Public support for the principle of racial equality has outpaced support for specific policies intended to realize it. But indisputably, change at the level both of principle and of policy has occurred.

The significance of the change, though, is far from indisputable. Many feel that the change in white racial attitudes has been either superficial or disingenuous (e.g., McConahay and Hough, 1976; Jackman, 1978, 1981; Jackman and Muhe, 1984; Kinder and Sears, 1981). On this interpretation, white Americans are willing enough to express support for the principle of equality so long as doing so has no costs; but asked to back policies to achieve racial equality, they back away. It is also frequently observed that merely because old-fashioned racism has gone out of style does not mean that Americans are no longer racist. Far from it: racism has instead found new, more contemporary, and socially acceptable forms of expression (e.g., McConahay, Hardee, and Batts, 1981; McConahay, 1986).

Obviously, it is important to gauge the strength of Americans' commitment to racial equality, and one of the best ways of doing so, we would suggest, is to see how readily white Americans can be talked out of support for policies to achieve racial equality. Previous research has not ignored the issue of persuasibility. There is thus a line of studies on opinion instability as a function of question order; question wording, including issues of balance and filtering; and question format, including the number of response categories and response styles (Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick, 1978; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1978; Schu-

man and Presser, 1981). The thrust of this research, however, has been methodological. Our concern, in contrast, is substantive. Moreover, our study focuses on a form of persuasibility that has not previously been studied and is of particular relevance to politics. Typically, the public comes to a controversial political issue with an established sympathy for one or the other side. The political struggle boils down to each side attempting to persuade those who are initially opponents or on the sidelines to become supporters, while trying to ensure that its own supporters are not similarly snared by the opposition. Accordingly, our approach is to establish the balance of forces on an issue, and then assess which side is more likely to give way under the pressure of counterargument, and why.

How many who favor one side of an issue would change their minds under the pressure of a counterargument? Why is it easier to talk some people rather than others out of a position on an issue? And – a connected but distinguishable question – why is it easier to talk people out of some political positions than out of others? Exploring these questions yields two sets of results, one anticipated, one not. Attitudes on racial issues turn out to be markedly elastic, especially with respect to issues involving government action. This we expected. What we did not anticipate was an asymmetry in persuasibility; it is easier, it turns out, to talk supporters of government action out of their position than opponents. Still more fundamentally, the reason for this is that it is easier to persuade conservatives who have taken a position with respect to government action that is inconsistent with their overall outlook to return to the fold than it is to persuade liberals who are similarly inconsistent to come back to the fold. This is, we think, an intriguing anomaly: Why should conservatism provide a reason to change one's mind under the pressure of a counterargument but not liberalism? And to account for it, we develop, and test, a model of ideology and issue persuasibility.

PLIABILITY OF OPINION

The Race and Politics Survey is based on a cross-sectional survey of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay area.¹ The survey was conducted in the summer and fall of 1986 by the Survey Research Center (University of California, Berkeley), taking advantage of the Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing Facilities (CATI) developed by the Computer-assisted Survey Methods Program, University of California, Berkeley.² The sources are described in Chapter 11. The analysis will focus on whites.

A useful starting point is attitudes about the issue of government assistance for blacks. Since our aim is to demonstrate the elasticity of policy preferences, our questions parallel previous measures. Thus, following the National Election Studies, we asked:

Some people think that the government in Washington should increase spending for programs to help blacks. Others feel that blacks should rely only on themselves. Which makes more sense to you?

It would of course be surprising not to find the Bay Area more liberal on racial issues than the country as a whole. The results are just as one would expect: In the Bay Area, a majority of whites supports government assistance for blacks, by a margin of 5 to 4; however, by a comparable margin, in the country as a whole a majority of whites favors the alternative position, namely that blacks should help themselves.³

But how firm is majority support for government help for blacks? To answer this question, after respondents' issues positions were assessed, each was presented with a counterargument, in an effort to change her or his mind. Concretely, in the case of the issue of government assistance for blacks, respondents who favored increased spending programs for blacks were asked:

Would you still feel the same way even if government help means people get special treatment just because they are black or would that change your mind?

On the other hand, respondents who believed blacks should help themselves were asked:

Would you still feel that way even if it means that blacks will continue to be poorer and more often out of work than whites or would that change your mind?

The first chart, A, in Figure 12.1 presents the distribution of preferences on the issue of government help for blacks, as initially assessed. Here, the majority is clear-cut, and liberal: 57 percent in favor of government help, 43 percent opposed. Subsequent distributions, though, show the impact of counterarguments. B, for example, illustrates the balance of preferences under the pressure of a counterargument for a conservative position on the issue. Specifically, the number initially conservative is added to the number of those initially liberal who changed their position when given a counterargument. The consequence: Instead of a majority in favor of a liberal policy, a still larger majority – nearly three in four – favors the conservative position. Now, consider the opposite situation, the balance of preferences under the pressure of a counterargument for a liberal position. C thus adds to the number initially liberal the number of those initially conservative who changed their position when given a counterargument. The consequence: Nearly three in four favor a liberal position. But of course the crucial question is this: If both sides are confronted with a counterargument, which winds up the loser? The last chart, D, shows the result. Before counterarguments, a majority favors government assistance for blacks, by a margin of about 5 to 4. After, the majority is still 5 to 4 – but in support of the opposite policy: against rather than for increased government spending for blacks. In sum, a liberal majority turns into a conservative one.

Given the loose linkages of mass belief systems, not infrequently a person who is liberal in overlook takes a conservative position on a specific issue, and vice versa. Obviously, it should be easier to talk someone out of a liberal position on a racial issue if they are basically conservative, just as it should be easier to talk them out of a conservative position on a particular issue if they are basically liberal.⁴

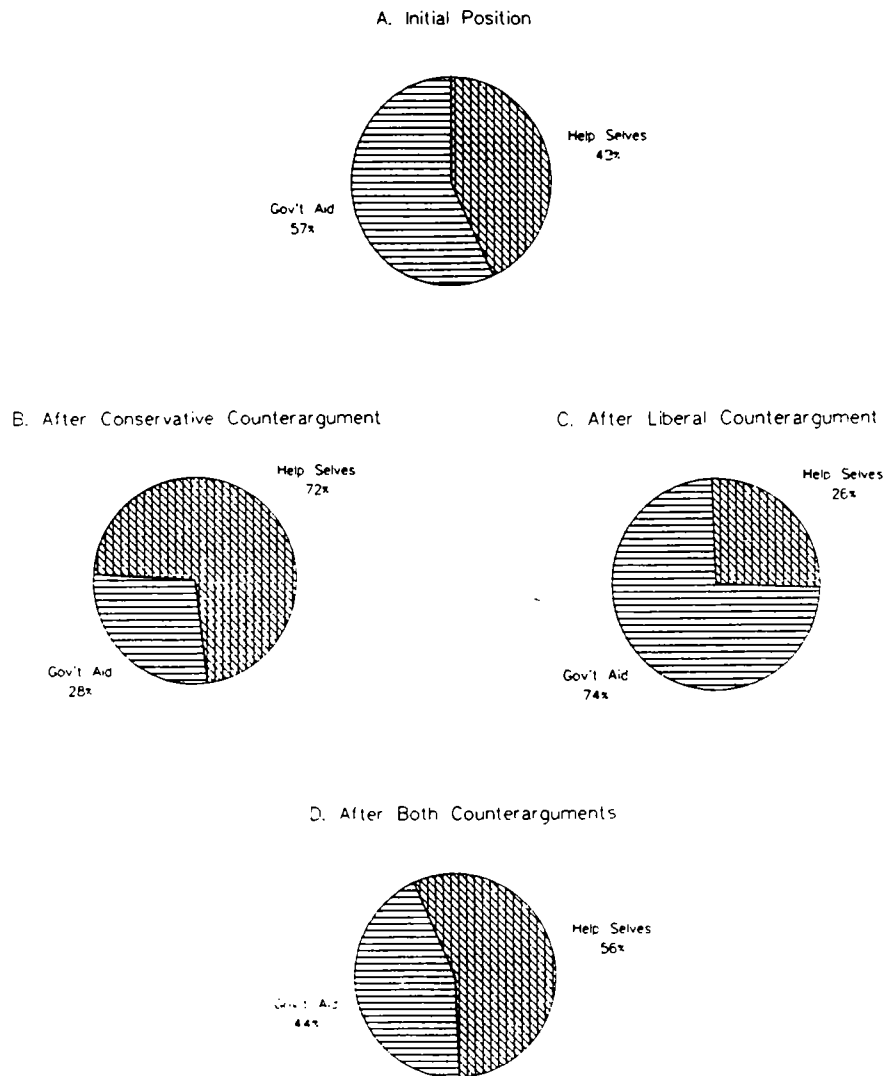


Figure 12.1. Support for government aid for blacks before and after counterarguments.

Figure 12.2a shows the relation between liberalism-conservatism and persuasibility with respect to an initially liberal position; Figure 12.2b, between liberalism-conservatism and persuasibility with respect to an initially conservative position. Remarkably, Figures 12.2a and 12.2b are a study in contrasts. Figure 12.2a shows that the more conservative people are in their overall outlook, the more likely they are to abandon an initially liberal position under the pressure of a conservative counterargument. The reverse, though, is not the case. Liberals

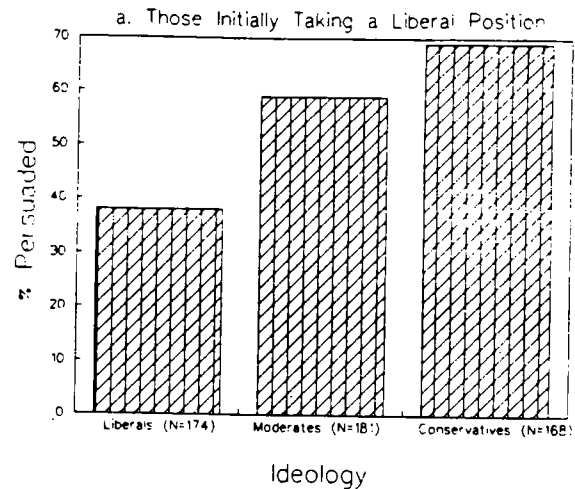


Figure 12.2a. Percent persuaded to change position by ideology: those initially taking a liberal position.

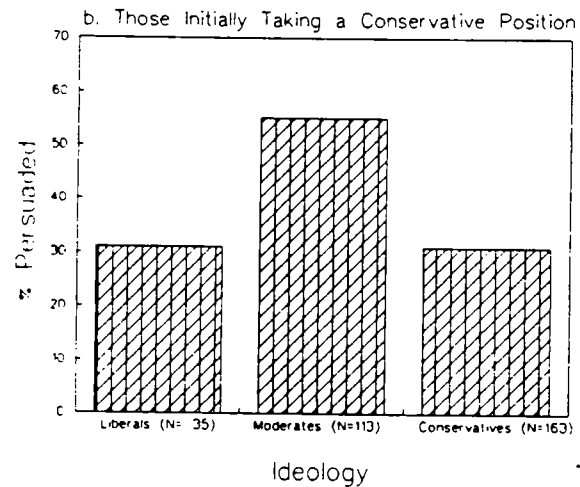


Figure 12.2b. Percent persuaded to change position by ideology: those initially taking a conservative position.

who happen to take a conservative position on this issue are not more likely to come home under the pressure of a liberal counterargument. Rather Figure 12.2b shows that liberals are no more likely than conservatives to change their minds.

There is thus an anomaly – in fact, a double anomaly. First, it is easier to talk supporters of government help for blacks out of their position than to talk opponents out of theirs. Second, it is easier to get conservatives to give up an initially

The new racism and the American ethos

Racial prejudice refers to how some people feel and think about blacks, racial discrimination to how they treat them. Plainly, the public opinion survey is well-suited for the study of prejudice; but consensually, it is not suited for the study of discrimination, since by definition an opinion survey only records opinions, not behaviors.

We want to urge a less self-denying ordinance, a slight relaxation of the definition of discrimination. Our interest is politics, so by racial discrimination we shall mean a person honoring a claim for government assistance for a white but refusing to honor exactly the same claim, made on exactly the same grounds, for a black.

Chapter 13 introduces a technique for the assessment of racial discrimination, so defined. As with Chapters 11 and 12, the technique capitalizes on computer-assisted interviewing. The key experiment – the “laid-off worker” experiment – makes particularly plain how our introduction of planned variations has burst the constraints of the traditional paper-and-pencil split-ballot technique. In the laid-off worker experiment five attributes of an unemployed worker are randomly varied: race, gender, age, marital-parental status, and work history. Because each is varied independently of the other, there are ninety-six different combinations in all, far more than could possibly be accommodated in the traditional technique.

One word of caution. Chapter 13 reports initial results. We have a high degree of confidence in them, but they do not represent our complete analysis of discrimination. In particular, it would be unwarranted – indeed, flatly wrong – to infer from the results of the laid-off worker experiment that racial discrimination no longer occurs. On the contrary, subsequent studies will demonstrate that racial double standards are still practiced. Our broader aim is thus not to demonstrate that discrimination persists – which is surely obvious – but rather to identify the conditions under which it occurs and the characteristics of the individuals most likely to engage in it.

It is now a commonplace among commentators on race and American society that the old racism, rather than being overcome, has merely been replaced by a new racism. This new racism is subtler than the old. Instead of open bigotry, racism is now covert, concealed in a defense of traditional American values, but no less pernicious.

This chapter assesses the validity of the new racism thesis, concentrating particularly on the claim that the new racism is rooted in values held up as quintessentially American: self-reliance, individual initiative, hard work, and individual achievement among them.

This chapter prepared by Paul M. Sniderman, Thomas Piazza, Philip E. Tetlock, and Ann Kendrick.

THE NEW RACISM THESIS

It is sobering to realize that only thirty to forty years ago a majority of white Americans believed that whites should have the first chance at jobs, with blacks deserving to be considered only if there were jobs left over. For that matter, majorities of whites believed that blacks should not be allowed to drink from a water fountain that whites might subsequently touch, or rent a hotel room that whites might later sleep in, or eat at a restaurant table where whites might subsequently eat (e.g., Cantril, 1951; Corbett, 1982). Although race prejudice has by no means disappeared, an overwhelming majority of whites now support equal treatment of whites and blacks (e.g., Hyman and Sheatsley, 1956, 1964; Greeley and Sheatsley, 1971; Lipset and Schneider, 1978; Taylor, Sheatsley, and Greeley, 1978).

But race as a political issue has hardly gone away; indeed, with issues like affirmative action and busing coming to the fore, it has, if anything, become more divisive. So an initial reaction of optimism has been overtaken by one of pessimism. Blatant racism, it is conceded, is on the wane. But it has been replaced, many fear, by a new form of racism, subtler, less apparently racial, but no less pernicious (Pettigrew, 1979; Kinder and Sears, 1981; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts, 1981; McConahay, 1986).

The new racism thesis represents a new view of the relation between racism and the American Creed. In his famous formulation, Myrdal (1944) had proposed that there was a conflict between "the entire American Creed of liberty, equality, justice and fair opportunity for everybody" on the one side, and the irrational impulses, jealousies, and traditions underpinning racial prejudice and discrimination on the other. The new racism thesis, however, turns this view on its head: Far from the Creed being at odds with racism, it holds that antiblack affect has combined with key elements of the Creed to produce the new racism (McConahay, 1986, p. 98).

Proponents of the new racism thesis thus locate the susceptibility to racism in distinctively American values – in Kinder and Sears formulation, the "traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic" (1981, p. 416). McConahay and Hough (1976) have spelled these out:

The values that appear to be most important for producing symbolic racism are those associated with what we call American civil Protestantism. Specific expressions of these values may be multidimensional, but they are, we would hypothesize, derived from the secularized versions of the Protestant Ethic . . . : hard work, individualism, sexual repression, and delay of gratification, with a large dose of patriotism and reverence for the past thrown in. (p. 41)

Ironically, then, what is new about the new racism is the involvement of traditional values (Kinder, 1986; Sears, 1988).

So formulated, the new racism thesis holds, first, that the average American's reactions to racial issues are often rooted in an aversion to blacks, typically acquired in early socialization, reinforced by a commitment to traditional values.

But as McConahay (1988) observes, because racial prejudice is now regarded as socially undesirable, it follows that people are under pressure either to inhibit overt expression of antiblack sentiments or behavior or, alternatively, to camouflage them so that they are defensible on socially acceptable grounds ("I'm not opposed to helping him because he's black, but because he's not putting out an effort on his own"). But of course people sometimes will find themselves in situations in which it is permissible to express negative racial attitudes: indeed, as McConahay emphasizes, it is not necessary that they know they can express antiblack sentiments with impunity; it suffices that the situation be "characterized by racial ambiguity. That is, a context in which there is a plausible, nonprejudiced explanation available for what might be considered prejudiced behavior or intended behavior" (1988, p. 100).

Hence the conception of the new racism as subtle, indirect, disguised (cf. Pettigrew, 1979): So far from being overt and unambiguous, as bigotry used to be, it tends to conceal itself in the cloak of socially acceptable values. In social psychological terms, people feel free to express the new racism only under conditions of attributional ambiguity – that is, when they can invoke a plausible nonracial justification for discriminating against blacks. As a result, the new racism is both hard to identify and easy to defend.

This argument directs attention to the potential importance of covert, or hidden, racism. Thus far it has not been possible to detect covert racism in a conventional survey interview. Now, drawing on computer-assisted interviewing, we shall present a method for doing so. Our objective is thus to determine under what conditions, and why, Americans continue to practice a racial double standard, adhering to one standard of what is fair when a claim for a public benefit or a right is made by a white, and another and harsher standard when it is made by a black.

ANALYSIS

This chapter draws on the same data set, the Race and Politics Survey (RAP) of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay area, as Chapters 11 and 12. In addition, we shall take advantage of a national cross-section, drawn from the familiar National Election Studies (NES) series. The two surveys were conducted at a similar time, during the summer and fall of 1986. Moreover, a number of items in the RAP survey deliberately duplicate or correspond closely to items in the NES study. Our primary concern, in comparing the two samples, is to demonstrate that the results from the Race and Politics Survey correspond to those of the NES at all points the two can be compared.

CONSERVATISM AND RACIAL POLICY PREFERENCES

Conservatism has repeatedly been shown to be correlated with opposition to policies to help blacks (e.g., Sears and Kinder, 1971; Sears, Hensler, and Speer, 1979;

tively more likely to favor help for a black than a white – much the same holds for those not committed to traditional values (data not shown) – but rather the absence of an instance when commitment to a traditional value, however defined, is accompanied by a significantly more negative reaction to a black than to a white claimant in the laid-off worker experiment.

In short, across a range of values, it is not the case that proponents of traditional values react more negatively to a black in need of government assistance than to a white similarly in need.

CONCLUSION

What broader light do our findings shed on the contemporary debate about the character of modern racism? As we read it, two theses are at the heart of the debate.

The first is that contemporary racism tends to be covert, in contrast to old-fashioned race prejudice that was blatant. Indeed, the distinguishing feature of modern racism is precisely that it is "more indirect, more subtle, more procedural, more ostensibly nonracial" (Pettigrew, 1979, p. 118). The thesis of covert racism thus holds that many whites are ready to discriminate against blacks given a socially acceptable pretext, and second, that this pretext characteristically takes the form of "stereotypical symbols of blacks' violation of traditional values" (Kinder and Sears, 1981, p. 416), or by perceptions of blacks as "violating cherished values" (McConahay and Hough, 1976, p. 38; see also Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe, 1980; McConahay, 1986).

The second thesis is the thesis of conservative racism. Modern racism, it is claimed, involves an alliance between hostility to blacks and core values of the American ethos – for example, the ethic of self-reliance and individual achievement (e.g., Kinder and Sears, 1981; Kinder, 1986). The claim is thus that traditional, ostensibly nonracial values inspire opposition to racial equality.

The two theses – the covert character of contemporary racism and its alliance with traditional American values – are argued both together and apart. Thus, Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) assert the first and deny the second, Kinder (1986) and Sears (1988) deny the first and assert the second, while McConahay (1986) and Pettigrew (1979) assert both. Our findings bear on both theses, in all three combinations.

The thesis of covert racism needs to be assessed experimentally, because it is otherwise impossible to disentangle the influence of the color of a claimant's skin and the availability of a pretext for refusing assistance. The laid-off worker experiment is the first to investigate whether the claim of a black to a public benefit will be rejected on the grounds of race if a situational pretext is supplied. The experiment tested this thesis not once but twice, once using the stereotypical symbol of "the lazy and irresponsible black," the other using the symbol of the "broken" black family.

Now, if substantial numbers of whites are simply waiting for a moral justification or excuse in order to express their hostility toward blacks, as the new racism thesis suggests, either or both of these stereotypical symbols of blacks' violation of traditional values should elicit a negative reaction. The findings, however, show that whites respond the same to an undependable black worker as to an undependable white one; they likewise respond to a black single parent as to a white single parent. In the laid-off worker experiment, furnishing respondents with a pretext to respond negatively to a black does not in fact lead them to do so. This finding cannot be read, under any construction, as consistent with the hypothesis of covert racism.

As for the thesis of conservative racism, we have seen that political conservatives are more likely than liberals to oppose government efforts to help blacks; and their opposition tends to be systematic, not confined to policies dealing with especially strategic objectives (e.g., economic incentives) or especially controversial means (e.g., affirmative action). Moreover, political conservatives are also more likely than liberals to endorse negative stereotypes about blacks that have direct relevance to central public policy choices. Conservatives are thus more likely than liberals to perceive blacks as irresponsible, as unwilling to make an effort to get ahead, and as too willing to take advantage of welfare programs.

These findings are consistent with the thesis of conservative racism. But it begs the question to read the relation between conservatism and opposition to government assistance for blacks as proof of racism. To do this is to dismiss the possibility that conservatives object, in part at least, because such policies offend their conception of what government should and should not do. Moreover, though conservatism and negative images of blacks are correlated, the strength of this correlation should not be exaggerated. It is true that three in every four conservatives agree that "most blacks who are on welfare could get a job if they really tried," but it is worth observing that one in every two liberals agree as well. In short, not the least objection to the conservative racism thesis is its underestimation of the liberal endorsement both of pejorative images of blacks and of opposition to "new agenda" racial policies like affirmative action and busing.

Still more fundamentally, this study has turned up evidence directly at odds with the claim that modern racism takes the form of a fusion of antiblack affect and traditional values. The laid-off worker experiment demonstrated that blacks are *not* singled out for especially negative reactions. Moreover, the absence of discriminatory judgments of claims to public benefits is true not only of the public taken as a whole, but in addition true also of those committed to traditional values.

It would be wrong to infer from this that proponents of traditional values, or indeed their opponents, decline to discriminate against blacks in all circumstances. It would be wrong to draw this inference, partly from a decent respect of the limitations of one study, partly because there is reason to believe (e.g., Rossi and Nock, 1982; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1985) that reactions to blacks on

issues where there is the possibility of personal contact between blacks and whites (e.g., fair housing) may be quite different.

There is a double lesson, however, that should be drawn from this study. First, notwithstanding the din of assertions that large-scale racism remains and powerfully expresses itself in subtle and indirect ways, the evidence shows that the claims of a black to government assistance are not treated differently and worse than those of a white – even when a pretext for doing so is at hand. Second, and more important for the future, this study introduces a methodology for detecting racial double standards. This methodology marries the inferential virtues of experimental design with the descriptive strength of survey research. Although a marriage of the two has long been regarded as desirable in the abstract, the crucial problem has been how to consummate it in practice: One means for doing so, we have attempted to demonstrate, is computer-assisted interviewing. The result is not merely a technological breakthrough, but the opening of a range of new phenomena to investigate, as we shall try to make plain in the next chapter.