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INTRODUCTION

During the last seven years there has been a significant shift to the right in the ideological perspectives of American political institutions and behavior. Despite some inconsistencies, the direction is clear. The term "moderate" has acquired a conservative meaning, and liberals have been split into neo-liberal and neo-conservative camps. At this moment American society is informally declaring that it is not committed to achieving the goal of equal outcomes long espoused by a mainly liberal national political and institutional system.

The shift to the right is working changes on traditional black ideological perspectives, both among blacks and between black and white groups. The voices that in the past spoke for black interests, whether they came from black or white groups, no longer effectively present a clear or compelling vision for how we progress towards a just society. The lack of a coherent progressive ideology or voice is evident among blacks and whites. There is division and a lack of momentum. One result is a schism in the black community that has resulted in a loss of influence upon national policy. Blacks must articulate a new vision, must formulate new and progressive approaches that respond to the current social and political realities.

The American people in general, and certainly black Americans, are not particularly ideological. There is no strong passion for ideological positions in this country as there is in some European countries and in other parts of the world. Historical evidence supports this assessment. How else, for example, could a socialist be elected and re-elected as mayor of a large city, Burlington, in the rural and conservative state of Vermont? How could Massachusetts at once support arch-liberal Ted Kennedy and arch-conservative Ed King? Finally, how could conservative Ronald Reagan be elected president by the majority of voters in 49 states when only a minority of those voters identify themselves as conservative and most disagree with him on major issues in economic and social policy?

This evidence is not to suggest that Americans do not have points of view. They have "informal ideologies," for example, about the role of government versus other institutions or the extent to which government should be active in promoting social goals. But Americans are not passionate in those beliefs and are not bothered by inconsistencies between stated views and actions.

Does ideology in fact make a difference? Since our democracy has survived and prospered, and since blacks have moved steadily if not fully toward freedom under both nominally liberal and nominally conservative leadership, does it really matter that there is a certain raggedness and inconsistency in our belief systems?

I will argue in this essay that point of view is helpful in establishing political voice. Ideology is a definition of a group's perspectives, desires, and aspirations in relation to the rest of society and to other groups. Ideology reflects a position on questions regarding the relationship between state action and political, economic, and social outcomes. "Voice" is the translation of this ideology into political behaviors, positions on issues, coalitions, etc.

The process by which competing interests are resolved is politics. The only people in a society who are really non-ideological and who need no separate "voice" are those who have no interests aside from the common indivisible interest of the society. There are, in fact, few such people in America. Groups by definition have interests different from the society at large, and most Americans have membership in such groups. American history is a history of various interests being forwarded. Politics without ideology (voice) is not likely to be successful because it will not lead consistently and efficiently toward satisfying group interests in relation to those of the larger society.

In this paper, I will further argue that blacks are in a state of disarray regarding the voice with which they speak to each other and to the larger society. National black politics is neither efficient nor effective in articulating or advancing blacks'

claims for equality in the larger society where elements still resist such claims. As we move towards 1988, this situation threatens to become even more serious as various other groups jockey for the inclusion of their agenda in both the Republican and Democratic platforms. While debate rages about whether American society is aligning with the right -- turning away from equality as a goal -- blacks are not involved in the debate, are not active in making the case for their interests.

Of course, this has not always been the case. Early in this century, blacks such as DuBois and Washington presented voices that offered alternatives for blacks. Others -- from Garvey to Malcolm to King to Carmichael -- also offered coherent perspectives for social and political action. They generated great debates, and they also generated institutions and movements that shaped the politics of their day.

Presently, the civil rights movement is dead; there is no national movement or forum. Even though the organizations that were once active are still in place, they are struggling to survive and to defend past gains rather than breaking new ground. Prominent black leaders are mainly politicians grounded in local constituencies who, if prominent nationally, have become so because they serve a broader than racial interest. The care and concern of blacks was once at the top of the nation's agenda and was in the stewardship of a single-minded black leadership, but this leadership is now scattered and scrambling for attention in a nation increasingly unwilling to take it seriously.

I sense today that we have politics without the analysis of perspectives that should precede it. Political and policy debates are strategic and in reaction rather than proactive and enlightening. More importantly, there is a little formal communication within the black community about positions on the great issues of the day.

The absence of voice arising out of this lack of communication, as well as that resulting from real or imagined conflicts of interest, reflect a critical problem. The

virtual absence of blacks in the intellectual debates defining or redefining the contours of America's public policy means the future is being decided with little black input. And what input there is is not being sifted through the screen of interests within the black community. Unable to rely any longer upon the power of liberalism that benefited them in the past, blacks must develop a voice of their own that correctly represents them on a national level.

THE RIGHTWARD DRIFT AND CIVIL RIGHTS

For the last forty years this nation has enacted policies generally viewed as liberal, though sometimes reluctantly and often without passion. During this time the national government expanded the scope of services, regulations, and activities. The goal was to reduce differences between groups or regions and to protect individuals from social misfortunes, the economy, even their own personal behavior. Ending discrimination, if not the fostering of equality, was a central goal.

The origin of this struggle for group improvement, for advancing the general welfare, for balancing liberty and equality, is as old as the Constitution; but it was not consistently pursued until the administrations of Franklin Roosevelt put executive leadership, legislation, and regulatory muscle into the service of these goals. Since that time --between the Great Depression and 1980, under presidents who were both Democrat and Republican -- the federal span of activist public policy grew steadily.

Blacks benefited substantially from this expansion in government. Indeed much of the expansion between 1960 and 1980 was directly related to the claims on government by blacks and their supporters advocating greater civil rights and economic justice.

During this period there was a substantial transformation in this country, the details of which I will explore a little later. Suffice it to say at this point that under this expansive federal role, the one-third of the nation's ill-housed, ill-fed, and

unemployed that Roosevelt observed in 1932 was dramatically reduced. The great differences between the North and South were substantially reduced. The modernization of the South and the development of the West proceeded at a rapid pace, and America's place in the world, while interrupted by such misadventures as the war in Vietnam, expanded substantially.

America generated a surplus that was shared with the world at large and which contributed to making the least well off in this country better off. While the poor were still with us in the 1980s, their numbers were reduced by half compared to the pre-welfare era.

Since the late 1970s, and especially in the 1980s, a variety of events have combined to shift white public opinion toward the right and away from civil rights support. What are some of the features of this trend?

Since the mid-70s our society has been aging. A society that seemed to be dominated by youth in the 60s and early 70s is increasingly dominated by baby boom adults. In contrast to their parents and grandparents who experienced the Depression and World War II and who wanted the government to provide security against the vagaries of the market and to help their children move into a secure place in the middle class, this current young adult group takes a different view. The present concern is for consolidating middle-class status, for increasing wealth and opportunity in a competitive context. This trend is inconsistent with the strong redistributive ethic that ran through American politics.

The young middle-class population has two principal traits that are important for understanding the rightward shift. First, their education and training support the domination of ideas and analysis over populist or liberal sentiment, those romantic feelings based on a sense of solidarity among the oppressed or the aggrieved. The young middle class brings a mind set of technical rationality to the formation of political perspectives. Few in this group ever experienced poverty or

the fears associated with it. Theirs was a relatively comfortable life, and they have had education and experience that shows them the possibilities of increasing that comfort. Compared to earlier generations, they have obtained status and comfort without much blood or sweat, and they believe, subliminally at least, that everyone can obtain it. While there have been economic downturns (three recessions in the last 10 years, for example) and some marginal losses in real income, the safety net for the middle class is a tight mesh through which few middle-class people fall.

The young middle class is suspicious of sentimentality and of the political strategies and appeals based upon it, strategies and appeals like those that were dominant in their parents' era. Tip O'Neill is a great reminder of what they don't want. George Bush and Ronald Reagan look like the boss they want to please--a boss they respect even if they don't agree with him on some issues. Many young people don't remember Kennedy or King, and they view the 1960s as an over-romanticized, chaotic, and unsettling era they do not want to repeat. Vietnam and a poorer international competitive position crippled the image of "America the Strong." The social problems aggressively attacked in the 1960s are still with us. The young are cynical about what is possible and who is responsible.

The second aspect of this change in the middle class is the increasing amount of competition its members face. This is not only competition for the opportunities, which while substantial are not unlimited given this large cohort of baby boomers. The competition is real, economic recovery notwithstanding. The brightest have been successful at competition and are at a point now where they want to consolidate and compound their winnings, not reduce, share, or trivialize them. This competition further reduces sentimentality and altruism.

There are two other societal trends that help explain the shift to the right: economic restructuring and demographic change. The economic restructuring that has occurred over the last twenty years is characterized by the decline of the heavy

industrial and unionized sectors, by the rise of small business, high tech, service and professional occupations, and the organizations that support them. Deficits, trade imbalance, and manufacturing decline underscore the frailties in the economy. Career advancement is less certain for many, and the chance to advance as fast as their parents and to obtain as much cannot be taken for granted.

There has been an increase in the professional and managerial class. While in many cases these workers are not paid more than the mature working class, they are exposed to a different set of values--values that are ideologically opposite to those of their parents, who saw workers as a class of people who were obliged to struggle against the bosses. The bosses are now heroes, not villains. This is a major, if as yet inexplicit, shift in our society.

Economic restructuring and demographic change have combined to change dramatically the character of the liberal alliance that had been influential in recent decades. Unions are weaker, more suspect; the family farmer has virtually disappeared; the black population is scattered over many more states and concentrated within the larger cities, not the suburbs where most of the new middle-class population grew up and resides.

Old ethnic and immigrant groups have been assimilated and have moved away from the urban core. The shared interests and shared plight on a common turf (the city) that characterized traditional political organizations and unions no longer applies. Today individuals are in a position to be and are encouraged to be far more independent in their judgments and their alliances. They rely less on gatekeepers, on opinion leaders, on moral arbiters. Fewer institutions manage their relationship to the larger society. It is now "in" to be an Independent rather than a Democrat or Republican.

As these developments occurred, blacks shared in some of them and not others. Economic restructuring has been a major factor in the advancement of some

blacks and the falling behind of others. The black middle class has grown in an expanded industrial and service economy, but the number of unemployed blacks has grown still more rapidly as that economy shifted from low-skilled jobs. The result is the evolution of an unemployable "underclass" of the permanently poor, even as a black middle class emerges. Yet middle-class blacks remain stalwarts in the liberal alliance that is under siege from the right. Blacks are also beginning to be affected by the dominance of ideas over sentiment and indeed that shift explains, in part, the growing schism in the black community that I will discuss below.

The increasing competition in society has also affected the black community by raising tensions between black and white peers in professional and work environments over such issues as affirmative action and seniority. While whites are rushing to assert independence and eschewing "special interests" in their personal politics, blacks continue to feel obliged (but not without increasing dissent and personal tension) to continue reliance on race politics--a political stance that says blacks should reflect solidarity around the race issue to the substantial exclusion of other issues.

These trends at least partially explain the rightward political movement. How are these sentiments organized in political terms, how have they changed, and where do blacks stand with respect to them?

THE NATURE OF IDEOLOGY

In speaking of ideology I have several specifics in mind. I am interested in attitudes concerning the role of government, interested to what extent racial interests are included in government policy. I am also interested in the extent to which the complex interaction between race, class, and other features is addressed. I am interested in the extent to which the public process is open and the degree to which democratic values prevail. I will look at attitudes towards justice and the extent to which economic injustices, pure market outcomes, are accepted.

Finally, I am interested in how the conflict between liberty and equality is resolved. This is the question of the extent to which individuals are free to pursue their own interests and to enjoy their own winnings (liberty) versus the extent to which public policy intervenes on behalf of the less well off, the vulnerable, or the public generally (equality).

When we look at the major ideological perspectives on these several dimensions, we find substantial shifts among moderates and liberals to more explicitly conservative notions. Those shifts have important meaning for blacks.

For most blacks there is a clear starting point on each of these questions. Blacks have traditionally assumed that government would play a substantial role in society and that the federal government's intervention on their behalf was more dependably favorable and subject to their influence than state and local intervention. They depended on the federal government to protect their particular interest, mainly the reduction of segregation, racial inequality, and discrimination, through civil rights legislation, in particular, and through legislation in other areas such as social welfare and administrative regulations.

Blacks have traditionally viewed justice as a first obligation of government and believed that economic injustice without mitigation is unacceptable. Government responsibility in this regard was to protect individuals from private or market outcomes that operated to sustain or increase racial inequality. Blacks have typically experienced liberty negatively, as reinforcing or increasing their inequality, as when its arguments are used to maintain segregated neighborhoods and work places or to support discrimination in public or business settings.

Blacks have traditionally aligned themselves with the politicians or parties that best reflected these activist points of view. This has generally meant the Democratic party since Franklin Roosevelt, but in particular states and particular elections, there have been exceptions. Even black conservatives accepted this broad view, saving

their conservative views for strictly economic, religious, or other nonrace related matters.

Most politicians, parties, and ideological representatives declare that they are non-racist. They claim to promote opportunity for all, and they claim that they abhor discrimination. All points of view suggest that progress for blacks has been made and argue that their point of view will speed progress forward.

Black conservatives have emerged recently to join in the debate, but they are out of step with black traditionalists, even conservative black traditionalists, who are for the most part liberal on matters related to race. These new conservatives, speaking largely from white institutions and isolated from blacks and from any political accountability, find suspicious ears in the black community. Black radicals who call for an end to the capitalist system are and have been even less regarded.

It is perhaps important to note that some of the difficulty we have noted above and will be exploring more in the sections below arise from the changing nature of the status of the "black problem" in America. We have moved from a problem that had at its core legal barriers to participation to problems that have economic inequality at their core. Fighting racial barriers that were specifically illegal was easy compared to challenging the distribution of socioeconomic outcomes that are not constitutionally guaranteed. A major reason for the evolving non-role of blacks in American politics must be attributed to this change and the failure of black politics and politics in general to factor in the different issues involved.

VARIETIES OF BELIEF

In the sections below I shall discuss the varieties of liberal, conservative, and radical points of view and the issues raised in each of them on the matter of race. In undertaking this, however, there are some caveats. The first is that any attempt at cataloging these perspectives runs the risk of oversimplifying. Simplifications are

unavoidable in any kind of discourse, and, therefore, we ought not back away; simplification is also a useful foil for complexity.

As I noted in the beginning Americans are not temperamentally ideological; there are within most Americans some points of view that are inconsistent with a dominant perspective. It is also true that not everyone acts on their beliefs. We are often constrained by institutional, contextual, or personal affection. Whites may be hostile to aspirations of blacks considered as a group but not to the aspirations of individual blacks or of blacks they know or come to know well. Those of us who grew up in the South are well aware of these contradictions.

Liberals

The liberal tradition goes back to the age of reform that had its origins in the nineteenth century, flourished in the progressive era, and triumphed with the election of President Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. The liberal ideology is founded on the belief that humans are perfectible and that a more perfect and humane society can be achieved. Liberals believe they understand society and understand how to make society more perfect. Blacks have been the beneficiaries of liberal reform attention.

This notion of the good society is best obtained, according to the liberal point of view, through a strong central government and through regulation of the economy and such areas of personal behavior as are deemed important for the general good of society, especially for the good of those less well off. Liberals accept the market, accept capitalism, but not how it sometimes works imperfectly for protecting or uplifting the poor. They acknowledge that the market will not eliminate poverty, but they feel that redistribution can substantially reduce the suffering in society and make it possible for most people to gain access to the expanding economic pie that the free market promises. They favor government

policies that are compensatory or partly redistributive as an antidote to economic injustice. Perfect equality was never a liberal goal.

Liberals have advocated intervention by both public and private spheres. The liberal view is that government should act positively to achieve outcomes rather than to simply set a tone. On busing, for example, even though it violates the liberty they espouse, liberals believe that the result to be achieved (integrated education) justifies government action. They have a similar view with respect to group versus individual treatment. Given their belief in the possibility of a more perfect society, they are inclined to promote public policy that benefits groups rather than individuals.

Given this view, the liberal attitude towards blacks is not hard to detect. It is reflected in the use of the central government and other institutions to benefit blacks as a group, to produce results rather than simply opportunities for results. The tactical approach of the liberals has been to create and support various interest groups and special organizations that are a part of their coalition. Such groups exist for blacks as for labor, public education, health, progressive farming, and other interests. Liberals have never been a homogeneous group, but rather a collection of special interest groups that had in common only the notion of actively creating a better society. Inconsistencies between the interests of these special groups were sublimated, and their overarching goal of a just society was emphasized.

In their treatment of blacks, liberals tend to be democratic, but they reserve for themselves the status of senior partners in the institutions and movements. In some cases paternalism characterizes the liberal's relationship with blacks. The pattern is present in personal relationships and most especially in institutional ones. While liberalism was the dominant influence between 1930 and 1980, liberals have never really been in full command or confident about their power. Even during the depths of the Depression, liberals were on the defensive. This was in large part

camouflage their social engineering motives and adopt some of the platitudes of the conservatives.

In recent years, as the conservative assault has broadened and increased, liberals have been even more on the defensive. Their confidence has sagged under the weight of several electoral losses going back to 1968. No liberal has been elected president since Johnson, and some of the more dependable and eloquent liberal politicians have been defeated. Many surviving liberals are taking steps to the center of the political spectrum.

Black voices in liberal circles have been mainly political rather than intellectual. As liberals have had to face challenges to their point of view and policies, blacks have lent political and moral support but little in the way of revision or revitalization. In the last five years, during which many books, studies, and papers have been written as part of the public policy debate, there have been very few black entries. It is as though blacks are the non-commissioned officers in the liberal core. This second-class citizenship, this intellectual isolation, is a source of real tension, especially to young blacks, even though the "black power" rhetoric that first gave voice to it has subsided.

Equality was well served in the years of liberal dominance. Hardly anyone would dispute that progress has been made in bringing blacks into the mainstream. But success has been far from complete. Many of the problems that we have always complained about are still with us. In recent years the tensions and conflicts among various liberal interest groups have dominated political dialogue and public discourse: disagreements on affirmative action, seniority, community control, Democratic party rules. This has engendered a good deal of disenchantment among those who still profess to be liberals, and it has also led to the emergence of both neo-liberals and neo-conservatives. The disenchantment with the shifting agenda

and the disaffection (or perceived disaffection) of once-faithful friends is the source of much anguish in the black and liberal communities.

While some liberals have sought to reassess their policy perspective in light of new realities and have as a result come up with new proposals that are still consistent with the liberal ideology (Governor Cuomo may be considered an example in this regard), many others have taken detours from the traditional liberal path. Hence we have the emergence of the neo-liberals and the neo-conservatives.

The Neo-Liberals

Neo-liberals are liberals who took a look at the traditional approaches, alliances, and perspectives on public policy issues that they regarded as automatic and obligatory and decided that they should be subject to critical review. Charles Peters, author of Neo-Liberal Manifesto writes:

> ...if neoconservatives are liberals who took a critical look at liberalism and decided to become conservatives, we are liberals who took the same look and decided to retain our goals but to abandon some of our prejudices. We still believe in liberty and justice and a fair chance for all, in the mercy for the afflicted and help for the down and out. But we no longer favor unions and big government or are opposed to military and big business. Indeed for our solutions to work we have come to distrust all automatic responses–liberal and conservative.

The neo-liberals have some points of view that put them at odds with the liberal mainstream and with blacks. For example, they do not favor industrial policy that seeks to revive or protect the old industries (in which lots of blacks work and to which access has been recent), but rather neo-liberals seek to promote growth-oriented entrepreneurship and small business, not simply to shuffle assets as in speculation, mergers, and the like. They believe in being pro-defense but not pro-foreign intervention, and they accept social program cuts as necessary and acceptable in the current effort to control deficits. They favor the use of economic sanctions but not military intervention. They oppose protectionist policies. They

are against big labor and big government but they are not opposed to unions or government intervention.

They believe that government should be strong but not big, that government should figure out what government should do and do those things efficiently and well. They believe that government should avoid those things it cannot do effectively even if attention to them is clearly merited. They are more excited by government as public entrepreneur and regulator of incentives for development than as big-muscled social engineer.

Neo-liberals specifically reject "special interests" and favor government as an agent of the public interest. They regard as "special interests" those groups that make up the liberal alliance --unions, gay rights, the education lobby, trade protectionists, etc. Blacks resent the "special interest" prejudice as it is attached to civil rights and anti-poverty activists, arguing that seeking justice is hardly the same thing as seeking a tax loophole, exclusive subsidies, trade protection, or other such economic benefits at the public's expense.

While neo-liberals assert they have an interest in enforcing civil rights laws, they do not believe that they have an obligation to accept demands for equal outcomes. They do not regard equal outcomes as fundamentally or reasonably achievable, and they are committed only to making opportunity equally available to the extent possible and to do so by "expanding the pie."

They do not believe that all criminals can be rehabilitated or that all kids should go to Harvard. And they claim that they can figure out how to make choices. They believe, with respect to criminals for example, since you can't rehabilitate them, that you should at least lock them up. While they favor educational opportunities, they are not inclined to undo the elitist bias reflected in many educational systems and policies.

Neo-liberals are empathetic with social issues raised by conservatives where liberals often are not. For example, they oppose mandatory prayer in schools but they might not object to a nonsectarian "moment of silence." They favor desegregation but do not feel obliged to support busing. In short they want to update liberalism, making it appeal to the young middle-class constituency. They are not sentimental about, nor defensive about, having abandoned the old liberal stand on the side of the downtrodden.

While some of these departures from traditional views are matters of degree and emphasis, some shake what might be called liberal articles of faith. Neo-liberals fought liberals on aid to Chrysler. Neo-liberals are more positive on tuition tax credits. They are not as protectionist as liberal union advocates. Gary Hart, their presidential standard-bearer in 1984, got few endorsements from traditional liberal or black groups, who considered his technical, rational approaches cold. Bradley, Gephardt, Babbitt, and Nunn face similar skepticism.

Neo-liberals do not have a party. Indeed they do not have a movement. They are a loose collection of journalists, academics, writers, and politicians. Unlike their traditional liberal colleagues, they place a great deal of emphasis on rational analysis to help them address public policy questions. They like "new ideas," by which they mean policies that define a role for government that is effective, unsentimental, and based on leveraging constructive individual and collective motives. For them the government should support entrepreneurship, competition, and partnership as effective tools to help those in need.

There's a hard edge -- some might say arrogance -- to their positioning. They seem uncomfortable dealing with racial issues and in working with or being politically collegial with those who don't share their middle-class background. Indeed blacks are suspicious of neo-liberals because neo-liberals object to "special interests" and to traditional litmus tests blacks might apply. It is not surprising,

therefore, that between the two leading white Democratic contenders, blacks overwhelmingly preferred Walter Mondale, the traditional liberal, to Gary Hart, the neo-liberal. Among current contenders, Dukakis, Simon, and Biden -- along with Jackson -- should get a sympathetic audience from blacks.

For blacks, looking at neo-liberals, the issue is not simply the neo-liberal view on specific policy issues. The black middle class may even find they agree with them in many particulars. The concern is on other matters:

- Neo-liberals are often unwilling to give a preamble of commitment to equality or equal outcomes as a goal for government policy;
- Neo-liberals prefer attention to the middle class and not the underclass;
- Neo-liberals prefer analysis to sentiment, which effectively marginalizes black political expression that is not analytically presented;
- Neo-liberals express abhorrence for "special interests," among which are blacks and other liberal support groups; and
- Neo-liberals support entrepreneurship and the private sector and are skeptical of what expanding government can do to improve society.

What some middle-class blacks who might share these positions fear is that coalition with the neo-liberals will further divide blacks along class lines and consign the poor blacks to an "underclass" with little power and no effective or competent political allies--black or white. And beyond this, for blacks, there is the question of how and whether neo-liberalism can move from marginalism to the partnership that young blacks insist on as a condition for support. Neo-liberals presently show but limited disposition in this regard.

Neo-liberals are very active in the effort to reorganize the Democratic Party. They may well prevail in shaping the Party to their image. Indeed they believe that the Democratic Party can only succeed if it adopts their point of view and recaptures from Republicans the young white moderates who they believe make up the largest sector in the voting population. Neo-liberals are an ascendant force in the

mainstream of American politics. They view dealing with black aspirations and sentimentality as undesirable and unnecessary. While neo-liberals do not dominate the mainstream of the Democratic Party's organization, that is surely changing in their favor. The issues that divide them from the traditional liberals will be the debate about the direction of the Party for decades to come.

Blacks have yet to develop a response to the neo-liberal challenge or to figure out how to deal with the growing influence of these ideological insurgents. The major battleground to date has been the Democratic Party rules. The class difference between blacks and neo-liberal activists is major, as is the style difference. Blacks have not figured out how to get the neo-liberals attention, what to say to them about programs, about the goals viewed as sacred by blacks and liberals. Recent Democratic victories and Republican weakness give new momentum to the Party. How they get beyond party rules and into substantive platform issues will be an important political drama.

Conservatives

What do conservatives believe? The primary tenet that conservatives bring to the table is the belief in the free market as the primary arbiter of interests, ideas, and values in American society -- and the principal allocator among competing groups. They believe that the market left alone will provide the greatest benefits to the most people. Conservatives favor self-reliance and individual effort rather than group strategies to achieve the benefits of the marketplace.

Where social policy is necessary, they favor attention to individuals and not to groups. In fact, they deplore the idea of group interests. And the treatment of group interest has always been central to blacks. Conservatives also believe that a strong central government is inimical to the interests of the majority. They favor action at the lowest level of government with fewer functions provided at the central or national level. They believe in education, for example, but not that there

be a national standard or that government be obliged to help poor people use education to reduce inequality. They believe that the "bells and whistles" in society are for the private sector and local foundations to address or for individuals to purchase.

They believe in liberty--the idea that people are free to enjoy the benefits of their accumulated wealth and power as well as to be free from government constraint in social affairs. Conservatives believe that these liberties should not be comprised so as to be redistributed to those who have less. They believe in "traditional family values" and that intervention in individual behavior is only justified when that behavior is by its nature evil. Therefore, some conservatives favor government action to prevent abortions because they believe abortion is fundamentally wrong. They do not believe, for example, that segregation is an evil for which busing (a constraint on liberty) ought to be the solution. They believe freedom of choice is adequate to meet the constitutional requirement of equal protection of the law as well as their notion of social responsibility.

In race relations, conservatives believe that government should support equal opportunity but not require or even encourage equal results. They believe the market will determine what the results ought to be and that market generated results ought to be accepted as the most efficient and most fair. Anyone who feels unsatisfied by the market result ought, therefore, by individual action seek to change the results for themselves. Conservatives generally are opposed to policies that are race-conscious, including strong affirmative action plans.

Conservatives argue that social programs sponsored by liberals substantially failed and interfered with the incentives blacks would otherwise have had to take advantage of market opportunities and incentives. In that vein, they conclude that the programs were harmful, or wrong, or both. They feel that the economic tide

will, in fact, lift all boats and that for blacks to get into the mainstream is their only opportunity for equality.

Conservatives would argue that discrimination is not a serious problem, since in the free marketplace discrimination is irrational. Personal preferences, they argue, are acceptable. While conservatism is not by definition racist, it does provide an umbrella under which racial discrimination dressed in institutional rules and personal preference can hide.

A growing number of blacks are articulating conservative points of view. This is new as a journalistic phenomenon but is not new in fact. There has always been a conservative streak among blacks. What sets the traditional black conservatives apart from newer ones such as Thomas Sowell, Glenn Loury, and Walter Williams, is the latter group's opposition to certain civil rights laws and their belief that social and economic policy ought not explicitly be designed to reduce racial equality or give special attention to race. They assume what is good for the economy is good for blacks. Indeed black conservatives have become some of the most impassioned critics of race-conscious public policy, including affirmative action. White conservatives and young black conservatives have joined to argue that advocacy on a racial basis and on the basis of group membership is fundamentally wrong.

Of course there are varieties of conservative belief. At the one extreme, libertarians argue that to pursue the goals described above, government ought to do little if anything beyond national defense and public health and safety. More moderate conservatives, on the other hand, accept that government has some responsibility in social areas, as when the market clearly falls to such an extent that there is a threat to social stability. All conservatives believe that stability is a requirement for justice, not that justice is a requirement for stability, as liberals argue.

Neo-Conservatives

Neo-conservatives are former liberals who looked at the liberal political traditions and chose to become conservative rather than becoming neo-liberal. They reject the core of liberal beliefs. They react to many of the same issues and concerns that prompted neo-liberals to make their switch. Examples of neo-conservatives include: Irving Kristol (editor of Public Interest), Nathan Glazer (Affirmative Discrimination), and Edward Banfield (The Unheavenly City). The neo-conservatives are for the most part intellectuals. They are in research institutions and universities. They are mostly older men. Some are former radicals as well as former liberals.

They share neo-liberal reactions to the automatic sentiments of liberals and the conservative's respect for the power and fairness of the market as social arbiter and economic allocator. They also believe strongly in traditional social values. They interpret the shortcomings of social programs and the rise of the black middle class as proof that the traditional liberal approach to social engineering is fundamentally wrong, ineffective (for those still in need), and unnecessary (for blacks who are now middle class).

Unlike neo-liberals, neo-conservatives do not have an activist view or an alternative to the free market route to the more perfect society or the more just society. Neo-conservatives view society as fundamentally just. From their point of view, further perfection is not likely to result from social engineering. James Wilson's Crime and Human Nature, for example, ascribes to the nature of criminals the behavior liberals have blamed on society or our imperfect institutions. This neo-conservative critique of criminal justice concludes that much social and criminal justice policy ought to be scrapped. Similar critiques have been made in the welfare and education areas.

They react angrily, like the scorned parent, to what they consider to be the excesses of the 60s and 70s, particularly to the race-related concessions and preferences. They have a high regard for culture, intelligence, self-reliance, civility, and good manners as evidence of mature behavior and responsible political stewardship. Unlike neo-liberals they feel no obligation to search for a means to accommodate the democratic process to those who have no such background or standards. For the neo-conservatives the vote and related political institutions are sufficient forms of access.

Unlike neo-liberals, who are essentially positivists and rational analysts, neo-conservatives are in simple terms fed up with social engineering. They are uncomfortable with civil rights and racial advocacy, and indeed many of them have made declarations that have in effect trivialized race. For example, Patrick Moynihan, more than a decade ago, suggested that the issue of race would benefit from a period of "benign neglect." Nathan Glazer has described many of the traditional social programs advocated by liberals and blacks to be clear examples of "affirmative discrimination" in addition to being misguided and counterproductive.

Not only are neo-conservatives uncomfortable with current civil rights issues, blacks are especially uncomfortable with neo-conservatives. Indeed they find neo-conservatives far more unapproachable and insensitive on matters of race than the traditional conservatives, who often can be convinced to be race interventionists for a variety of reasons (related to "social stability" or "corporate responsibility").

Neo-conservatives are disenchanted and unsympathetic with racial and social activism. There is little hope that they will seek partnership with the black masses. They are not key actors in many institutions and, with few exceptions, they are "national critics," political actors without any base at the state or local level.

While neo-conservatives are not politically active as a group, their influences should not be underestimated. They write books and appear on television. They

are highly literate and as such are effective in the media. Especially important is the fact that they create "ideas in good currency" and provide analysis that has the effect of giving voice to ideas that the political conservatives and neo-liberal actors share. The influence of Charles Murray's Losing Ground is illustrative in this regard. They are also influential in the institutions that play an important role in society, especially the university.

The fact that blacks are not involved in these discussions and are not present when the arguments are made in scholarly and institutional settings means that the social policy revisions in government are often developed without black input at critical stages. Congress, which used to be a forum for the debate of domestic social policy, has been reduced to a forum for Reagan's fiscal and economic approach to undermining liberal social policy.

Radicals

My observations about radicals will not be extensive or comprehensive. This is not to suggest that they are not deserving of some discussion or that their contrasting beliefs are not important. It's just that they are not now nor have they ever been in the political mainstream. Unlike European countries where the ideological fringe often has influence and presence, this is not the case here.

The various radical critiques are important, however. For example, among all the ideologies, radicals have cogent, if not always compelling, explanatory models that speak to the old and continuing sources of inequalities between the races. Radicals generally argue against concentrated private power and wealth, lack of public control, repressive restrictions on self- determination and self-definition. While they are often naive about what can be done in various areas of public policy, their diagnostic insights are sharp.

They argue that New Deal liberalism and more recent liberal policies failed and that the market has failed to bring about the economic redistribution that is

their definition of social justice. They believe that the growth of the middle class has made revolutionary and radical change less likely because the constituency for redistribution has eroded. They contend that mainstream efforts to bring about change, such as bargaining, marginal shifts-in-share of resources, and pressure group politics, will fail in the future as they have in the past. They are perhaps most critical of liberals because they argue that liberals are fundamentally cowards, recognizing and agreeing with the socio-political dynamics that radicals assert but unwilling to accept the implications of this knowledge.

However well worked out, the radical perspective has been marginal in the practice of public management. For that reason they generally have not had a central place in American politics and have not attracted substantial black interest. In the current ideological turmoil that seems to be even more the case. The declining influence of radicals (black or white) in the black community is not surprising. Black intellectuals have long been disillusioned with radicals, who they believe used blacks as victims on display and had more interest in the class than the racial aspects of inequality. Since class inequality is still the principal interest of radicals, there is likely to remain a significant distance between blacks and radicals.

The "black power movement" was a case where blacks sought to make their own radical critique of American and black society. It is not a coincidence that a major part of this effort was that it sought to present a black radical critique separate from the white radical perspective. The movement was successful in this regard and had the impact of changing a generation of young blacks by opening up for critical examination many of the assumptions, symbols, and ideas about American society and themselves that blacks had simply adopted uncritically from the liberal tradition. Because it largely addressed issues only touched by the civil rights movement, the black power movement was important not so much for its

political impact as much as for its creation of a disposition among blacks to acknowledge the importance of the questions we propose in this essay.

The black power movement succeeded in other ways. Out of it came a new generation of political and community leaders. These leaders were different from the traditional race politicians. They were more confident and less compromising; but insecurities and confusion remained to a troublesome degree. The black power movement has come to an end; and the end was premature.

The movement was radical mainly for the idea that blacks could demand self-determination; the movement was not able to deal with all the applications or implications of a black perspective. It did not leave behind a significant political institution that could perform the functions of a political party, interest group, or social movement, nor did it produce an effective and enduring progressive voice or leadership at the national level. It produced no model for relating to existing political parties, for identifying and articulating issues, for supporting candidates and choosing among them, or for managing accountability. It provided no way to interpret and adjust to the changing political and social realities. When critics comment about lack of institutional political sophistication among blacks, they are substantially correct.

It is true that a new generation of politicians -- Mayors Young, Goode, etc. -- have succeeded. But they were bogged down in their own personal and political balancing act -- between the race politics that elected them and the political mainstreams through which they must swim if they are to survive. Jackson is different, but only in the sense that as a national candidate he is reaching for the rainbow and not articulating a voice and developing an institution for black Americans.

What we have tried to show in the sections above is the ideological turmoil in both the national community and in the black community. The turmoil is healthy.

What is unhealthy is the failure of the black community to locate a progressive voice with which to develop an agenda and carry on a dialogue. While the national leaders are coming up with new perspectives about the black community and the problems its faces, the black community is not coming up with alternative or confirming perspectives, is not defending its largely liberal interests against the conservative onslaught and liberal desertion.

Such disarray is not likely to be lost on presidential candidates. They can fail to address black interests by being polite and attentive to symbols and organizing sympathetic blacks. Some candidate will win the black vote but the black presence will be minor even if black votes play a major role. This is a result not lost on the poor who figure the election is not about them anyway.

THE SCHISM IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The failure of voice in the black community is not an academic matter. There is every evidence that we are at one of those critical points in history where we are not clear about what our problems are or how to address them. We are under siege even with respect to past "victories." There are widely divergent suggestions from others about what we should do, and there are discordant demands within the community. Do blacks believe that affirmative action really is a good idea or does it place a stigma on blacks? Is busing an effective way to equalize educational opportunity or would some approach not focusing on integration be better? Should we get "tough" with crime or wait until "causes" are addressed? Does welfare promote "dependency?" What should be done about teen-age pregnancy? About gentrification?

Our leadership seems incapable of mounting either an effective defense or a credible offense. While the old divisions in the black community continue, new divisions are emerging, especially between the interests and perspectives of the expanding black middle class and the even more rapidly expanding "underclass."

History of the Schism

The history of the schism in the black community is tied to changing economic conditions in the country. At the turn of the century, more than 90% of the black population lived in the South. They provided the muscle for the largely unmechanized agrarian system. Starting with the Depression, the old agrarian society went into a steep decline. Mechanization forced many blacks off farms; those who stayed had an increasingly marginal existence.

Starting with the mobilization for World War II, large numbers of blacks headed North. By the end of this exodus (in the mid-1960s), half of the black population lived outside the South, concentrated in two dozen large industrial cities in the North. The move mainly involved low-income blacks with limited education and training. Huge gaps existed between blacks and whites in education. In the last two decades, that gap in education has narrowed considerably, and among younger black families so has the gap in income. Those who made the most progress in this regard became the new black middle class--either by getting a "good job" in unionized industry or by education.

Blacks found cities less effective as engines of opportunity than did those immigrants who moved to American cities in large numbers. The shifting economic structure of the country meant that over time there was a declining number of manufacturing jobs that could provide middle-class status to blacks as it had provided for generations of white working-class families. Increasingly, the city as a lever for upward mobility seemed stuck for all but the well-educated who can take advantage of the growing number of white-collar-job opportunities. When large numbers of young blacks came of age and lower-paid service jobs dominated, the trend set in motion in the 60s became even more apparent in the 80s.

Blacks also found that in cities the opportunities in the public sector were on the decline. The public sector had provided opportunities for some immigrant

groups to gain a foothold in the city and improve their economic status by their demographic and subsequently electoral domination. This was not true for blacks, even though black political control did eventually come to several large cities. But rather than blacks having a substantial share of public sector jobs, they were essentially competing for a share of a shrinking pie.

Finally, because race is a special and indelible mark of oppression, blacks were not able to melt into the urban stew. The mounting racial tension, highlighted by the "unrest" of the 1960s, meant that every effort blacks made to improve their position set them up for conflict with whites who were left behind or who had come to feel entitled to their exclusive but shrinking prerogatives. Jobs that could help the black poor advance were increasingly unavailable over the last 20 years and especially in the most recent years. High rates of unemployment, especially for young black workers, seemed to remain at high levels whatever the state of the economy as a whole.

By 1960 the contours of status differences, blacks versus whites, were already clear. While some cities such as Atlanta, Washington, New York, and Chicago were able to develop a large black middle class that could in fact generate its own growth, this was by far the exception. In no city was the black population like the white population -- mainly middle class. Blacks were more than twice as likely to be poor. Their unemployment rate was at least twice the unemployment rate of whites, regardless of education. By 1980 these contours had hardened, and we began to talk about the black poor not as a fractional phenomenon but as a class -- an "underclass." We had a small but growing group of middle-class blacks who were doing well, and a larger and also growing group of poor blacks who could only make do, if that.

What does it mean when there are significant changes in the two ends of the distribution of families within the black community? I come to the conclusion that

this schism heightens the divergence of interests that the groups have; and this divergence, in addition to producing our blurred policy visions, complicates the search for an articulate and effective progressive voice. We explore these two groups in the sections below.

The Underclass

This group is the approximately one-third of black families who earn less than $10,000 a year. The 18% of black families who earn less than $5,000 are of special concern. Half of this group is not in the job market and, therefore, does not benefit from economic growth. They are, and this is an important part of the definition of underclass, outside of the mainstream. Some do succeed and work their way out of poverty, but this is increasingly the exception.

They are not simple carbon copies of their parents who were typically poor. Each generation is structurally poor for different reasons. The current young adult poor person has education and skills that in another generation would have been sufficient for steady employment and decent pay. But at the same time they had gained a little more education than their parents, their greater education came to count for less.

While the majority of all poor individuals are children, their future turns on the extent to which these youngsters get leverage in terms of educational preparation. They arguably are not getting it in the big city school systems. Racism is partly to blame, but there are economic and perhaps cultural explanations as well. Our efforts at helping the underclass have been substantially unsuccessful in lifting them out of poverty. We have not conquered racism. The economic system reinforces class divisions, and we have been unwilling to devise a cultural technology that all groups, including blacks, could use when facing big obstacles.

This is not to suggest that programs have been unsuccessful generally, as conservative and neo-liberal critics increasingly charge. Many of the families would

be far worse off were the safety net not available; and many presently in the middle class, over the period of a generation, made a movement from the working classes to the middle class or in some cases from the lower class to the middle class as a result of various social programs. In our current policy-bashing frame of mind, we should not forget that no one ever walks out of the ghetto. One is only lifted out or one climbs out.

What is important is that the number of poor blacks continues to expand, and permanence rather than instability characterizes this status. They are increasingly not being given, and to some extent are not taking advantage of, opportunities for upward mobility.

The underclass presents problems in other ways that are of growing concern. Several major cities have had comebacks in terms of job production and economic development. There has been a veritable economic renaissance in major cities such as Boston, New York, San Francisco, etc. "Rust Belt" states such as Ohio and Michigan also show signs of progress. While manufacturing jobs continue to decline, there has been an increase in a variety of other sectors. Some analysts now contemplate labor shortages in some cities. Their studies also show that, so far, little mobility out of poverty has resulted from this economic resurgence. Analyses of job opportunities suggest that blacks are being locked out of the recovery growth at increasing rates; jobs are being taken by process changes and automation, by suburbanites, and in some locations by immigrants. What is left that poor blacks can get are more "dead-end" than the manufacturing jobs that have been lost in recent years--jobs that pay less and offer less hope for mobility.

All of this reinforces the notion of permanence of the black underclass. It also underscores the point that the present crisis of the underclass is not entirely historical but, in important ways, contemporary.

The Black Middle Class

Approximately 18% of black households are middle class. Using the cutoff of $25,000 per year in 1979, this is up from 13% in 1970 and compares with a shift from 31% to 37% for whites in the same time period. The black middle-class population that we are talking about is a working middle class. Only 1% of black families (versus 6% for whites) earn as much as $50,000.

This black middle-class status is disproportionately achieved by having a working spouse and is concentrated in heads-of-household under age forty. Much of this middle class is new, therefore, and arrived through salaried employment in the professions and not self-employment or business enterprise.

There are several points about this group which inform our current debate, and I will discuss them in turn. The first is that historically the black middle class has not been able to be secure in its middle-class status. Unlike middle-class whites whose children are almost all certain to be middle class when they grow up, blacks experience no such certainty. Many older blacks experienced an unstable career trajectory that sometimes included downward mobility or stunted growth. As a result there is concern among the black middle class about how they can secure their own status as well as about how to pass it on to their own children.

This new black middle class has moved to suburbs in the last several years at a greater rate than whites. This, combined with regional mobility, means that a growing physical isolation is developing: the middle class is the suburbs (and middle-class city neighborhoods) and the underclass is the ghetto. The natural alliance cemented by propinquity and kinship is now broken by regional mobility and segregated housing. This segregation makes "us" and "them" easier and more concrete.

There is also within the black middle class a substantial amount of stress. The evidence for this is anecdotal but substantial. The popular black press, once

consumed with interpreting and advocating civil rights and "black power," now focuses on black middle-class family, professional, and business issues -- not just the petty bourgeoisie or "yuppie" issues, but investment, relationships, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

The growth in the status of many young blacks has been so fast that there are serious questions about how to juggle many parts of their life, how to interpret their success, how to feel and act towards the less fortunate of their brethren left behind, and how to deal with complex relationships they have with their white peers and bosses. This stress should not be interpreted as either a sign that they are not capable of managing it or that middle-class whites don't have the same concerns; it is only to suggest that the newness of it requires some attention and makes understandable some of the concerns we hear about the growing overlap of issues between this group and their white peers. When there is overlap, the pull of the two worlds on the individual black is truly powerful.

Another theme in the black press is the anguish over the underclass: how to solve the still serious problems, how to use black institutions which themselves reflect the class issues, how to relate politically and socially to the underclass, and how to protect them from the moral cutbacks they sense among whites. There is sympathy, anger, and embarrassment in good measure, directed both at whites and at their underclass brothers and sisters.

Another point to be made about this group is that they are disproportionately concentrated in the industrial sector and the public sectors where the rate of future job growth is not expected to be substantial. There are relatively few blacks in the middle class who are employed in engineering or technical fields or who are in the executive levels of growth-oriented service or corporate organizations. The question of the opportunity for security and mobility among middle-class blacks depends critically on their moving quickly to consolidate their personal and class

position and to make appropriate lateral and/or vertical exits to more growth-oriented sectors.

Despite the middle-class status, this group is more than twice as likely to experience unemployment as their white peers. While their unemployment rate is not high, typically 5% or so, the fact that it is twice as high as their white peers and that upward mobility is a problem reinforces the point that discrimination and separate treatment are important even at this level.

What is the significance of this class division between black groups compared to a normal difference in perspective and experience between the "haves" and "have nots?" The evidence seems to suggest there is a growing division of interests within a group that traditionally had interests that were indivisible and monolithic. The tradition of solidarity grounded in social victimization was formerly not complicated by class. The objective evidence of class was insignificant compared to the brutal and common victimization as members of a racial group. Both classes now have major concerns that require a different kind of attention. Our language, institutions, and forums do not reflect this fact or facilitate a solution. How is this phenomenon of class schism related to the present political and ideological issues?

There are several areas where these two worlds collide with the larger world of policy politics. The language of that discussion (or the lack of one) and the balancing of interests and advocacy in the black community are themes of this essay. There are issues of public policy where the battle is not only strategic, but also ideological, especially regarding help for the underclass. These issues include: interdependence of interests, the nature of the "safety net," government intervention to promote a class standard (read: middle-class standard), the role of local institutions versus government, spokesmanship for blacks in political and institutional arenas.

First, it is important to acknowledge that the two classes have interdependent interests in more ways than we generally acknowledge. The middle class uses the starkly graphic suffering of the poor to gain benefits from whites that the poor are not in a position to use. It is not a put down to suggest that affirmative action has been most beneficial to the middle-class (and working-class) blacks who were prepared to enter the new doors opened. Except by some quite limited "trickle down" effect, these programs do not help the mobility of the poor. The varying electoral clout of the poor masses is often placed in service of this strategy.

The poor depend on the middle class to work the system for them as well as provide institutional leadership in the communities. A significant proportion of the black middle class works in settings where they can be helpful to the poor provided the resources are in place. These professional blacks are rarely in situations where they fully define the agenda or allocate the resources. They mainly run programs or provide services whose design originates elsewhere. In some settings where black control seems substantial (for example, urban school systems or public housing authorities), the blacks in charge are accountable to bureaucratic or official systems that often make their administration indistinguishable from that of white bureaucrats.

These interdependencies are not fully in effect. The middle class says that the poor don't vote, and the poor say the middle class is out for itself and turns its back on them. There is clearly evidence that both points are in part true and each side offers excuses: the poor say "why vote" and the middle class say the poor won't help themselves and often behave counterproductively.

The second issue is the nature of the "safety net." It goes without saying that the underclass is in need of government benefits -- both for immediate survival and to obtain mobility out of the ghetto. Children, the major beneficiaries (along with the elderly) of social programs, need them merely to survive. Yet we are in a period

where there are serious budget problems and a legislative mandate (Gramm-Rudman-Hollings) to reduce spending over the next several years. Choices will have to be made among existing programs. There is little momentum to launch major new programs. In addition, the Reagan administration has commissioned a major study of the welfare system that may, in fact, force the question more directly than would occur otherwise. What's at stake?

Both the media and political discussion suggest there is a growing doubt among the middle class about the ability of the existing welfare system to do more than maintain the poor in a dependent relationship at the level of survival. There is also a growing view that welfare ought to contain incentives that benefit those who behave in ways conforming to middle-class expectations and deprive those who do not. These are elements of a moral judgment, of a view that welfare ought to be a means to regulate the poor.

This is the opposite direction from the last 20 years of social policy that tried with some success to make public assistance a benefit granted without moral judgment and without penalty for counterproductive behavior. Do you go back to the idea of helping out the good and grateful, or do we continue the idea of not tying assistance to certain behavioral requirements? Workfare is a first approximation of this new direction. In recent years it has gained wide support across the political spectrum. Ten years ago, hardly anyone left of center favored it. This and other policies (proposals for restrictions on unwed mothers, presumptive sentencing, etc.) are now broadly favored even by middle-class blacks and will continue to be a source of division within the black community and between blacks and others.

The third point takes the issue of standards of behavior a step further by asking what standards apply in setting local and institutional policies within communities. Up to now even middle-class blacks have resisted the notion that the

black community should be required to adopt middle-class standards (read: white middle-class standards). While it is never made clear what standards are being talked about, the notion is that there are cultural differences among racial and ethnic groups and that blacks need not make wholesale changes simply to conform. Variety is both acceptable and a statement of group self-determination.

There is now an emerging view, though not a new one, that some of the lower-class black lifestyles are pathological and ought to change. If the black middle class, whose standards are similar to their white peers, begins to share this view, we again have the basis for a conflict in point of view, as well as for a conflict about social policies to follow from it.

Policies in the area of families, education, criminal justice, as well as the tone and character of activities within black organizations and agencies, will reflect this tension. The black middle class that runs these programs and agencies will be on the front line as managers of a process by which external standards are forced on the poor. To this point, the black middle class has resisted this role, but there is rethinking and there may well be reform that changes this policy. With Reagan no longer in the White House, these reforms cannot be blamed on him, but it would not be a big leap for some Democrat to move in this direction. Blacks have not figured out a position on this, and it will certainly come up in Democratic platform debates.

Embedded in these issues is the potential for division in the ranks of the black middle class between those in the service professions who adhere to race politics and a liberal social policy on one side and younger, more conservative blacks with their neo-liberal (or "pragmatic liberal") colleagues on the other side.

Another policy issue is who will take the lead in shaping social programs and public policies -- the federal government, local government, or nongovernment institutions, including those in the black community. The role of the federal

government will be a major issue in the next election. It is unlikely that the federal government will have no role to play in these matters since they are the only branch capable of making major income and resource transfers. It seems likely that more and more state and local discretion will be exercised, so that many important program design and implementation issues will be local.

The black middle class and their liberal friends are in charge of many of the public programs and agencies at the local level. The principal issue is whether the black poor will have a role and how they will exercise their influence. The only effective lever the poor have is the ballot. They have little institutional control or influence. The black middle class has various amounts and types of influence, though nowhere is it absolute (since they rely on funding from government, foundations, etc.).

To the extent there is conflict, the battle may well be between the poor and their political clout exercised through the support of race politicians and the black middle class and others who exercise the institutional power that in practice is more formidable and precise than the blunt instrument represented by black electoral power.

The history of liberal reform is really a history of the triumph of ideas more than raw politics. To the extent that blacks rely on raw political power rather than negotiation in the marketplace of ideas, this is the extent to which they will be increasingly marginal politically. If, for whatever reason, the black middle class lines up in a coalition to exercise institutional power (as they almost certainly will, at least in part), the stage is set for conflict -- among blacks and with whites, especially involving neo-liberals, who more than conservatives will struggle with these issues.

Then there is the issue of who speaks for blacks. This becomes more important as the differences outlined above become clearer. Will it be the race politicians who draw support from the black masses, or will it be the members of the black business

and professional middle class aligned with and having a base in multiracial constituencies and institutions?

Of course, there is the possibility of broad coalitions that cut across race and class lines. However, this latter possibility has been successful in only limited spheres, for example, in cities where well-organized blacks form a large minority. It has not been successful at the national or the state level, and it is national and state policy that is at the heart of the policy issues I have discussed. Cities have relatively little to do with changing the socio-economic status of individuals. Part of the present task is to get some perspective on how to help expand the social and economic progress of blacks. To be successful, leadership has to be effective beyond the realm where race politics is effective. There will also have to be new policy ideas, and the political sphere is not where new ideas typically originate. They emerge elsewhere to be tested and refined in the political arena. Black politics and policy in part have to be effective in state and national arenas and in academic and institutional circles where black input is presently sparse.

Taking this course is not simple. It raises two kinds of choices. Do blacks in local elections support race politicians such as Marion Barry or Harold Washington or do they support widely regarded and broadly influential pillars of the black middle class such as the late Patricia Harris or Andrew Young? There is the additional question of whether the black business and professional class (i.e., professors, corporate lawyers, and business leaders) will or will not become active in local politics. What should be the position of "cross over" politicians such as Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley? The other kind of choice is between a race politician and a certified friendly white politician who has the ability and interest to take account of black aspirations in national and institutional realms.

The black schism referred to here is in part a matter of two styles: the rational analytical style of strategic politics with policy grounded in the professions and

business, and the "expressive" style of ethnic politics grounded in advocacy of group interests, race solidarity, party loyalty, mass appeal, and in alliances of convenience or tradition with liberals. The former is more characteristic of the middle class while the latter reflects the political tradition of the poor. These lines will sharpen within the black community as they have already among white Democrats who, for example, have such camps as "ethnic or urban politician," or "suburban politician" -- all under the Democratic umbrella. The interests are real. Each is entitled to a fair and articulate representation around the table. A party cannot claim to a national party if it cannot handle this.

The reader may think that this analysis too sharply draws the divisions within the black community. While the extent of the division cannot be precisely estimated and will vary from place to place and over time, it is a real and an important source of tension. The only question is whether the interests of these groups are so mismatched that the tension cannot be made creative or redemptive, thus preventing a much needed dialogue in a black community too long dependent on ideas and initiatives from outside. I don't believe the mismatch will be fatal. I believe that most middle-class blacks want racial progress. I believe that most whites do as well. But I also believe that we are approaching a period where the permanence of the underclass and the frustrations of the rest of society may produce action before dialogue, reaction before analysis.

Whether we have dialogue in the black community is not entirely a policy question or even an institutional one. It is a matter of our personal politics and our capacity to find words to express our concerns and feelings. It is also a matter of trust: whether we can talk openly about our concerns and fears, whether we can trust the resolution of these matters to a political system not noted for its sensitivity to minority concerns and not subject to influence by blacks.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have suggested that blacks lack a clear voice in the major debates over, and the ideological structuring of, those domestic policies that are central in efforts to achieve their aspirations. Because the issues affect blacks differently depending on class and because there have been shifts in the black class structure that have altered traditional ideological positions, the lack of voice is part of, and contributes to, an emerging schism in the black community.

The present paralysis and blindness of collective will in the black community are relatively new. Leaders such as Douglass, Washington, DuBois and, most recently, King, presented ideas that supported the development of the movement and changed the relationship between the private aspirations of blacks and the political and social action they undertook. Dr. King, for example, gave us a voice with which to speak. That voice was powerful in building a coalition, propelling action, and striking with efficient resonance the cords in the national heart. His loss has not been replaced, and the technology of nonviolence has not been transformed to tackle present problems.

While the voice he offered would not have been good for all times, and while evolution was inevitable, we have not as a people evolved. What we have is mounting personal and community anguish and confusion about our relationship to each other and to whites, and about our personal disposition on matters in our community and individual lives. Set adrift as we are, we rely on porous ideological and political floats rather than sturdy vessels that can support navigation with and against the currents in our society.

Among whites, there is also drift. Those committed to racial equality anguish over how to be effective, helpful, and sensitive without being paternalistic, sentimental, or negligent to responsibilities in other areas such as gender or class inequality. They also want to avoid being victims of moral blackmail that plays on

guilt. They listen for black voices to lead or share leadership but hear none. They were conditioned by the black power movement to expect and to respect black self-definition that was partially developed by Carmichael and others but was never carried fully to its institutional, strategic, or personal potential. The movement was like a torch that produced heat and light as long as it burned. When the flame died, there was nothing left. The movement generated expectations among blacks and whites that have not been fulfilled.

For those whites who consider and face the racial issue only out of professional or political necessity, there is also concern. They look at problems blacks face or that society faces and wonder what to do. They sense something different needs to be done but find the language of discourse inadequate. They are alienated by strident voices. They would engage in legitimate dialogue if blacks could only develop a language, identify a forum, and create an environment where fears, suspicions, and concerns could be presented and resolved with dignity and in mutual respect. They know some of the tough questions and hard choices and only the political requirement to build some consensus, a requirement as yet unmet, stays their disposition to "do something." There is no guarantee they will be supportive of black interests. They will have to be convinced that there is an overlap of interests with blacks or that blacks can compel them to pay a cost for inattention.

Then there are whites who are not interested in black advancement, either because they are blind and cannot see its connection to anything of interest to them, or because they have an interest that they feel requires perpetuation of the status quo. They have had great freedom to act in the current administration, whose bold assault on blacks has gathered momentum largely because it has not been effectively challenged. Rather than being skillful social engineers acting on a national mandate against blacks (that public opinion polls do not suggest exist),

they are reckless ideologues who have commandeered an economic policy to strike at those fragile structures of justice that are the heart and soul of a democracy.

Black leadership has not met the challenge posed by the changes in ideology and has effectively placed the underclass as well as itself at risk. This need not have happened. Blacks have not had an effective offense. After all, blacks in California did better under Governor Reagan than blacks nationally have done under President Reagan. Blacks did better in the South against better led, more organized and powerful racist forces in the 60s than against less powerful and more diffuse elements in the 80s. That was possible because the moral voice raised by Dr. King was more powerful than the state and private forces mustered against him.

The difference now, I assert, is the lack of a progressive voice, the lack of which has allowed other voices, some hostile to black interests, to fill the vacuum. A new moral and strategic articulation of the just society is called for, and it is important, indeed imperative, that the black community, in all of its manifestations, create the dialogue and debate from which this fresh voice may arise.