

Introduction

A RACIAL ORDER—the set of beliefs, assumptions, rules, and practices that shape the way in which groups in a given society are connected with one another—may seem fixed. Racial orders do change, however. The change may be gradual, as when America evolved over two centuries from being a society with slaves to a slave society, or cataclysmic as when slavery or serfdom is abolished or apartheid instituted. A racial order can change for some groups but not others; the Immigration Act of 1924 denied all Asians and most Europeans and Africans, but not Latin Americans, the right of entry to the United States. Change in a racial order is most visible when it results from severe struggle, but it may also occur unintentionally through thousands of cumulative small acts and thoughts. And a racial order can change in some but not all dimensions; American Indians gained U.S. citizenship in 1924 but few have reacquired the land lost through centuries of conquest and appropriation.¹

Variation in pace, direction, activity, and object makes it difficult to see major change while it is occurring. Nevertheless, we argue that the racial order of the late twentieth century that emerged from the 1960's civil rights movement, opening of immigration, and Great Society is undergoing a cumulative, wide-ranging, partly unintentional and partly deliberate transformation. The transformation is occurring in locations and laws, beliefs and practices. Its starting point was the abolition of institutional supports and public commitments of the pre-1960s racial order, such as intermarriage bans, legally mandated segregation, unembarrassed racism, and racial or ethnic discrimination. Once those props were removed, the changes broadly signaled by "the 1960s" could develop over the next forty years. They included a rise in immigration, Blacks' assertion of pride and dignity, Whites' rejection of racial supremacy (at least in public), a slow opening of schools, jobs, and suburbs to people previously excluded, and a shift in government policy from promoting segregation and hierarchy and restricting interracial unions to promoting (at least officially) integration and equality and allowing interracial unions.

As a consequence, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, new institutions and practices have been moving into place: official records permit people to identify with more than one race, anti-discrimination policies are well established in schools and workplaces, and some non-Whites hold influential political positions. At the same time, the late twentieth century's understanding of the very meaning of race—a few exhaustive and mutually exclusive groups—is becoming less and less ten-

able as a consequence of new multiracial identities, immigrants' rejection of conventional American categories, and genomic science. Social relations, particularly among young Americans, are less driven by stereotypes, more fluid and fragmented, and more susceptible to creation rather than acquiescence. Even deeply seated hierarchies of income, educational attainment and achievement, prestige, and political power are easing for some groups and in some dimensions of life. Race or ethnicity, though still important, is less likely to predict a young person's life chances than at any previous point in American history; today's young adults will move through adulthood with the knowledge that one need not be White in order to become the most powerful person in the world.

These and other changes are best organized and understood through analysis of four powerful transformative forces. Immigration, as it has done throughout American history, is changing the raw materials of the racial order as well as the mixture and positioning of those materials. Multiracialism is changing our almost century-long convictions that a person belongs to one and only one race and that one's race is fixed at birth and remains static. Genomic science is reopening the old question of whether race has a biological component at the same time that it offers the possibility of dissolving race into individual profiles and transforming the criminal justice system. For young adults, marches, riots, and grape boycotts are what they study in history books; their collective memories include the New Orleans' Superdome in 2005, the immigrant rights march in 2006, and Barack Obama's Grant Park speech in 2008. Because, we predict, the cohort of young adults will retain this new set of views and perspectives, young adults are the preeminent transformative force. They disproportionately comprise and engage with immigrants, they are most likely to identify as multiracial, they will be most affected by genomic innovations, and they have the broadest set of life chances. They may create a new American racial order.

Thus the late twentieth-century racial order captures less and less of the way in which race and ethnicity are practiced in the United States today and may be practiced in the foreseeable future. If transformative forces persist and prevail, the United States can finally move toward becoming the society that James Madison envisioned in *Federalist* #10, one in which no majority faction, not even native-born European Americans, dominates the political, economic, or social arena.

The Madisonian vision must not blind us to two concerns. If it persists, creation of a new racial order will not have only beneficial results. Some Americans are likely to be harmed by these changes and will thereby suffer relative or even absolute losses. Continuing the venerable American pattern, they will be disproportionately African American or Native American, supplemented by undocumented immigrants. All Americans

are likely to lose some of the joys and advantages of a strong sense of group identity and rootedness. The greater concern, however, is that the newly created racial order will not persist and prevail. Black poverty and alienation may be too deep; White supremacy may be too tenacious; institutional change may be too shallow; undocumented immigrants may not attain a path to belonging; genomic research may usher in a new era of eugenic discrimination. In short, Americans may in the end lack the political will to finish what demographic change, scientific research, young adults' worldviews, and the momentum of the past decade have started.

Promoting the gains and reducing the costs of a transformed racial order are the driving motivations behind this book. We aim to contribute to understanding and explaining creative forces, provide warnings against their harms as well as extol their virtues, and generally help strengthen the political will to attain Madison's vision of a country of majority-less factions.

Our exploration of transformative forces and their blockages is spread over three parts and seven chapters. Part 1, "The Argument," has one chapter. Chapter 1 explicates the five components of a societal racial order and suggests what is at stake in the ongoing reinvention of the American racial order. Examples show how immigration, multiracialism, genomics, and cohort change are transforming each component of the late twentieth-century racial order. Chapter 1 also points to elements of American society that could distort or block transformation of the racial order. Perhaps most important, it provides analytic justification for our expectation that creative forces will outweigh blockages, so long as Americans take steps to incorporate those now in danger of exclusion and to improve the life chances of those at the bottom.

Part 2, "Creating a New Order," consists of five chapters. Chapters 2 through 5 respectively analyze immigration, multiracialism, genomics, and cohort change, in each case using the five components of a racial order to organize the discussion. Despite variation in the content and process of change, a consistent pattern emerges: each transformative force independently (and all of them interactively) is changing how Americans understand what a race is, how individuals are classified, how groups are relatively positioned, how state actions affect people's freedom of choice, and how people relate to one another in the society. Chapter 6 looks at the opposite side of the creative dynamic—that is, features of the American racial order that reinforce the late twentieth-century order of clear racial and ethnic boundaries, relatively fixed group positions, intermittently prohibitive state actions, and hostile social relations. Chapter 6 focuses on four issues that directly challenge the transformative forces—the costs of a loss in group identity, wealth disparities, un-

precedented levels of Black and Latino incarceration, and the possibility that illegal immigrants or Muslims might become the new pariah group. It warns that effective creation of a new racial order can itself deepen the disadvantage of the worst off even while moving toward a more racially inclusive polity.

Finally, part 3, “Possibilities,” consists of one chapter. Chapter 7 concludes by considering the likelihood that the current American racial order will look very different by the time our children reach old age. It also sketches some political and policy directions necessary to promote transformation, expand its benefits, and reduce the proportion of Americans who are left out or harmed.

The issues of this book are personally as well as professionally important to the authors; we live them as well as study them every day. We have family members who identify with a different race or ethnicity from our own; two of us are second-generation immigrants; we vary in phenotype and complexity of racial identity; two of us are children of intergroup marriages. Our DNA ancestry tests reveal these varied backgrounds. Although Hochschild had taken a test several years ago that showed Native American and East Asian ancestry, to her and her parents’ surprise, the recent test reported 100 percent European heritage. It is presumably the more accurate and a good early warning signal about not taking these results too seriously. Weaver has 82 percent European ancestry (a little higher than she had anticipated but not a lot), 16 percent African, and 2 percent Asian background; like most other Americans of comparable background, she identifies as Black and multiracial but seldom as White despite how people sometimes see her. Burch has 85 percent African, 12 percent European, and 3 percent Asian ancestry. Her reaction: “Both the test and my own research happen to draw the same conclusion that I am mostly Black, so no surprises there.”

Parts of this book have been published elsewhere, generally in quite different form. We provide references to our own articles or chapters where an argument rests on a fuller analysis and richer evidence already in print. Much of chapter 3 was published in “There’s No One as Irish as Barack O’bama’: The Policy and Politics of American Multiracialism,” *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (3) (September 2010): 737–59, © 2010 by the American Political Science Association. Some of chapter 5 was published as “Destabilizing the American Racial Order” in *Daedalus* 140 (2) (spring 2011): 151–65, © 2011 by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. We thank the publishers of both pieces for allowing us to use the material from these articles here.

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The authors jointly dedicate *Creating a New Racial Order* to the next generation, whom we are counting on to work for a better future. We mean that generally, invoking all of the Americans and would-be Americans who are young enough to fix the problems that we older Americans have made or not yet fixed. We also mean it more concretely, invoking our students who challenge us when we fall down and make it worthwhile to come to work each day. And we mean it very specifically, invoking Vesla's relatives, Chloe Britt and Blakely Tyler, Vesla's son, Lennox Grey Lebron-Weaver, and Jennifer's children, Eleanor and Raphael Broh. They are the light of our lives.