A FRAGILE MOSAIC?:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES OF
AFRICAN AMERICANS, LATINOS, AND WHITES TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER

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Paper prepared for presentation at
the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association
Atlanta, Georgia, September 2-5, 1999
ABSTRACT

In the American experience, as has been the case in many other nations, considerable conflict and tension between the various racial and ethnic groups composing the society have accompanied the great diversity. This paper will examine the political and social attitudes of African Americans, Latinos, and Whites towards one another. Do Latinos and Whites believe that the employment prospects of Blacks are hindered by discrimination? What are Whites' perceptions of Blacks and Latinos as to whether they believe these groups prefer either to be self-supporting or to live on welfare? Do Blacks favor Latinos receiving special job training and educational assistance because of past disadvantages? Finally, how do Blacks and Whites regard immigration and its effect upon their group's political influence and economic opportunity?

While the Black-White racial divide has arguably been the central cleavage throughout the nation's development, the growth and salience of Latinos over the past several decades has undoubtedly altered and broadened the nation's racial dynamics -- a development that has had an obvious effect upon the political, social, and economic environment of such major states as California and Texas. This paper examines the above critical questions in an exploration of the social and political attitudes of African Americans, Latinos, and Whites. We will analyze two sets of questions that we categorize as follows:

♦ The group's perceptions of the attributes and experience of the other groups. (For example, How much discrimination is there that hurts the chances of [group x] to get good paying jobs? Where would you rate [group x] as to how intelligent or unintelligent that group is?)

♦ The group's attitudes towards policy designed to address inequality and other groups' right to benefit from such policy. (For example, Do you favor [group x] receiving special job training and educational assistance?)

Our quantitative analyses were based upon data from the 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, a study of more than 9,000 household interviews conducted in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles. The study, funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and Ford Foundation, is unique in that it has significant samples of African American, Latino, and White respondents. We generally find that there is consensus among Blacks and Latinos in their support of affirmative action, job training, and educational assistance for their groups. However, both groups do believe in some negative attitudes about the other group, suggesting that the dominant racist and nativist ideologies influence the regard that they have for one another. Future research will examine the bases of these attitudes.
The tremendous racial and ethnic diversity of American society is one of the nation's most unique features. It is a diversity that is the result of the voluntary immigration of a multitude of peoples, the involuntary immigration of African Americans, and Native Americans' great perseverance in the face of violent oppression. Clearly, America's diversity is an inextricable part of its history, enriching its character, its economy, and its culture. Yet in the American experience, as has been the case in many other nations, considerable conflict and tension between the various racial and ethnic groups composing the society have accompanied the great diversity. This paper examines the political and social attitudes of African Americans, Latinos, and Whites towards one another. Do Latinos and Whites believe that the employment prospects of Blacks are hindered by discrimination? What are Whites' perceptions of Blacks and Latinos as to whether they believe these groups prefer either to be self-supporting or to live on welfare? Finally, do Blacks favor Latinos receiving special job training and educational assistance because of past disadvantages?

While the Black-White racial divide has arguably been the central cleavage throughout the nation's development, the growth and salience of Latinos over the past several decades has undoubtedly altered and broadened the nation's racial dynamics -- a development that has had an obvious effect upon the political, social, and economic environment of such major states as California and Texas. In light of globalization, the current economic times, the inevitable demographic change reducing Whites' numerical hegemony, and the continuing economic distress experienced by many African Americans and Latinos, racial and ethnic tension promises to be one of the more consequential factors influencing American politics.

This paper examines these critical questions in a preliminary exploration of the social and political attitudes of African Americans, Latinos, and Whites towards one another. We argue that the attitudes of groups towards other groups can be categorized as follows:
The group’s perceptions of the attributes and experience of the other groups. For example, how much discrimination is there that hurts the chances of [group x] to get good paying jobs? Where would you rate [group x] as to how intelligent or unintelligent that group is?

The group’s attitudes towards policy designed to address inequality and other groups’ right to benefit from such policy. For example, do you favor [group x] receiving special job training and educational assistance?

The group’s perceptions of group competition. For example, if immigration to this country continues at the present rate, how much political influence do you believe people like you will have?

For this paper, we will focus upon the first and second aspects of our framework. Future research will include examine the third aspect as well. In the next section, we elaborate upon our theoretical argument regarding the importance of groups’ attitudes towards other groups. We then examine these attitudes in an empirical analysis. Our empirical analyses examine data from the 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, a survey of more than 9,000 household interviews conducted in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles. The study, funded by the Ford Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation, is unique in that it has significant samples of African American, Latino, and White respondents.

THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

Over the past forty years many scholars have focused their attention on uncovering attitudes that different racial groups have of one another, especially Whites’ views of African Americans (among some of the major works are: Allport [1954] 1979; Bobo 1983; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears 1988; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). However, there has been a dearth of literature examining the relationship between the prevailing social attitudes of groups towards other groups and how they affect political behavior. Two of the most recent studies (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Dash 1998) examine important attitudes that serve as a foundation for political behavior.

Bobo and Hutchings (1996: 951) pose two fundamental questions about the nature of interracial tension: (1) To what extent do Whites, Blacks, Latinos and Asians view one another
as locked in competitive social relations? (2) What are the social and psychological underpinnings of such outlooks? Extending Blumer’s model of racial prejudice, they hypothesize that “the more that members of a particular racial and ethnic group feel collectively oppressed and unfairly treated by society, the more likely they are to perceive members of other groups as potential threats.” They go on to examine whether these perceptions stem from simple self-interest, orthodox prejudice (such as negative feelings and stereotyping), or broad beliefs about social stratification and inequality.

With regard to levels of perceived threat, their results indicate that depending on the race, some groups appear to be perceived as more threatening than others. Blacks, Whites, and Latinos all feel the greatest sense of threat from Asians, the least amount of threat from Blacks, with Latinos falling in between. However, Bobo and Hutchings found that these levels of perceived threat were not influenced by either background or self-interest. Other noteworthy patterns emerged from their analysis as well. Their data indicate that Whites’ perception of Blacks as competitors increased with greater alienation, negative stereotyping, social distance, and greater income. The consequence of this pattern was that “whites who adopt a conventional liberal interpretation of the status of Blacks are less likely to see Blacks as a collective threat” (Bobo and Hutchings 1996: 962). A social distance measure also influenced perceived levels of threat among Blacks, Latinos, and Asians of one another in that the greater the perceived level of social distance, the more likely they were to regard members of the other groups as a threat. From these results they were able to conclude that “feelings of competitive threat from members of other racial and ethnic groups have complex determinants” (Bobo and Hutchings 1996: 965). In other words, aspects of group positions, classical prejudice, stratification beliefs, and self-interest models all play a role in determining the extent to which groups feel threatened.

Dash (1998) conducted a similar analysis but focused on the general nature of the social and political attitudes among African Americans and Latinos and the extent to which these
attitudes affect the likelihood of a political coalition between the two groups. She argued that there are three distinct dimensions (or conditions) necessary for minority coalition-building: (1) common political and social interests, (2) a shared oppression/history of discrimination, and (3) favorable perceptions of each other.

The first dimension of coalition-building focuses primarily on the extent to which the groups share common political interests and ideology. For example, the extent to which the groups identify themselves with the Democratic Party, classify themselves as liberal, and support affirmative action policies are all possible indicators of the liberalism that is seemingly integral to coalition formation between Blacks and Latinos. The second dimension measures the degree to which the participating groups view their minority status as either enhancing or hindering their mutual self-interest. Dash argues that the potential groups need to feel that their status as a minority group limits their life chances. In other words, the groups must believe that past oppression limited their groups’ social and economic opportunities and that members of their groups continue to experience oppression in its many forms. If groups do not share the same agenda to respond to this oppression, it makes other agendas difficult to fulfill as well. And finally, the third dimension is significantly more complex than the other two and not surprisingly, more difficult to meet. Potential allies must possess somewhat favorable perceptions of each other if coalescence is to occur. This is especially important with regard to coalitions with Blacks. Negative stereotypes of Blacks are so rampant that other minority groups can be just as likely as Whites to buy into them. Finally, perceived and actual threat must be minimal. The belief that the other group is somehow a threat to one’s own well-being (either political, social, or economic) lessens the likelihood for coalescence, argues Dash.

Dash found that analysis of the first dimension did not indicate any trends that counter conventional wisdom. As expected, Blacks were much more likely to identify themselves as Democrats as well as being liberal. A majority of the Latino respondents, on the other hand, tended to have no party preference with a quarter of them not having thought at all about their
political ideology. Additionally, while Blacks were consistently in favor of preferential treatment of Blacks and Latinos in education, job training and hiring, Latinos only felt special consideration should be given in education and job training.

Within the second dimension, Dash found that a majority of the Black respondents believed that both Blacks and Latinos face discrimination with many Blacks also feeling that they have been denied a job because of their race. Furthermore, they were more likely to believe that the sources of inequality for both Blacks and Latinos were structural rather than behavioral. Conversely, Latinos were more likely to believe that Latino inequality was due more to discrimination and structural factors rather than behavioral factors and believe that Black inequality was due more to behavioral factors rather than structural ones. Indeed, a large percentage of Latino respondents felt that Blacks had a less in-born ability to learn and lacked will power and motivation. The consequences of violation within this dimension were far greater than violations in the first dimension.

Finally, third dimension variables revealed that Latinos did not think too highly of Blacks as a group. Whereas Blacks were more likely to offer a neutral or more favorable response regarding Latino characteristics (with the exception of English speaking ability), Blacks were seen by Latinos as being a relatively unintelligent group that was hard to get along with and preferred welfare over being self-supporting. Additionally, Latinos perceived Blacks as a group involved in drugs and gangs and guilty of discriminating against others. However, Blacks were much more likely to view Latinos as an economic and political threat, while Latinos were less likely to regard Blacks similarly. Additionally, Blacks greatly feared that immigration would lessen their economic influence.

It is within the second and third dimensions where one can see the link between social attitudes and political behavior. The fact that Latino respondents so greatly differentiate between the sources of inequality for Blacks and Latinos suggests that the political measures for alleviating the inequality would be different for the two groups. More specifically, the fact that
many Latino respondents think that Blacks suffer from inherent (less in-born ability to learn) and behavioral (a lack of motivation) problems arguably makes it difficult for Latinos to believe any government policy would lessen Black inequality, thus reducing the likelihood that Latinos would be supportive of mobilizing with Blacks to demand policies addressing that inequality. However, the inequality Latinos feel they face as a group is due to discrimination, lack of education, and the inability to speak standard English. Latinos appear to think that their inequality can be alleviated, if Latinos experienced less discrimination and had greater access to education and language training. In short, just because both Blacks and Latinos feel they suffer from inequality does not mean they agree on the reasons causing their inequality and thus the measures for addressing it.

Third dimension variables (those measuring favorable perceptions of each other) indicate that Blacks and Latinos might not be coming together politically simply because they do not think highly of each other. However, the reasons they do not think highly of each other are different for each group. Latinos’ apparent susceptibility to dominant stereotypes about Blacks suggests that they subscribe to the racial propaganda of the greater White society. Blacks, on the other hand, believe that Latinos are threats to their economic and political influence; their fear of immigration apparently shows that Blacks are not above from believing nativist propaganda and the sentiments of anti-immigrant groups.

Ultimately there is a need to extend beyond the traditional analyses, which tend to focus on identifying attitudes certain groups have regarding other groups, to an analysis of why certain groups have certain attitudes to begin with and how they affect political attitudes and behavior. If anything, the above studies illustrate the importance of identifying how we can tap into certain social and psychological attitudes and try and determine how they can influence not only relations between different racial groups, but also the types of social policies they support and the methods of political mobilization they prefer. We will now proceed to examine the attitudes of Blacks, Whites, and Latinos towards one another.
THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In this analysis, we examined a number of questions asking Black, White, and Latino respondents about their attitudes towards other groups. As we noted earlier, we are concentrating on two main groups of attitudes here: those measuring respondents' perceptions of the attributes and experience of other groups and those measuring respondents' attitudes towards policy designed to address inequality and other groups' right to benefit from such policy. The preliminary examination for this paper involves bar graph analyses of percentages among the questions’ available responses for the three groups of respondents. The first question measures respondents’ perceptions of the general intelligence of the groups and appears as follows:

Next, for each group I want to know whether you think they tend to be intelligent or tend to be unintelligent. Where would you rate (GROUP) on this scale, where 1 means tends to be intelligent and 7 means tends to be unintelligent? A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or the other and, of course, you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in the group stand.

[Insert Figures 1, 2, and 3 here.]

Figure 1 examines the question inserting Whites for the group respondents were asked about. Black, Latino, and White respondents all generally agreed that Whites are intelligent, with at least half of the respondents of each group in agreement with this end of the scale. Over a third of the Whites believed that Whites were neither intelligent nor unintelligent; about a third of Blacks and a fifth of the Latinos selected this response. However, equal percentages of Black and Latino respondents -- just under a fourth for both groups -- believed that Whites are unintelligent; only a very small percentage of Whites believe likewise.

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1 The total number of respondents for our analyses was 7,657. There were 3,092 Blacks, 1,783 Latinos, and 2,782 Whites.
2 We recoded the seven-point scale to these questions into three categories: (GROUP) is intelligent, the (GROUP) is neither intelligent nor unintelligent, and (GROUP) is unintelligent.
The distributions for Figures 2 (whether Blacks are intelligent or unintelligent) and 3 (whether Latinos are intelligent or unintelligent), in comparison, were more evenly balanced between the responses. Among the respondents who believed that Blacks are intelligent, only the Black respondents selected this answer at a percentage greater than 50%; about a third of White respondents and of Latino respondents believed similarly. The greatest percentage of Whites (just under half) believed that Blacks are neither intelligent nor unintelligent, while a third of both Blacks and Latinos selected this answer. The unintelligent end of the scale revealed an interesting finding in the groups’ assessment of Black intelligence: Latinos, rather than Whites, were more likely to believe that Blacks are unintelligent, with nearly a third of them believing so. Only about a fifth of the White respondents subscribed to the notion that Blacks are unintelligent. As we might expect, a small percentage of Blacks agreed with this end of the scale.

Figure 3 reports the results for respondents’ assessments of Latino intelligence. As we might expect, the greatest percentage of Latinos believed that members of their group are intelligent, although the percentage here (just over 40%) was lower than the percentages for Blacks’ assessment of Black intelligence and Whites’ assessment of White intelligence. Over a third of Blacks felt that Latinos are intelligent and just over a fourth of Whites agreed. Nearly half of the White respondents selected the neither category and about 40% of the Black ones agreed with them. A third of the Latinos selected this answer.

Once again, the unintelligent category was most interesting in that about a fourth of both Blacks and Whites subscribed to the notion that Latinos are unintelligent, while just over a fifth of Latino respondents agreed with them. The percentage of Latinos agreeing with the unintelligent category was the highest percentage among the three groups’ assessments of their respective group’s lack of intelligence. What can we conclude from this analysis? Clearly, all groups subscribed to some of the dominant ideology regarding the intelligence of Whites versus that of other racial and ethnic groups, believing that Whites are generally intelligent while other
groups are generally less so. Given our research interest, the degree to which Blacks believed that Latinos are unintelligent and Latinos believed that Blacks are unintelligent suggests that the dominant ideology influences each group’s attitudes here. This should be kept in mind as we examine the subsequent figures.

[Insert Figures 4, 5, and 6 here.]

The next three figures examine the following question:

Next, for each group I want to know whether you think they tend to be self-supporting or tend to prefer to be on welfare. Where would you rate (GROUP) on this scale, where 1 means tends to prefer to be self-supporting and 7 means tends to prefer to be on welfare? A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or the other and, of course, you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in the group stand.3

Looking across Figures 4 (whether Whites are self-supporting or prefer welfare), 5 (whether Blacks are self-supporting or prefer welfare), and 6 (whether Latinos are self-supporting or prefer welfare), we see that substantial percentages of respondents from all three groups tend to believe that Whites are self-supporting. However, this was not the case when respondents were asked about the preferences of Blacks and Latinos. While Blacks were almost evenly split in their percentage distribution between the three answers to the question, both Whites and Latinos tended to believe that Blacks prefer to be on welfare. Over 40% of Whites and about 65% of Latinos selected this answer. This is obviously quite a striking result with respect to the vast difference between Whites and Latinos subscribing to a negative assessment of Blacks. As for the preferences of Latinos, Blacks did not depart much from the even distribution evaluating their own group’s preferences between being self-supporting and preferring welfare. About 35% of Blacks agreed that Latinos prefer welfare, while nearly an equal percentage of Whites thought likewise. Latinos tended to look unfavorably towards their group’s preferences in a way similar to their attitudes towards Blacks in the previous figure, with

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3 We recoded the seven-point scale to these questions into three categories: (GROUP) prefers to be self-supporting, the (GROUP) neither prefers to be self-supporting nor prefers to be on welfare, and (GROUP) prefers to be on welfare.
about half of them believing that Latinos prefer welfare. While it is difficult to make a definitive conclusion here given the basic analysis presented, Figures 5 and 6 nonetheless suggest that Latinos are nearly as likely to evaluate their own group’s behavior negatively as they are to regard Blacks negatively.

[Insert Figures 7, 8, and 9 here.]

The next three figures provide a direct measure of respondents’ attitudes towards the ease of getting along with the groups. The question was asked in the following manner:

Next, for each group I want to know whether you think they tend to be easy to get along with or tend to be hard to get along with. Where would you rate (GROUP) on this scale, where 1 means tends to be easy to get along with and 7 means tends to be hard to get along with? A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or the other and, of course, you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in the group stand.4

As shown by Figure 7 (whether Whites are easy or hard to get along with), greater percentages of the White and Latino respondents agreed that Whites are easy to get along with. Although they had a fairly even distribution between the scales’ three alternatives, Blacks were more likely to believe that Whites are hard to get along with. Over a third of Blacks subscribed to this view, joined by about a third of the Latino respondents. In Figure 8 (whether Blacks are easy or hard to get along with), both Black and White respondents generally tended to believe that Blacks are either easy to get along with or neither easy or hard to get along with. In comparison, Latinos had a bimodal distribution and were more likely to select the far ends of the scale. However, over 40% of Latinos -- double the percentage of Whites -- agreed that Blacks are hard to get along with. This result stands in stark contrast to how Blacks regarded Latinos, as shown by Figure 9. Although they were nearly even in their selection of the three alternatives, greater percentages of Blacks believed Latinos were either easy to get along with or neither easy or hard to get along with. Like the other groups in their evaluation of the ease in

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4 We recoded the seven-point scale to these questions into three categories: (GROUP) is easy to get along with, the (GROUP) is neither easy nor hard to get along with, and (GROUP) is hard to get along with.
getting along with their group, the greatest percentage of Latinos believed that they are easy to get along with. Once again, we see Latinos appear to have a much more negative view of Blacks than Blacks have of Latinos, even in comparison to Whites and their evaluation of Blacks.

[Insert Figures 10 and 11 here.]

The remaining analyses concentrate upon evaluation of Blacks and Latinos by all of the respondents. The next two figures examine the following question:

The next questions ask for your opinions about the reasons for racial inequality. I’m going to mention several reasons that are given for why (GROUP) people have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people. I’d like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each reason I mention.

(GROUP) people have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people because of racial discrimination.

Figure 10 reports the results inserting Blacks in the question, and Figure 11 asks the question with respect to Latinos. White respondents had very similar distributions for their responses to both questions, with about 40% of them somewhat agreeing that Blacks and Latinos have jobs, incomes, and housing worse than Whites as a result of racial discrimination. A little over one in ten Whites expressed strong agreement with the statements. On the other hand, about 40% of the White respondents disagreed with the statements. Latinos generally agreed that racial discrimination limits the opportunities of both Blacks and Latinos, although the intensity of their agreement with the statements was not as strong as Blacks’ agreement with them. About 40% of Latinos somewhat agreed that racial discrimination affects the life chances of Blacks and that it affects those of Latinos. Although they were less likely to express strong agreement with the statements, a greater percentage of Latinos were more likely to believe that racial discrimination affects their group than it affects Blacks. As for Black respondents, high percentages of them strongly agreed that racial discrimination affects the life chances of Blacks (about 50%) and Latinos (just under 40%). One of the more intriguing findings of these two
figures is that Blacks tended to express a greater intensity of agreement that racial discrimination affects Latinos than Latinos expressed for themselves.

[Insert Figures 12 and 13 here.]

The next two figures pose the same question as Figures 10 and 11, asking respondents about their agreement with the following statement:

The next questions ask for your opinions about the reasons for racial inequality. I’m going to mention several reasons that are given for why (GROUP) people have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people. I’d like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each reason I mention.

Most (GROUP)s have less in-born ability to learn.

High percentages of Whites and Blacks strongly disagreed with the statement with regard to both Blacks and Latinos. Well over half of the White respondents strongly disagreed that Blacks and Latinos possess less innate ability to learn. About two in three Black respondents expressed strong disagreement with the idea that most Blacks have less innate learning ability. However, there was a sizable drop in strong Black disagreement with the statement posing whether Latinos have less innate learning ability: about 45% of Black respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Nonetheless, when those who moderately disagreed are added in, about 75% of Blacks disagreed with the statement. In comparison, Latinos generally tended to disagree that Blacks have less innate learning ability, with over half of them in strong or moderate disagreement with the statement. Yet, they were a bit more balanced in the intensity of their disagreement; a slightly greater percentage of them moderately disagreed. Interestingly, almost a third of Latinos somewhat agreed that Blacks have less innate learning ability – a percentage almost twenty percentage points greater than those among the Whites and Blacks selecting this answer. As for Latinos’ evaluation of their group’s innate learning ability, they generally tended to disagree with the idea but again the intensity of their disagreement was slightly below that expressed by Blacks with respect to Latino learning ability.
The next two figures use the same introductory protocol as the four previous figures and ask respondents about their agreement with the following statement:

The next questions ask for your opinions about the reasons for racial inequality. I’m going to mention several reasons that are given for why (GROUP) people have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people. I’d like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each reason I mention.

Most (GROUP)s just don’t have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty.

In responding to the statement asking about Blacks, sizable percentages of all respondents somewhat agreed that Blacks do not have the motivation or will power to pull themselves out of poverty, as shown by Figure 14. About a third of Blacks selected this answer, and well over a third of Whites and Latinos did so as well. Among both Whites and Latinos, the greatest percentages of them somewhat agreed with the statement for Blacks. Although 30% of Blacks strongly disagreed, overall the Black respondents were nearly evenly split between agreement and disagreement with the statement. Whites also were nearly evenly split between agreement and disagreement with the statement. However, of the three groups, Latino respondents were somewhat less evenly split, with about 60% of them tending to agree that Blacks lacked the motivation to raise themselves out of poverty.

In Figure 15, there were evident differences between Blacks’ and Latinos’ perceptions of the motivation to rise out of poverty among Latinos. The distributions of responses among Blacks and Latinos were practically mirror images of one another: Black respondents generally tended to disagree with the statement, while Latino ones were more likely to agree with it. Indeed, the group that expressed the highest percentage among those people who strongly disagreed with the statement was Blacks, by a margin of nearly ten percentage points above the closest group. About 65% of Blacks either strongly or moderately disagreed that Latinos lack the will power to get out of poverty. Latinos were about as evenly split between agreement and
disagreement with the statement as Blacks were in Figure 14. Although over a third of the White respondents somewhat agreed that Latinos lack such a motivation, over half of them either strongly or moderately disagreed. Nonetheless, about a third of the Black respondents questioned Latinos' will power to get out of poverty and either somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement.

[Insert Figures 16 and 17 here.]

The next two figures once again use the same introductory protocol as the previous figures and ask respondents about their agreement with the following statement:

The next questions ask for your opinions about the reasons for racial inequality. I’m going to mention several reasons that are given for why (GROUP) people have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people. I’d like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each reason I mention.

Most (GROUP)s don’t speak standard English well.

With respect to Blacks and their ability to speak standard English (Figure 16), well over half of each of the three groups of respondents either strongly or moderately disagreed with the statement. As we might expect, the greatest percentage of Blacks – about 35% -- strongly disagreed. Latinos were not too far behind in strongly disagreeing that Blacks do not speak standard English, with about a third of them saying so. Whites were more likely to disagree moderately rather than strongly with the statement. On the other hand, well over a third of Whites expressed modest agreement with the statement. Just under a third of both Blacks and Latinos also somewhat agreed that Blacks fail to speak proper English. Very few of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

Figure 17 is distinctive in that of almost all of the questions we have examined there is a consensus among Black, Latino, and White respondents in their assessment of a group. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents of each group either somewhat or strongly agreed that Latinos do not speak standard English – a finding that probably is the result of Black and White
acceptance of a common stereotype about Latinos and of Latino self-criticism. Here, we see Blacks buying into some of the stereotypical attitudes about Latinos.

[Insert Figures 18 and 19 here.]

The final four figures examine the second aspect of our framework, namely respondents’ attitudes towards policy designed to address inequality and other groups’ right to benefit from such policy. Figures 18 and 19 examine the following question:

Now I have some questions about what you think about the fairness of certain policies. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should receive special job training and educational assistance. Others say that it is unfair to give these groups special job training and educational assistance. What about you? Do you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose special job training and educational assistance for (GROUP)?

In responding to the question when it was asked about Blacks (Figure 18), Black, Latino, and White respondents generally favored these programs in assisting Blacks. Over 80% of Blacks, about 70% of Latinos, and about 60% of Whites favored these programs. Nearly equal percentages of Whites – about 20% -- either opposed them or neither favored or opposed them. About a fifth of Latinos neither favored nor opposed these programs for Blacks. Figure 19 also showed general support for employment training and educational assistance for Latinos. Nearly 80% of Latinos favored these programs for Latinos, while about 70% of Blacks and just under 60% of Whites felt similarly. Once again, about 20% of Whites opposed them and an equal percentage neither favored nor opposed them. The interesting result here is the general consensus among Blacks and Latinos in their support of employment training and education aid for both groups.

Finally, Figures 20 and 21 examine the following question:

Some people feel that because of past disadvantages, there are some groups in society that should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that it is unfair to give these groups special preferences. What about you? Do you

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5 We recoded the available responses to these questions into three categories: oppose, neither oppose nor favor, and favor.
strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose, or strongly opposed special preferences in hiring and promotion to (GROUP)\(^6\)

What is striking about both figures is the general consensus among Blacks and Latinos in their support of special preferences in hiring and promotion for their groups in contrast to the opposition among Whites to them. Well over 60% of Blacks favored these hiring and promotion preferences for Blacks, joined by over 40% of the Latino respondents. Though they did not sustain a similar level of support for these preferences when the question was asked about Latinos, nearly half of the Black respondents nonetheless supported them for Latinos as well. Over 50% of Latinos favored these preferences for their group. However, about a third of them neither favored nor opposed employment-related preferences for either Latinos or for Blacks. Half of the White respondents, on the other hand, opposed these preferences for both Blacks and Latinos. And about a third of them neither favored nor opposed them for either group.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

What really stands out in this analysis is the apparent consensus among both Blacks and Latinos in their support for such policies as affirmative action, job training, and educational assistance. Yet this seeming general agreement between the groups stands in the face of negative attitudes that each group subscribes to in evaluating the other group. Many Latinos appear to have a rather negative perspective towards Blacks — one that even exceeds the unflattering views of many Whites towards Blacks. Substantial percentages of Latino respondents expressed that Blacks are unintelligent, prefer to be on welfare, are hard to get along with, and have less motivation to lift themselves out of poverty. Yet, many Latinos also tended to regard their own group in a less than positive manner, believing that many members of their group prefer to be on welfare, for example. Blacks, on the other hand, were generally positive in their assessments of Latinos, even to such a degree that they disagreed that Latinos

\(^6\) We recoded the available responses to these questions into three categories: oppose, neither oppose
lacked the motivation to progress economically at greater percentages than Latinos did for themselves. While these analyses suggest that these attitudes might stand in the way of the potential coalition-building that could occur between Blacks and Latinos, further analysis is necessary in order to understand better the bases of these attitudes and the general policy consensus between Blacks and Latinos.


Figure 1

Whites Intelligent or Unintelligent

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Figure 2

Blacks Intelligent or Unintelligent

Figure 3

Latinos Intelligent or Unintelligent

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Figure 4

Whites Are Self-Supporting or Prefer Welfare

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.
Blacks Are Self-Supporting or Prefer Welfare

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality,
the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Latinos Are Self-Supporting or Prefer Welfare

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality,
the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.
Figure 7

Whites Are Easy or Hard to Get Along With

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality,
the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Figure 8

Blacks Are Easy or Hard to Get Along With

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality,
the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.
Figure 9

Latinos Are Easy or Hard to Get Along With

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Figure 10

Racial Discrimination -- Blacks

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Figure 11

Racial Discrimination -- Latinos

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Figure 12

Less In-Born Ability to Learn -- Blacks

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the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Figure 13

Less In-Born Ability to Learn -- Latinos

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the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.
Figure 14

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

No Motivation or Will Power to Pull -- Blacks

Figure 15

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.
Figure 16

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Does Not Speak Standard English -- Blacks

Figure 17

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.
The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Figure 18
Favor Job Training and Educational Assistance for Blacks

Figure 19
Favor Job Training and Educational Assistance for Latinos
Figure 20

Favor Special Preferences in Hiring for Blacks

The 1992-94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality,
the Ford and Russell Sage Foundations.

Figure 21

Favor Special Preferences in Hiring for Latinos

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