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ARTICLES

BEYOND TOCQUEVILLE, MYRDAL, AND HARTZ: THE MULTIPLE TRADITIONS IN AMERICA

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Analysts of American politics since Tocqueville have seen the nation as a paradigmatic "liberal democratic" society, shaped most by the comparatively free and equal conditions and the Enlightenment ideals said to have prevailed at its founding. These accounts must be severely revised to recognize the inegalitarian ideologies and institutions of ascriptive hierarchy that defined the political status of racial and ethnic minorities and women through most of U.S. history. A study of the period 1870–1920 illustrates that American political culture is better understood as the often conflictual and contradictory product of multiple political traditions, than as the expression of hegemonic liberal or democratic political traditions.

Since the nation's inception, analysts have described American political culture as the preeminent example of modern liberal democracy, of government by popular consent with respect for the equal rights of all. They have portrayed American political development as the working out of liberal democratic or republican principles, via both "liberalizing" and "democratizing" socioeconomic changes and political efforts to cope with tensions inherent in these principles. Illiberal, undemocratic beliefs and practices have usually been seen only as expressions of ignorance and prejudice, destined to marginality by their lack of rational defenses. A distinguished line of writers, from Hector St. John Crèvecoeur in the eighteenth century and Harriet Martineau and Lord Bryce in the nineteenth century to Gunnar Myrdal and Louis Hartz in the twentieth century serves as authority for this view. Today, leading social scientists such as Samuel P. Huntington, Walter Dean Burnham, and Ira Katznelson, legal scholars, historians, and cultural analysts such as Kenneth Karst, John Diggins, and Sacvan Bercovitch, and many others still structure their accounts on these premises. Virtually all appeal to the classic analysis of American politics, Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Tocqueville's thesis—that America has been most shaped by the unusually free and egalitarian ideas and material conditions that prevailed at its founding—captures important truths. Nonetheless, the purpose of this essay is to challenge that thesis by showing that its adherents fail to give due weight to inegalitarian ideologies and conditions that have shaped the participants and the substance of American politics just as deeply. For over 80% of U.S. history, its laws declared most of the world's population to be ineligible for full American citizenship solely because of their race, original nationality, or gender. For at least two-thirds of American history, the majority of the domestic adult population was also ineligible for full citizenship for the same reasons. Contrary to Tocquevillian views of American civic identity, it did not matter how "liberal," "democratic," or "republican" those persons' beliefs were.¹

The Tocquevillian story is thus deceptive because it is too narrow. It is centered on relationships among a minority of Americans (white men, largely of northern European ancestry) analyzed via reference to categories derived from the hierarchy of political and economic statuses men have held in Europe: monarchs and aristocrats, commercial burghers, farmers, industrial and rural laborers, and indigents. Because most European observers and British American men have regarded these categories as politically fundamental, it is understandable that they have always found the most striking fact about the new nation to be its lack of one type of ascriptive hierarchy. There was no hereditary monarchy or nobility native to British America, and the revolutionaries rejected both the authority of the British king and aristocracy and the creation of any new American substitutes. Those features of American political life made the United States appear remarkably egalitarian by comparison with Europe.

But the comparative moral, material, and political egalitarianism that prevailed at the founding among moderately propertied white men was surrounded by an array of other fixed, ascriptive systems of unequal status, all largely unchallenged by the American revolutionaries.² Men were thought naturally suited to rule over women, within both the family and the polity. White northern Europeans were thought superior culturally—and probably biologically—to black Africans, bronze Native Americans, and indeed all other races and civilizations. Many British Americans also treated religion as an inherited condition and regarded Protestants as created by God to be morally and politically, as well as theologically, superior to Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and others.

These beliefs were not merely emotional prejudices or "attitudes." Over time, American intellectual and political elites elaborated distinctive justifications for these ascriptive systems, including inegalitarian scriptural readings, the scientific racism of the "American school" of ethnology, racial and sexual Darwinism, and the romantic cult of Anglo-Saxonism in American historiography. All these discourses identified the true meaning of *Americanism* with par-

ticular forms of cultural, religious, ethnic, and especially racial and gender hierarchies.³ Many adherents of ascriptive Americanist outlooks insisted that the nation's political and economic structures should formally reflect natural and cultural inequalities, even at the cost of violating doctrines of universal rights. Although these views never entirely prevailed, their impact has been wide and deep.

Thus to approach a truer picture of America's political culture and its characteristic conflicts, we must consider more than the familiar categories of (absent) feudalism and socialism and (pervasive) bourgeois liberalism and republicanism. The nation has also been deeply constituted by the ideologies and practices that defined the relationships of the white male minority with subordinate groups, and the relationships of these groups with each other. When these elements are kept in view, the flat plain of American egalitarianism mapped by Tocqueville and others suddenly looks quite different. We instead perceive America's initial conditions as exhibiting only a rather small, recently leveled valley of relative equality nestled amid steep mountains of hierarchy. And though we can see forces working to erode those mountains over time, broadening the valley, many of the peaks also prove to be volcanic, frequently responding to seismic pressures with outbursts that harden into substantial peaks once again.

To be sure, America's ascriptive, unequal statuses, and the ideologies by which they have been defended have always been heavily conditioned and constrained by the presence of liberal democratic values and institutions. The reverse, however, is also true. Although liberal democratic ideas and practices have been more potent in America than elsewhere, American politics is best seen as expressing the interaction of multiple political traditions, including *liberalism*, *republicanism*, and *ascriptive forms of Americanism*, which have collectively comprised American political culture, without any constituting it as a whole.⁴ Though Americans have often struggled over contradictions among these traditions, almost all have tried to embrace what they saw as the best features of each.

Ascriptive outlooks have had such a hold in America because they have provided something that neither liberalism nor republicanism has done so well. They have offered creditable intellectual and psychological reasons for many Americans to believe that their social roles and personal characteristics express an identity that has inherent and transcendent worth, thanks to nature, history, and God. Those rationales have obviously aided those who sat atop the nation's political, economic, and social hierarchies. But many Americans besides elites have felt that they have gained meaning, as well as material and political benefits, from their nation's traditional structures of ascribed places and destinies.

Conventional narratives, preoccupied with the absence of aristocracy and socialism, usually stress the liberal and democratic elements in the rhetoric of even America's dissenters (Hartog 1987). These accounts fail to explain how and why liberalizing efforts

have frequently lost to forces favoring new forms of racial and gender hierarchy. Those forces have sometimes negated major liberal victories, especially in the half-century following Reconstruction; and the fate of that era may be finding echoes today.

My chief aim here is to persuade readers that many leading accounts of American political culture are inadequate. I will also suggest briefly how analyses with greater descriptive and explanatory power can be achieved by replacing the Tocquevillian thesis with a *multiple-traditions* view of America. This argument is relevant to contemporary politics in two ways. First, it raises the possibility that novel intellectual, political, and legal systems reinforcing racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities might be rebuilt in America in the years ahead. That prospect does not seem plausible if the United States has always been essentially liberal democratic, with all exceptions marginal and steadily eliminated. It seems quite real, however, if liberal democratic traditions have been but contested parts of American culture, with egalitarian ideologies and practices often resurging even after major enhancements of liberal democracy. Second, the political implications of the view that America has never been completely liberal, and that changes have come only through difficult struggles and then have often not been sustained, are very different from the complacency—sometimes despair—engendered by beliefs that liberal democracy has always been hegemonic.

I shall review and critique Tocqueville's account of the sources and dynamics shaping democracy in America, along with two of the most influential extensions of Tocquevillian analysis in modern social science, Gunnar Myrdal's (1944) *American Dilemma* and Louis Hartz's (1955) *Liberal Tradition in America*. I argue that Tocqueville himself was much more perceptive than his modern "Tocquevillian" followers, though not free from the problems identified here. I shall note how Tocquevillian premises continue to flaw recent scholarship, especially general works on American political identity and citizenship. Finally, I shall illustrate the merits of a multiple-traditions approach by showing how it offers more insight into the qualified but extensive creation of new systems of ascriptive inequality during the post-Reconstruction and Progressive eras.

THE TOCQUEVILLIAN THESIS

Tocqueville began *Democracy in America* by calling attention to the immense influence of one "basic fact" that was the creative element from which each particular fact—and, indeed, the whole course—of American society is derived, namely, "the equality of conditions." This "fact" absorbed Tocqueville's interest because he saw a democratic revolution taking place in Europe, especially in France, breaking down the power of nobles and kings. In the United States this revolution seemed "almost to have reached its natural limits." Thus, by studying America, Toc-

queville could draw lessons for the future of his own nation and all of European culture (1969, 9–12, 18).

America was so advanced in this democratic revolution, Tocqueville argued, because of several elements that conspired to produce its egalitarian point of departure. The vast stretches of land “inhabited only by wandering tribes who had not thought of exploiting” the soil enabled European immigrants to spread out and make their fortune—as opposed to nations where most lands formed parts of large hereditary estates. Settlers came chiefly from England, where they had unusual “acquaintance with notions of rights and principles of true liberty,” reinforced in New England particularly by “democratic and republican” Protestant beliefs. They also came without any “idea of any superiority of some over others,” because great lords did not relocate to the colonies and because the large landowners who did lacked aristocratic privileges. Instead, a “middle-class and democratic freedom” flourished almost from the outset. This combination of comparatively equal and open economic and social conditions and an ideological legacy conducive to republicanism and personal liberties made America the perfect laboratory to study the tendencies of a society that from the start was decisively free, egalitarian, and democratic in theory and practice (1969, 33–36, 50–51, 280–81).

The impact of Tocqueville’s thesis on modern American scholarship was magnified by two among many works applying his ideas to twentieth-century politics, though in ways that compounded his deficiencies.⁵ Each stressed one aspect of Tocqueville’s account of America’s point of departure. First, Gunnar Myrdal’s (1944) study of American race relations emphasized the ideals of Enlightenment “humanistic liberalism.” Elaborated by revolutionary leaders to define and justify their cause, these beliefs became, in Myrdal’s view, the tenets of the American Creed and represented to Americans the essential meaning of their struggle for independence. It thus served as the cement of the nation, written into all the basic documents comprising the highest law of the land. This democratic creed proclaimed the worth and moral equality of all individual human beings and their “inalienable rights to freedom, justice, and a fair opportunity.” It also denounced “differences made on account of ‘race, creed or color’” (pp. 3–4, 7–8, 25, 52).

Since Myrdal’s subject was the “Negro problem,” he knew that Americans’ fidelity to such beliefs was questionable. But he explained that the creed represented “valuations preserved on the general plane,” which Americans knew to be *morally higher* than their discriminatory valuations. The latter were merely expressions of interests, jealousies, prejudices—impulses known to be “irrational” even by many who harbored them. Discriminations were defended, if at all, only “in terms of tradition, expediency, or utility.” In Myrdal’s account, then, it was this ideological inheritance, the equalitarian creed forming the national ethos, that drove American development. There was a dynamic tension between creedal values

of equality and liberty, but with evident approval, Myrdal saw egalitarian values as having “triumphed” in most respects. The persistent refusal to follow American egalitarian ideals in matters of race was, he thought, most characteristic of “poor and uneducated white” people in “isolated and backward rural” areas of the deep South. Thus, his analysis offered hope that these inequalities, too, would in the end be dissolved (Myrdal 1944, lxxi–iii, 6–9; see also Jackson, 1990, 199 and Southern 1987, 295).

If Myrdal stressed Tocqueville’s argument that early Americans were shaped by egalitarian Enlightenment ideals, Louis Hartz (1955) emphasized Tocqueville’s account of America’s relatively egalitarian and free economic and social conditions. Americans’ lack of feudal institutions, classes, and their lived experience of “atomistic social freedom” made the U.S. a liberal society. Hartz viewed the presence of “the liberal idea” among early Americans as important, but he did not think it was consciousness of a specific ideological heritage that made Americans liberal. Most were instinctive—even “irrational”—Lockeans, all the more so because they had no real awareness of any alternatives. Their comparatively nonascriptive, nonhierarchical conditions led most Americans to regard liberal beliefs in individual rights and liberties, petit bourgeois democracy, and Horatio Alger myths of economic mobility as self-evident. Far more than Myrdal and even more than Tocqueville, Hartz bemoaned the fixed, dogmatic character of this liberalism born “of a liberal way of life,” seeing it as a tyranny of unanimity that went much deeper than mere tyranny of the majority. He believed the absence of any real sense of class and the wide regard of middle-class values as natural supported McCarthyite antisocialist policies in domestic and foreign affairs in the early 1950s (pp. 6–23, 35–36, 46, 51, 58, 62–63, 66, 284–309).

Hartz saw conflicts in American history, but in his view they were all conflicts within liberal boundaries—between majority rule and individual or minority rights and specifically between democracy and property rights. Slavery (not true feudalism) also had to be eliminated. Yet to Hartz, these conflicts were never as deeply problematic as the stifling consensus born of lived experience from which they stemmed, “the secret root” of all that was most distinctive and fundamental about America (1955, 9, 21–22, 63, 75, 89, 91, 128–29, 140, 147).

Thus, Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz differed mildly in their accounts of just why American political culture was pervasively liberal democratic and more significantly in their assessments of the desirability of that culture. But collectively, their arguments powerfully reinforced beliefs that the United States’ core values should be so described. Yet all wrote at times when the nation was still denying most persons access to full standing within the American political community on racial, ethnic, or gender grounds. Their ability to stress the democratic nature of American values despite these facts is vivid testimony to how their focus on the absence of a Euro-

pean class system led them to minimize the significance of other types of ascriptive inequality. Each of them did, however, take some notice of America's exclusionary practices and beliefs, again in influential ways.

RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND THE TOCQUEVILLIAN THESIS

Tocqueville dealt with these issues most perceptively. Despite some misleading passages in his early chapters, he did not claim to have written an account of American political identity *in toto*. In the last chapter of volume 1 of *Democracy in America*, he said he had now finished his main task of describing democracy. But he noted that there were other things in America besides an "immense and complete democracy" that were "like tangents to my subject, being American, but not democratic." Those things were the position of two races, the "Indians and the Negroes," within (not outside) the democratic nation (1969, 316).

Thus Tocqueville distinguished being democratic from being American, though he led readers to believe that America was essentially democratic apart from these two exceptions. He also did not assume that racial conflicts would be swept away by the working out of the Revolution's egalitarian principles. He thought it more likely that the "Indian race" would resist becoming "civilized," so that it was "doomed." Tocqueville dryly underscored the inhumanity that the rhetoric of American policies toward the tribes thinly veiled; but he added that whatever those policies might be, as Europeans filled the continent, Indians would "cease to exist" (1969, 326).

Tocqueville believed that the presence of blacks was, in contrast, "the most formidable evil threatening" the nation's future, because he was not optimistic that they would ever be included in America's democracy, either. Anticipating Myrdal, Tocqueville treated racism as mere prejudice and slighted the burgeoning of scientific racist theories in Jacksonian America. But he correctly saw racism as prevalent throughout the United States even though blacks were confined to a limited area, the South. There they largely lived in slavery. But that institution was, in Tocqueville's view, uneconomic, as well as repulsive to northern Christian and Enlightenment values, so its survival was improbable. Yet should it be eliminated, Tocqueville only foresaw deepening white repugnance toward blacks. Doubting that the "white and black races will ever be brought anywhere to live on a footing of equality," especially in the United States, yet dubious of colonization efforts, he grimly concluded that a massive violent conflict between American blacks and whites was "more or less distant but inevitable" (1969, 340-63). Thus, Tocqueville did not see nonwhites as members of America's democracy, nor did he think they would become so. Instead, he expected prejudice-driven genocides.

In his first volume, devoted chiefly to political

institutions, Tocqueville said nothing about women and their absence of equal political rights. That huge omission reinforced the sweeping quality of his initial descriptions of American equality. But he did consider women in what, for him, was their proper place in his second volume, primarily concerned with American civil society. There, Tocqueville presented their status as an expression of democracy's tendency to destroy or modify "those various inequalities which are in origin social," including relations such as master-servant and father-son. Tocqueville perceived a corollary tendency to make women "more nearly equal to men." He argued, however, that America was not essaying what he saw as the mistake of making men and women "creatures who are, not equal only, but actually similar." Since nature had "created such great differences between the physical and moral constitution of men and women," Americans traced "clearly distinct spheres of action for the two sexes," which both were required to keep to at all times. To attempt anything else, he stated, "degrades" both sexes (1969, 600-601).

All of this allegedly meant benefits for American women. They were viewed as competent to have major domestic responsibilities. Women were taught to think for themselves, and their husbands showed respect for their judgment. They were also not subjected to a sexual double standard: male seducers, Tocqueville claimed, were as much dishonored as their female victims. Women were also protected. Not even those in poor families had to undertake "rough laborer's work" or "hard physical exertion." But men remained the heads of families, just as they exclusively possessed voting rights and other formal political powers. Tocqueville contended that American women themselves embraced these strictures; or at least "the best of them" did, and "the others keep quiet" (1969, 590-92, 601-02).

These claims are familiar themes of "domestic sphere" ideology, though Tocqueville's statement of them provided influential reinforcement. And it is correct to say that all societies must take account of the different reproductive roles of women and men, much more clearly than they need give weight to skin color or national origins. Tocqueville's benign portrait of the condition of American women was highly romanticized, and his insistence that a social system of "separate spheres" was an appropriate response to sexual differences is no longer so widely shared. Still, nothing like a consensus exists on better answers.

Even so, Tocqueville's arguments emphatically did not establish that women were actually civic equals of men. In their different ways, women and men might have "equal worth." It might be true that American arrangements were more beneficial to women than European ones. But women were not regarded by law as rulers in their homes, were legally denied the franchise, and could not hope to occupy governmental and most professional offices. Even making public speeches on political issues was usually denied them. Thus when Tocqueville appealed to "nature" to defend all these political inequalities, as well as wom-

en's dependent status in the domestic sphere, he was endorsing a slightly modified ascriptive hierarchy that denied American women full democratic citizenship.

On close analysis, then, Tocqueville showed a rich awareness of how limited democracy was in America. But like his successors, he still frequently wrote in unqualified terms about America's supposedly egalitarian conditions; he relegated blacks and Native Americans to the status of "tangents," however important; and he obscured the intellectual respectability of racism, deeming it only prejudice. Worst of all, he claimed to reconcile the inferior civic status of women with democracy by accepting their confinement to domestic roles as natural. Hence he made America seem much more fully a liberal democracy than it was. The less comprehensive analyses of Myrdal and Hartz intensified all these failings.

Both were completely silent on women. His thorough studies of race relations, however, led Myrdal to undermine many of his opening assertions about what defines American political culture. He first made it seem that only blacks were outside the American Creed, chiefly in the south and only as a result of what most knew to be irrational biases, characteristic of the poor and uneducated. Yet as *An American Dilemma* proceeded, readers could discover that up to the very time in which Myrdal wrote, many Americans had always imputed racial inferiority to lower classes of whites and non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, as well as blacks. Nor were those beliefs merely matters of bigoted ignorance; they were supported by the "long hegemony" of the biological sciences and medicine, "firmly entrenched" in American universities. Indeed, "scientific and popular writings with a strong racialistic bias" had "exploded in a cascade" in the years around World War I, feeding thereafter into immigration restriction. Myrdal contended that "a handful of social and biological scientists" had, in the twentieth century, gradually compelled "informed people"—but not the "ordinary man"—to give up "some of the most blatant" of racist biological beliefs (1944, 37–38, 91–92, 99, 1189, n. 10, n. 12).

Thus, far from being chiefly the prejudices of uneducated southern farmers, Myrdal showed hierarchical racial theories to have had great prestige through most of American society and history. Indeed, he eventually conceded that as political ideologies go, white supremacy should "not be denied high qualities of structural logic and consistency." And though he maintained that matters had been better in the north, he admitted that, as a result of these beliefs, "the North has kept much segregation and discrimination." Far from being chiefly an exception, moreover, Myrdal conceded that the nation's racial ordering affected virtually all aspects of American life (1944, xxiii, 97, 99, 443, 529, 599).

Myrdal did offer one answer to how academic doctrines of racial inequality squared with his claim that only liberal democratic values received "higher" intellectual defenses in America. He contended that

the American Creed's very dominance calls forth dogmas of racial inequality to legitimate what are at root prejudices. And he insisted that the "philosophical" basis for such racism was the same Enlightenment outlook that had spawned liberalism. Americans favored scientific accounts of biological differences to explain their hierarchies because these accounts comported with Enlightenment attachments to rationalism (1944, 89). But those arguments hardly proved that Americans were, at bottom, philosophically liberal. If appeals to modern science are enough to show that an illiberal doctrine shares the philosophical roots of the American Creed, then Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia must also be held to be grounded in the bedrock Enlightenment liberalism that is supposed to make America distinctive.

Furthermore, it is not true that all major defenses of racial inequalities in the United States rested on Enlightenment rationalism. American racial justifications also drew on other traditional beliefs that were at least as intellectually influential, a point Myrdal again conceded (1944, 97). Racist readings of the Bible were immensely important. Only slight less so were doctrines of historical and cultural identity spawned by the romantics' rebellion against Enlightenment views of human nature and reason (Fredrickson 1971; Horsman 1981). If the use of religious and romantic themes to oppose egalitarianism does not count as illiberal, then writers such as Carlyle and Nietzsche may as well be placed in the liberal fold.

Louis Hartz's failure to discuss women in his two major accounts of America as a "liberal society" is more discreditable than Myrdal's, since Hartz claimed to treat America comprehensively. He did, however, address racist and nativist ideologies to some degree in *The Liberal Tradition* (1955) and more extensively in *The Founding of New Societies* (1964). Each time, he attempted to minimize their importance in ways that partly differ from Myrdal.

In his earlier work, Hartz largely ignored Native Americans, Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and other targets of racial discrimination. He dealt with race chiefly by reference to defenses for slavery in the South; and even then, he neglected theorists of racial differences. Instead, he stressed two proslavery positions that did not rely on claims of black inferiority: the states' rights constitutional arguments of John C. Calhoun and (particularly) the effort to give a neofeudal defense of the South made by George Fitzhugh.

Hartz correctly presented Fitzhugh as a "romantic nationalist," but Fitzhugh was a misleading choice to represent either proslavery views or American romanticism. Fitzhugh elaborated an "organic," paternalistic view of society that exalted slavery as beneficial for workers of any race. He opposed doctrines of racial inequality until late in his career, when he was struggling to retain an audience. Many other defenders of slavery instead embraced the scientific and religious doctrines of racial hierarchy (holding blacks fit only for subservient status) that pervaded antebellum America. Hartz paid little attention to their views or to the positions of the many American romantics who

were antislavery Whigs. The latter were often nativists who, unlike Fitzhugh, stressed doctrines of enduring cultural differences, again hierarchically ordered. Thus by centering his discussion of blacks and race on a writer often seen as exceptional in his treatment of those issues (as Hartz admitted), Hartz illegitimately deprecated the place of overtly racist and nativist ideologies in America (Hartz 1955, 158–72; see also Ashworth 1983, 222–23; Beer 1984; Ellis 1991, 344–51; Fredrickson 1971; Howe 1979, 234–36).

Yet not even Hartz could ignore those views entirely, and initially he conceded their illiberal character. Indeed, he argued that racist theorists like Josiah Nott forged “one of the most vicious and antiliberal doctrines of modern times,” one existing “curiously enough, on a plane that was alien to liberalism and feudalism alike.” But Hartz did not pause to explore this curiosity, so unaccounted for by his theory. Instead, he suggested that these alien doctrines were necessary if slaveholders were to avoid embracing feudalism for all and “keep democracy for the whites.” Hartz treated this desire as evidence of their commitment to *democracy* among whites, and so it is. But it is equally evidence of southern whites’ insistence on confining democracy to *whites*, while they assigned to blacks statuses that should not have existed in a liberal democratic society.

Hartz also attempted to write off these ideologies, saying they resulted only in confusion because of their conflicts with Fitzhugh’s position. They were all, moreover, part of an evanescent “madhouse of Southern thought before the Civil War.” Yet Hartz had to concede that a similar theory of racial supremacy, specifically Anglo-Saxon superiority, also contributed to late nineteenth-century American imperialism and Jim Crow segregation. Once more, Hartz recognized these outlooks as “basically alien to the national liberal spirit.” But he asserted that they, too, had limited impact, disappearing like Josiah Nott, amounting only to “the prejudice of loose elements” amidst “the massive and uniform democratic faith” by which Americans lived (1955, 167–69, 291–92).

In light of the enduring harms they wrought on millions, Hartz’s minimization of these doctrines was grotesque. The battle for civil rights in the 1960s and the scholarship that accompanied it eventually made it hard for him to dismiss American racist thought so offhandedly. In 1964, he made a different argument. American racism was really just another form of liberalism. If we “go beneath the surface of the racial attitudes,” Hartz maintained, we will soon encounter what his thesis insisted must be there: the familiar figures of early liberal thinkers like “Suarez and Locke.” Hartz stated that “since the European ideologies [did] not know race” and their “usual social categories” did not fit race, battles broke out within the adherents of those ideologies over their application to race. Nonetheless, actually both sides were seeking to apply the ideologies. In America’s “liberal fragment” society, the only European ideology available was liberalism, so racial hierarchies had to be justified in liberal terms. The problems of doing so

were massive, Hartz admitted. If blacks were human at all, liberalism demanded that they “receive full equality.” He therefore claimed that Americans could oppose black equality only by consigning blacks to the status of “property” or an “inhuman species,” rather than an *inferior* human species. He had to admit that after the Civil War, “the spirit of separatism continued,” so that the “South won the battle of Reconstruction.” Blacks were assigned just the sort of second-class status Hartz insisted that liberalism did not permit. But he claimed that the modern Civil Rights movement was proving that that status could not last (1964, 16–17, 49–50, 60–62, 102).

Hartz now also took notice of Indians, predictably stressing the (very real) influence of the Lockean argument that they had not mixed their labor with American soil enough to be able to claim it. He again treated the role of racial ideologies with near silence. And overall, Native Americans did not seem important to him. Only the fate of blacks amounted to a “major imperfection that marred the American liberal” society, having been “one of the central conscious preoccupations of our history” (1964, 94–9).

Hartz’s mature answer, then, was closer to Myrdal’s. Despite the contrary judgments in his earlier book, it turned out that American defenses of racial inequality were structured in liberal terms after all. And on liberal premises, Americans could only justify racial inequalities by denying the humanity of blacks.

This response remained wholly inadequate. It did not begin to account for why, even after constitutional recognition of the humanity of blacks, Americans created new systems of racial inequality affecting not only blacks but all nonwhite peoples and maintained them through much of the twentieth century. Hartz’s appeal to recent civil rights struggles left too much history unexplained. That shortcoming reflected the deeper failure of his whole analysis: If “European ideologies” such as liberalism did not know race, where did the category of “race” come from that they had to take into account? Why had this “unknown” (and biologically indefensible) classification been a “central conscious preoccupation” throughout U.S. history? The answer is that it had been burned into American minds by prestigious intellectual traditions, most of them inarguably non-liberal, that defended subjugation of nonwhites by contending that humanity was naturally divided into hierarchically arrayed “races.” There had always been much in America’s basic institutions, popular sentiments, and moral orthodoxies that rendered those traditions compelling.

THE TOCQUEVILLIAN THESIS TODAY: THE ORTHODOXY ON AMERICAN IDENTITY

In an era marked by controversies over multiculturalism, one might expect the limitations of Toc-

queville, Hartz, and Myrdal to have long since been superseded. But for many in the social sciences and the humanities, these Tocquevillian arguments still provide the deep structure within which they debate real but lesser differences.⁶ For analyses of American politics in political science, the influence of Hartz, especially, remains pervasive. Leading realignment theorists like Walter Dean Burnham have repeatedly insisted that Hartz's theory of American political culture has "the greatest explanatory power" (Burnham 1970, 176; Burnham 1982, 15, 95, 127–28). Scholars influenced by Marxian emphases on class conflict, like Ira Katznelson, also argue that the "direction, ideological claims, and relative chances of success" of the "politics of class" in the U.S. have had their "secret root" in the liberal national character Hartz discerned (Katznelson 1981, 14–16; see also Hartz 1955, 125, 248–52). Along with many historians, a number of political scientists now see the Progressive Era as a more decisive turning point than Hartz allowed, involving basic shifts in American beliefs and institutions. But they still present the changes of that era (toward pragmatic progressivism, corporate liberalism, interest group liberalism, or some similar label) as only a mutation within the liberal institutions, ideals, and practices dominating American politics (Ackerman 1991; Ceaser 1979; Galambos 1970, 1983; Hays 1957; Kloppenberg 1986; Lowi 1979; Lustig 1982; Sklar 1991; Wiebe 1967).

Historically minded students of American culture have often found Hartz too simplistic; but they have usually sought to add complexities without disputing the basic Tocquevillian framework. The one major effort to dethrone Hartz (but not Tocqueville) has been the "republican synthesis" identified with Bernard Bailyn (1967), Gordon Wood (1969), and J. G. A. Pocock (1975). But even proponents of republican historiography now concede that Americans have more often blended liberalism and republicanism than opposed them and that at some point in U.S. history liberalism became predominant (Ackerman 1991, 27–29, 327, n. 45). Many scholars (e.g., Sacvan Bercovitch and John Diggins) have also argued that Hartzian accounts underplay the role of Protestant values; but most present these religious strains as reaffirming the American liberal consensus despite serving as sources of criticism (Bercovitch 1978; Diggins 1984; Greenstone 1986). Hence, these writings pose significant debates within—but not challenges to—interpretations explaining American evolution in terms of liberal republican preconditions.

None of these mainstream approaches to American politics has given prominence to the racial, ethnic, or gender makeup of the American citizenry, though neither have they wholly avoided those issues. In the last three decades, however, many other scholars have greatly enriched understanding of the ethnocultural dimensions of American life. Much of this research provides evidence for a multiple-traditions account of American politics. But few of these scholars have addressed the significance of their findings for general views of America. And, perhaps because

of the real if partial truths grasped by the Tocquevillian orthodoxy, those who have done so have usually tried to accommodate it, not to challenge it.

Most important in this regard is the seminal study of nativist and racist ideologies in modern American scholarship, John Higham's *Strangers in the Land*, first published in 1955. Higham's book had many ingredients needed to correct the Tocquevillian thesis. He correctly saw American nativism as a species of modern nationalism. He also believed it was built on ethnocentric attitudes that were virtually always present. But Higham stressed that only in certain periods did American leaders elaborate those attitudes into full-fledged ideologies (1966, 4). (Thus, he actually found several nativisms, though all shared an "ideological core.")

This distinction between an elaborated ideology and more inarticulate ethnocentric feelings has some force, though Higham has acknowledged that it also presents difficulties (1986, 223; 1988, 343–44). But one consequence was that for most readers Higham's work did not compel any major reinterpretation of American politics. Nativist ideologies could still be seen as occasional things, fitting the pattern of exceptions to egalitarian beliefs that Tocquevillian scholars continued to stitch. In contrast, liberal democratic ideology still seemed more constant and intellectually developed, as Myrdal had argued.

That contrast is not defensible. As Myrdal had to admit, sophisticated doctrines of racial inequality were dominant in American universities and public opinion through much of U.S. history. And as Hartz recognized, Americans ordinarily have not held liberal democratic values in the form of full-fledged ideologies any more than they have racial values. Liberal democratic norms have often been unreflective if not irrational sets of beliefs, just as deserving of the label "prejudices" as racial values. It is, then, not credible to distinguish nativistic Americanism from liberalism and republicanism on the ground that Americanism has usually been a set of ethnocentric attitudes while the latter have been articulated ideologies. Insofar as Higham's presentation of nativist ideology as an occasional thing has permitted many to believe that America has otherwise been liberal democratic, it has been misleading.

Even so, Higham's work, along with the Civil Rights movement, has justly inspired many scholars to analyze American attitudes and practices involving blacks, women, Native Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Jews, Mexicans, and the whole panoply of groups living in the United States. Perhaps if Higham had explicitly considered whether nativist ideologies really fit into Tocquevillian accounts of America, more writers might have addressed that issue. But as Martin Sklar has observed, most scholars today "essentially tell their stories within the framework" of traditional accounts of American political culture "or some mixture of them" (1991, 79). Many do so simply by focusing on the experience of one "outsider" group without exploring whether that group's experience raises questions about portraits of American

political culture as otherwise inclusive and egalitarian (e.g., Bell 1987; Fredrickson 1971; Miller 1969). There are, however, several ways in which many contributors to the new scholarship of race, ethnicity, and gender explicitly preserve the traditional framework.

Some accounts employ versions of neo-Marxian—usually Gramscian—premises stressing the presence of an economically rooted liberal hegemony in America and treating racist and sexist ideologies as appended rationales for forms of economic exploitation that blatantly violate liberal democratic precepts (Fields 1990; Takaki 1979). These scholars are right to see ideologies of racial and sexual inequality as social constructions justifying systems of unequal power and status, and the people privileged by those systems have also generally held lofty economic statuses. The powerful tend to seek superiority in every social arena. But those facts do not render liberal democracy the basic American ideology and racial or sexual ideologies merely “an inconsistent afterthought,” designed to explain the anomalous status of a minority of the population (Fields 1990, 114, 117). On this view, after all, these ideologies are all myths justifying economic exploitation. And even though economic supremacy is vital to those who enjoy it, it is easy to see why belonging to a caste proclaimed intrinsically superior might have charms beyond its economic benefits. Why, then, should the ideologies and institutions of racial and gender hierarchies be deemed “afterthoughts,” instead of key components of American political culture? Again, American law has denied rights of full citizenship much more often on these ascriptive grounds than because of class (though class has mattered greatly).

Scholars also attempt to link racial and sexual inequalities with the concept of the United States as a liberal society by drawing on postmodernist arguments. They hold that the discourses and practices dominant in Enlightenment liberal societies recurrently construct the identities of marginal groups as irrational, passionate, dangerous “others,” both to defend their exploitation and to deny the presence of such qualities in mainstream citizens (Karst 1989; Norton 1986; Rogin 1975). Even if we grant power to these contentions, they do not justify claims like Michael Rogin’s that “liberal egalitarian” values are primary in America but have a “logical marriage” to racist exploitation (Rogin 1975, 279). This argument might be compelling if the United States really had begun as an essentially liberal democratic society and had then generated racial and sexual inequalities out of that society’s tensions. But colonial British Americans pursued practices of racial and gender domination long before they embraced the types of liberal republican ideologies and institutions that came to play prominent roles in America. Hence once more it is plausible to see all these different practices and ideologies as central components in American political development, rather than some as primary and others as secondary. Their recurring admixture also does not prove that ascriptive inegalitarian outlooks have been *logically* compatible with liberal democ-

racy, because people often operate for long periods while holding contradictory beliefs.

Feminist scholars have been especially concerned to work out the relationship of liberalism to doctrines of sexual inequality. But far from criticizing Tocquevillian descriptions, most have striven to confirm that modern forms of patriarchy derive from liberal ideas. Thus, Carole Pateman objects when other feminists treat liberal capitalism and patriarchy as two systems that are “intertwined” but “relatively autonomous.” She insists that liberal thought has always had a patriarchal structure that is essential to it. She agrees with Tocqueville that the subordinate status of American women has been not only consistent with, but expressive of, liberal democratic principles.

Yet Pateman acknowledges that the premise of classical liberal contract theory—that all people are “naturally free and equal”—is potentially “subversive of all authority relations, including conjugal relations.” She contends, correctly, that early liberal theorists like Locke responded by asserting women were not naturally equal to men. But she also observes, correctly, that these writers were “extremely vague” on what capacities relevant to moral and political equality women lacked. Indeed, they sometimes conceded that women had sufficient capacities to enter contracts as equals (Pateman 1988, 38, 41, 54, 94). Pateman thus provides undeniable evidence that liberal writers endorsed conventional beliefs in natural sexual inequality; but far from showing that their liberal precepts required or generated those beliefs, her citations indicate that theorists like Locke did not really reconcile their inherited patriarchal beliefs with their more novel, distinctively liberal arguments. Hence, it seems quite reasonable to view liberal precepts and patriarchy as two intertwined but relatively autonomous systems of ideas and practices that contract theorists and many Americans have often inconsistently endorsed (see Eisenstein 1981, 3–5, 34–49; Mackinnon 1987, 14–16, 164–65; Okin 1979, 199).

Some writers (especially lawyers associated with Critical Race Studies) have criticized how other leftist scholars treat all American institutions as expressive of liberalism, instead of recognizing racism as an often contrasting and “central ideological underpinning of American society” (Crenshaw 1988, 1336). These arguments move in the direction pursued here, but they are still rare and do not yet extend to explicit critiques of Tocquevillian frameworks or to any developed alternatives. Despite the new scholarship of race, ethnicity, and gender, then, liberalism is still usually understood to have been both the chief ideology of opposition to racism, nativism, and patriarchy in America and the chief (or even sole) ideology supporting them.

As a result, all recent major works addressing the general topics of American nationality and citizenship endorse some version of this paradoxical Hartzian position. Many quote Philip Gleason’s summation of what has historically been required to be fully

American: "A person did not have to be of any particular national, linguistic, religious, or ethnic background. All he had to do was commit himself to the political ideology centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality, and republicanism. Thus the universalist ideological character of American nationality meant that it was open to anyone who willed to become an American" (1980, 62). Gleason adds that "universalism had its limits from the beginning, because it did not include either blacks or Indians, and in time other racial and cultural groups were regarded as falling outside the range of American nationality." There was "a latent predisposition toward an ethnically defined concept of nationality." But this "exclusiveness ran contrary to the logic of the defining principles, and the official commitment to those principles has worked historically to overcome exclusions and to make the practical boundaries of American identity more congruent with its theoretical universalism" (pp. 62–63). Despite the nation's record of blatant, not latent, exclusions, then, Gleason still suggests that the basic official requirement for full membership in the American political community has always been willingness to embrace liberal republican principles and that those principles have inexorably delegitimated all inconsistent exclusions.⁷

As the 1990s began, two noted works reexamined America's "civic culture" with explicit attention to race, ethnicity, and gender without truly modifying these Tocquevillian claims: Kenneth Karst's (1989) *Belonging to America* and Lawrence Fuchs's (1990) *American Kaleidoscope*.⁸ Karst's book is historically richly informed but focuses on recent legal developments, for his main aim is to lay out the constitutional implications of "the egalitarian strand in our civic culture." Karst asks readers whether these egalitarian values "ring true as part of what many Americans today accept as our national tradition," without insisting that most Americans always did so (1989, 33, 42, 217). Even so, he cites Gleason and concurs that the American national ideology has led to the gradual "enlargement of the national community." But Karst knows well that American policies have long voiced precepts—including "Protestant domination, white supremacy, and the dependency of women on men"—that are diametrically opposed to what he terms the "central values" of "today's American civic culture." He therefore takes a step Myrdal and Hartz resisted. Karst states that the American Creed has had "self-contradictory" elements, and he holds that Americans have been guilty of "hypocrisy," producing "huge exceptions" to our willingness to live up to our egalitarian ideals (pp. 30–32, 40, 47, 62, 172, 179, 181, 188, 210–11, 215, 228, 242).

These accusations of inconsistency and hypocrisy are significant concessions to the prevalence of egalitarian traditions; but they still presume that Americans' more liberal and democratic beliefs are their "real" ones. Karst does not explain why, given the contradictory elements of our ideology, only conformity with the egalitarian ones counts as con-

sistency and only compliance with the creed's non-liberal values constitutes hypocrisy. Nor does he clarify why the exclusionary policies that have prevailed during most of U.S. history should be identified as "exceptions" (however "huge") to its ideals. By failing even to raise these issues, Karst largely leaves the conventional narrative of American membership intact.

Lawrence Fuchs's massive study of ethnicity and race in America defines the nation's *civic culture* as based essentially on three beliefs derived from the founders' understanding of republicanism: that "ordinary men and women" are entitled to representative self-governance, that "all who live in the political community" should be able to "participate in public life as equals," and that citizens should have freedom for different religious outlooks and other sorts of pursuits in their private lives (1990, 4–6). Fuchs structures his book around (1) a discussion of this civic culture, characterized by the "voluntary pluralism" these principles support, and (2) three surveys of those long kept "outside the civic culture" by coercion: Native Americans; African-Americans; Asians and Mexicans. Next, Fuchs tells the story of the "triumph of the civic culture," the movement of these peoples toward full inclusion.

His book is, in its details, quite free of factual illusions. Fuchs notes that "the Euro-American determination to maintain a racially exclusive civic culture" was not abandoned until the 1960s to 1980s, making clear that such efforts have been powerful through the bulk of U.S. history (1990, 79). Yet in three ways, the design of Fuchs's analysis gives unwarranted support to whiggish narratives of American progress toward full conformity with the nation's inclusive "core" principles. First and most obviously, Fuchs (like his teacher Hartz) does not discuss the exclusion of women from full citizenship. It is true that women were always said to be American citizens, while many members of racial minorities were not; and it is hard for one book to cover all topics. But Fuchs contends that the civic culture fostered by the founders trusts *both* men and women to elect representatives and that all in the political community should be able to participate in public life as equals. Since women did not so participate through most of U.S. history, Fuchs must add that the founders extended this principle only to "white adult males." There is then no reason why an account of those outside his civic culture should not include the struggles of women to participate in public life as equals. Such omissions or minimizations of excluded groups characterize every author in the Tocquevillian tradition. Although many writers have had justifications for their emphases, the cumulative effect of these persistent failures to lay out the full pattern of civic exclusions has been to make it all too easy for scholars to conclude that egalitarian inclusiveness has been the norm. Once we recall that the exceptions have often defined the status of over half the domestic adult population in the United States (a fact that forces us to take note of the unequal civic status of

women), then the exceptions obviously have great claim to be ranked as rival norms.

Second, Fuchs's definition of his organizing category, the civic culture, is questionable. Why should only the principles encompassed by "voluntary pluralism" count as parts of the civic culture? Why should the principles officially employed to deny eligibility for full citizenship to so many others be treated as "outside" that culture? It is surely more appropriate to treat the nation's political culture as including all American residents, and the rationales for denying political equality to many. Fuchs's narrow use of "civic culture" provides illicit support for his claim that the "core of the national community" has been voluntaristic liberal values, despite the masses subjected to "coercive pluralisms."

Finally, Fuchs concludes that by the 1980s, the struggles against the various "old systems" of ascriptive inequality "had succeeded" and that problems of "racial, religious, a nationality conflict" were no longer so serious. *Class* barriers to social progress had now become the most difficult to overcome (1990, 492-93). Perhaps so. But Fuchs has structured his whole historical analysis in ways that minimize ethnic and racial ideologies, and he never explores why such illiberal ideas and practices have had recurring power in American life. Thus his optimism that they have been laid to rest may not be justified. The contrasting lessons suggested by a multiple-traditions approach to American politics can be seen by analyzing the development of American laws of nationality and citizenship following Reconstruction—a period in many ways parallel to our own.

THE MULTIPLE-TRADITIONS THESIS OF AMERICAN CIVIC IDENTITY

It seems prudent to stress what is not proposed here. This is not a call for analysts to minimize the significance of white male political actors or their conflicts with each other. Neither is it a call for accounts that assail "Eurocentric" white male oppressors on behalf of diverse but always heroic subjugated groups. The multiple-traditions thesis holds that Americans share a *common* culture but one more complexly and multiply constituted than is usually acknowledged. Most members of all groups have shared and often helped to shape all the ideologies and institutions that have structured American life, including ascriptive ones. A few have done so while resisting all subjugating practices. But members of every group have sometimes embraced "essentialist" ideologies valorizing their own ascriptive traits and denigrating those of others, to bleak effect. Cherokees enslaved blacks, (Perdue, 1979), champions of women's rights disparaged blacks and immigrants, (DuBois 1978); and blacks have often been hostile toward Hispanics and other new immigrants (Daniels 1990, 323, 376). White men, in turn, have been prominent among those

combating invidious exclusions, as well as those imposing them.

Above all, recognition of the strong attractions of restrictive Americanist ideas does not imply any denial that America's liberal and democratic traditions have had great normative and political potency, even if they have not been so hegemonic as some claim.⁹ Instead, it sheds a new—and, in some respects, more flattering—light on the constitutive role of liberal democratic values in American life. Although some Americans have been willing to repudiate notions of democracy and universal rights, most have not; and though many have tried to blend those commitments with exclusionary ascriptive views, the illogic of these mixes has repeatedly proven a major resource for successful reformers. But we obscure the difficulty of those reforms (and thereby diminish their significance) if we slight the ideological and political appeal of contrary ascriptive traditions by portraying them as merely the shadowy side of a hegemonic liberal republicanism.

At its heart, the multiple-traditions thesis holds that the definitive feature of American political culture has been not its liberal, republican, or "ascriptive Americanist" elements but, rather, this more complex pattern of apparently inconsistent combinations of the traditions, accompanied by recurring conflicts. Because standard accounts neglect this pattern, they do not explore how and why Americans have tried to uphold aspects of all three of these heterogeneous traditions in combinations that are longer on political and psychological appeal than on intellectual coherency.

A focus on these questions generates an understanding of American politics that differs from Tocquevillian ones in four major respects. First, on this view, purely liberal and republican conceptions of civic identity are seen as frequently unsatisfying to many Americans, because they contain elements that threaten, rather than affirm, sincere, reputable beliefs in the propriety of the privileged positions that whites, Christianity, Anglo-Saxon traditions, and patriarchy have had in the United States. At the same time, even Americans deeply attached to those inegalitarian arrangements have also had liberal democratic values. Second, it has therefore been typical, not aberrational, for Americans to embody strikingly opposed beliefs in their institutions, such as doctrines that blacks should and should not be full and equal citizens. But though American efforts to blend aspects of opposing views have often been remarkably stable, the resulting tensions have still been important sources of change. Third, when older types of ascriptive inequality, such as slavery, have been rejected as unduly illiberal, it has been normal, not anomalous, for many Americans to embrace new doctrines and institutions that reinvigorate the hierarchies they esteem in modified form. Changes toward greater inequality and exclusion, as well as toward greater equality and inclusiveness, thus can and do occur. Finally, the dynamics of American development cannot simply be seen as a rising tide of

liberalizing forces progressively submerging contrary beliefs and practices. The national course has been more serpentine. The economic, political, and moral forces propelling the United States toward liberal democracy have often been heeded by American leaders, especially since World War II. But the currents pulling toward fuller expression of alleged natural and cultural inequalities have also always won victories. In some eras they have predominated, appearing to define not only the path of safety but that of progress. In all eras, including our own, many Americans have combined their allegiance to liberal democracy with beliefs that the presence of certain groups favored by history, nature, and God has made Americans an intrinsically "special" people. Their adherents have usually regarded such beliefs as benign and intellectually well founded; yet they also have always had more or less harsh discriminatory corollaries.

To test these multiple-traditions claims, consider the United States in 1870. By then the Civil War and Reconstruction had produced dramatic advances in the liberal and democratic character of America's laws. Slavery was abolished. All persons born in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction were deemed citizens of the United States and the states in which they resided, regardless of their race, creed or gender. None could be denied voting rights on racial grounds. The civil rights of all were newly protected through an array of national statutes. The 1790 ban on naturalizing Africans had been repealed, and expatriation declared a natural right. Over the past two decades women had become more politically engaged and had begun to gain respect as political actors.

Confronted with these developments, what would Tocquevillian analysts have predicted for the next half-century of American life? Louis Hartz would have insisted that so long as the humanity of blacks, other races, and women was publicly acknowledged, the United States would have to grant them equal access to full citizenship. Myrdal, Karst, and Fuchs would have anticipated that surviving prejudices might produce resistance to implementation of the new legal expressions of the American Creed; but they would expect this opposition to be gradually, if painfully, overcome. Tocqueville on the other hand, would have been too pessimistic. He would have deplored the intrusion of women into politics, expected Native Americans to continue toward extinction, and foreseen deepening conflicts between whites and blacks that would probably end in some sort of destructive cataclysm.

None would have had the intellectual resources to explain what in fact occurred. Over the next fifty years, Americans did not make blacks, women, and members of other races full and equal citizens, nor did racial and gender prejudices undergo major erosion. Neither, however, were minorities and women declared to be subhuman and outside the body politic. And although white Americans engaged in extensive violence against blacks and Native Ameri-

cans, those groups grew in population, and no cataclysm loomed. Instead, intellectual and political elites worked out the most elaborate theories of racial and gender hierarchy in U.S. history and partially embodied them in a staggering array of new laws governing naturalization, immigration, deportation, voting rights, electoral institutions, judicial procedures, and economic rights—but only partially. The laws retained important liberal and democratic features, and some were strengthened. They had enough purchase on the moral and material interests of most Americans to compel advocates of inequality to adopt contrived, often clumsy means to achieve their ends.

The considerable success of the proponents of inegalitarian ideas reflects the power these traditions have long had in America.¹⁰ But after the Civil War, Spencerian and Darwinian evolutionary theories enormously strengthened the intellectual prestige of doctrines presenting the races and sexes as naturally arrayed into what historians have termed a "raciocultural hierarchy," as well as a "hierarchy of sex." Until the end of the nineteenth century, most evolutionists were neo-Lamarckians who thought acquired characteristics could be inherited. Thus beliefs in biological differences were easily merged with the Teutonist historians' views that peoples were the products of historical and cultural forces. Both outlooks usually presented the current traits of the races as fixed for the foreseeable future. Few intellectuals were shy about noting the implications of these views for public policy. Anthropologist Daniel G. Brinton made typical arguments in his 1895 presidential address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He contended that the "black, brown and red races" each had "a peculiar mental temperament which has become hereditary," leaving them constitutionally "recreant to the codes of civilization." Brinton believed that this fact had not been adequately appreciated by American lawmakers. Henceforth, conceptions of "race, nations, tribes" had to "supply the only sure foundations for legislation; not *a priori* notions of the rights of man" (1895, p. 249; see also Boller 1969, 180–85; Degler 1991, 15–16, 107, 397; Haller 1971, 11, 125–27; Ross 1991, 64–77; Russett 1989, 74–75, 204–5; Stocking 1968, 55, 122).

As Brinton knew, many politicians and judges had already begun to seize on such suggestions. In 1882, for example, California senator John Miller drew on the Darwinian "law of the 'survival of the fittest'" to explain that "forty centuries of Chinese life" had "ground into" the Chinese race characteristics that made them unbeatable competitors against the free white man. They were "automatic engines of flesh and blood," of "obtuse nerve," marked by degradation and demoralization, and thus far below the Anglo-Saxon, but were still a threat to the latter's livelihood in a market economy. Hence, Miller argued, the immigration of Chinese laborers must be banned. His bill prevailed, many expressing concern that these Chinese would otherwise become American citizens (Miller 1882, 1484–85, cf. 1548, 1583). The Chinese Exclusion Act was not a vestige of the past

but something new, the first repudiation of America's long history of open immigration; and it was justified in terms of the postwar era's revived racial theories.

Yet although men like Miller not only sustained but expanded Chinese exclusions until they were made virtually total in 1917 (and tight restrictions survived until 1965), they never managed to deny American citizenship to all of the "Chinese race." Until 1917 there were no restrictions on the immigration of upper-class Chinese, and in 1898 the Supreme Court declared that children born on U.S. soil to Chinese parents were American citizens (Daniels 1990, 278; *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* 1898). Birthplace citizenship was a doctrine enshrined in common law, reinforced by the Fourteenth Amendment, and vital to citizenship for the children of *all* immigrant aliens. Hence it had enough legal and political support to override the Court's recognition of Congress's exclusionary desires. Even so, in other cases the Court sustained bans on Chinese immigration while admitting the racial animosities behind them, as in the "Chinese Exclusion Case" (*Chae Chan Ping v. United States* 1889); upheld requirements for Chinese-Americans to have certificates of citizenship not required of whites (*Fong Yue Ting v. United States* 1893); and permitted officials to deport even Chinese persons who had later been judged by courts to be native-born U.S. citizens (*United States v. Ju Toy* 1905).

The upshot, then, was the sort of none-too-coherent mix that the multiple-traditions thesis holds likely. Chinese were excluded on racial grounds, but race did not bar citizenship to those born in the United States; yet Chinese ancestry could subject some American citizens to burdens, including deportation, that others did not face. The mix was not perfect from any ideological viewpoint, but it was politically popular. It maintained a valued inclusive feature of American law (birthplace citizenship) while sharply reducing the resident Chinese population (Daniels 1990, 240). And it most fully satisfied the increasingly powerful champions of Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

From 1887 on, academic reformers and politicians sought to restrict immigration more generally by a means that paid lip service to liberal norms even as it aimed at racist results—the literacy test. On its face, this measure expressed concern only for the intellectual merits of immigrants. But the test's true aims were spelled out in 1896 by its sponsor, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, a Harvard Ph.D. in history and politics. Committee research, he reported, showed that the test would exclude "the Italians, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Greeks, and Asiatics," thereby preserving "the quality of our race and citizenship." Citing "modern history" and "modern science," Thomas Carlyle and Gustave le Bon, Lodge contended that the need for racial exclusion arose from "something deeper and more fundamental than anything which concerns the intellect." Race was above all constituted by moral characteristics, the "stock of ideas, traditions, sentiments, modes of thought" that a people possessed as an "accumula-

tion of centuries of toil and conflict." These mental and moral qualities constituted the "soul of a race," an inheritance in which its members "blindly believe," and upon which learning had no effect. But these qualities could be degraded if "a lower race mixes with a higher"; thus, exclusion by race, not reading ability, was the nation's proper goal (Lodge 1896, 2817–20).

When the literacy test finally passed in 1917 but proved ineffective in keeping out "lower races," Congress moved to versions of an explicitly racist national-origins quota system. It banned virtually all Asians and permitted European immigration only in ratios preserving the northern European cast of the American citizenry. Congressman Albert Johnson, chief author of the most important quota act in 1924, proclaimed that through it, "the day of indiscriminate acceptance of all races, has definitely ended." The quota system, repealed only in 1965, was a novel, elaborate monument to ideologies holding that access to American citizenship should be subject to racial and ethnic limits. It also served as the prime model for similar systems in Europe and Latin America (Daniels 1990, 282–84; Dowty 1987, 90–91).

Lodge, the architect of racist immigration restrictions, was a Republican who in 1890 had barely failed to push through a bill reviving enforcement of Reconstruction civil rights statutes. In addition to partisan motives, that effort had reflected Yankee beliefs that northern culture could lift up American blacks. Soon, however, even Boston Brahmins like Lodge, along with religious leaders and scholars in almost every field, began admitting that their racial ideologies undercut the case for equal rights for all American people of color. Compulsion to do so came not only from their advocacy of immigration restrictions but also from their support for America's new imperialism. The nation's colonial acquisitions in the Pacific and the Caribbean during the late 1890s permitted its leaders to feel more comparable to the great powers of Europe, who shared the "White Man's Burden." And most leaders accepted, as the *Nation* wrote in 1898, that the "varied assortment of inferior races" inhabiting America's new possessions "of course, could not be allowed to vote." Eventually, in 1917, Puerto Ricans were made U.S. citizens but, again, of a lower grade. They were not granted votes in federal elections, nor did they receive all the constitutional rights of other citizens. The Supreme Court sustained these positions, holding that while Puerto Ricans were now citizens, Puerto Rico had not truly been "incorporated" into the United States (*Balzac v. Puerto Rico* 1922; Higham 1966, 108–9; Painter 1987, 142, 147, 152, 161; Woodward 1966, 72–74). Thus here, too, Americans constructed a civic status that did not fully satisfy either those who believed that all U.S. citizens should have equal rights or those who thought that inferior races should be denied citizenship. It was another of the "anomalous" statuses that somehow encompassed the majority of all Americans.

What Myrdal rightly termed the "explosion" of racist ideologies during these years also abetted the

most famous example of such a mixed status—the Jim Crow system of “separate but equal” laws and practices (Woodward 1966, 74). Sobering evidence in this regard is a speech by Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1908) to a Virginia audience. Adams was the great grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, grandson of an antislavery congressman, and a veteran of both the Union Army and liberal reform movements. But he now said that the “‘glittering generalities’ of the Declaration of Independence” and the beliefs in racial equality during Reconstruction seemed “strangely remote, archaic even.” The scientific views of Darwin had superseded scriptural views of the brotherhood of man, making it clear that the Reconstruction policy of 1866 was a blunder that was “worse than a crime.” The solution to the “race problem” now had to be “worked out in the South,” without northern protests against segregation (pp. 16–19).

The renewed acceptance of doctrines of racial hierarchy after 1870 is also visible in judicial rulings like that of Oregon district judge Matthew Deady, a rare champion of Chinese immigrant rights. In 1880 he ruled that a person of half Native American descent could not be naturalized because he was neither white nor of African ancestry, as the 1870 naturalization statute required. Deady wrote that it might seem strange that blacks could gain citizenship but that “the intermediate and much-better-qualified red and yellow races” could not. He explained that Africans were “not likely to emigrate,” so that the 1870 act was “merely a harmless piece of legislative buncombe” (*In re Camille* 1880). Such disdain for Reconstruction laws hardly communicated to southern whites that those measures had to be strictly observed.

But despite the new prevalence of such attitudes on the part of northern and western elites in the late nineteenth century, the Reconstruction amendments and statutes were still on the books, and surviving liberal sentiments made repealing them politically difficult. Believers in racial inequality were, moreover, undecided on just what to do about blacks. As Joel Williamson has shown, “Radical” racists (e.g., the nation’s chief statistician, Cornell professor Walter Willcox) argued that blacks, like other lower races, should be excluded from American society and looked hopefully for evidence that they were dying out. Their position was consistent with Hartz’s claim that Americans could not tolerate permanent unequal statuses; persons must either be equal citizens or outsiders. But those whom Williamson terms “Conservatives” believed, like the antebellum Whigs, that blacks and other people of color might instead have a permanent “place” in America, so long as “placeness included hierarchy.” Some still thought that blacks, like the other “lower races,” might one day be led by whites to fully civilized status, but no one expected progress in the near future. Thus blacks should instead be segregated, largely disfranchised, and confined to menial occupations via inferior education and discriminatory hiring practices—but not expelled, tortured, or killed. A few talented blacks

might even be allowed somewhat higher stations (Williamson 1984, 7, 28–29, 86, 122, 224; see also Ashworth 1983, 222–23).

In the heyday of Jim Crow, Radical racist views were most influential, far stronger than fading liberal ones, but they were not powerful enough to generate the violent elimination of blacks that Tocqueville feared and many white racists sought. Instead, the result was a system closest to Conservative desires, one that kept blacks in their place, although that place was structured more repressively than most Conservatives favored. And unlike the ineffective literacy test, here racial inegalitarians achieved much of what they wanted without explicitly violating liberal legal requirements. Complex registration systems, poll taxes, and civics tests appeared race-neutral but were designed and administered to disfranchise blacks. This intent was little masked. Even progressives like Carter Glass called openly for achieving racial disfranchisement by indirect means. He urged the 1901–2 Virginia Constitutional Convention to adopt every “discrimination within the letter of the law” that promised “the elimination of every Negro voter who can be gotten rid of.” These efforts succeeded. Most dramatically, in Louisiana 95.6% of blacks were registered in 1896, and over half (130,000) voted. After disfranchising measures, black registration dropped by 90% and by 1904 totaled only 1,342. The Supreme Court found convoluted ways to close its eyes to these tactics (Kousser 1974, 49, 262; Schmidt 1982, 846–47; Woodward 1966, 90–92; and see, e.g., *Giles v. Harris* 1903 and *Giles v. Teasley* 1904).

By similar devices, blacks were virtually eliminated from juries in the south, where 90% of American blacks lived, sharply limiting their ability to have their personal and economic rights protected by the courts (Schmidt 1983). “Separate but equal” educational and business laws and practices also stifled the capacities of blacks to participate in the nation’s economy as equals, severely curtailed the occupations they could train for, and marked them—unofficially but clearly—as an inferior caste. Thus here, as elsewhere, it was evident that the nation’s laws and institutions were not meant to confer the equal civic status they proclaimed for all Americans; but neither did they conform fully to doctrines favoring overt racial hierarchy. They represented another asymmetrical compromise among the multiple ideologies vying to define American political culture.

So, too, did the policies governing two groups whose civic status formally improved during these years: Native Americans and women. In 1884, the Supreme Court ruled that Native Americans were not native-born U.S. citizens, even though they were born on lands over which the United States claimed sovereignty (*Elk v. Wilkins* 1884). They were “wards” inhabiting “domestic dependent nations.” Yet federal policy in these years aimed at making them U.S. citizens, and eventually all were made so by the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. To U.S. officials, preparing Native Americans for citizenship meant “civilizing” them, that is, displacing their traditional

religions, family structures, and systems of subsistence, landholding, and tribal governance with Christianity, heterosexual monogamy, and self-sufficient farming on individually held lands, thereby ending tribal existences. The 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act was a keystone of this effort. It reassigned tribal lands and extended U.S. citizenship to individual Native Americans, subject to a 25-year period of federal trusteeship before those individuals could assume full land rights (and hence full rights as citizens). Not incidentally, the act also made huge amounts of "surplus" tribal lands available to whites. These assimilationist policies were defended by the same racial theories that argued for tutelary Anglo-Saxon governance of "lower races" abroad. Indeed, many legislators not only supported but linked Native American assimilation and imperialist policies. And even after 1924, states subjected their new Native American citizens to disfranchising devices and other forms of discrimination similar to those imposed on blacks. Hence although Native Americans became citizens in this era, the process was more coercive than consensual, and they, too, became Americans who were sometimes treated as bearers of equal rights, sometimes as a group subject to restrictions that other Americans did not face (Ragsdale 1989, 406-15; Williams 1980, 823-28; Wolfley 1991, 177-89).

Women took a major step toward full citizenship when they gained the vote via the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. But women were little more favored than nonwhites by the evolutionary theorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Darwin wrote that many of the defining characteristics of women were "characteristics of the lower races, therefore of a past and lower state of civilization," typified by the domination of sexual and spiritual emotions over reason. Thus women, like black men, were often lovable but ultimately childlike (Degler 1991, 26; Russett 1989, 11-12). Many female activists did not repudiate these views so much as adapt them, allowing women's special vulnerabilities to justify laws "protecting" them in the workplace and contending that their domestic nature gave women insights into social problems that would render them valuable in the voting booth (Cott 1987, 25-27, 53-81; Flexner 1975, 274-323).

Thus when American women gained the suffrage, for many the struggle for gender equality had not culminated but rather had been limited, postponed, or abandoned. Until 1922, federal measures taken during this era deepened, rather than modified, the dependence of women's citizenship on that of their husbands (see, e.g., *Mackenzie v. Hare* 1915). Although the 1922 Cable Act permitted women to retain American citizenship even if they married aliens, it excepted those who married men "ineligible by race for naturalization." And long after 1920, legislatures and courts maintained rules that discouraged female voting and jury service (Smith 1989, 273-84). Despite some major modifications, then, women, like blacks, Native Americans, and most Asian Americans, re-

mained both officially equal citizens and legitimately subject to special restrictions based on their perceived biological and cultural weaknesses.

This period also highlights how the influence of inegalitarian doctrines has not been confined to white male intellectuals, legislators, and judges. The leading writer of the early twentieth-century women's movement, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, was a thoroughgoing Darwinian who accepted that evolution had made women inferior to men in certain respects, although she insisted that these differences were usually exaggerated and that altered social conditions could transform them (Gilman 1966, 99-145; Russett 1989, 13-14). And even as he attacked Booker T. Washington for appearing to accept the "alleged inferiority of the Negro race," W. E. B. DuBois embraced the widespread Lamarckian view that racial characteristics were socially conditioned but then inherited as the "soul" of a race. He could thus accept that most blacks were "primitive folk" in need of tutelage, of an "emotional," mystical, "essentially artistic" nature. Hence they were best led by the "Talented Tenth" who had risen, like DuBois himself, to civilized rationality (Reed 1992, 131-37).

The acceptance of ascriptive inegalitarian beliefs by brilliant and politically dissident female and black male intellectuals strongly suggests that these ideas had broad appeal. Writers whose interests they did not easily serve still saw them as persuasive in light of contemporary scientific theories and empirical evidence of massive inequalities. It is likely, too, that for many the vision of a meaningful natural order that these doctrines provided had the psychological and philosophical appeal that such positions have always had for human beings, grounding their status and significance in something greater and more enduring than their own lives. No doubt that grounding was especially reassuring to many old-stock Americans whose material, political, and social positions had been unsettled by immigration, industrialization, and urbanization, as many argue. But these inegalitarian views should not be seen as simply reactive and fearful. For many, they spawned confidence that the intellectual keys to a better future had been found. And these views were often widely shared by constituencies that consisted of much more than simply capitalists, or the Protestant middle class, or even that group combined with native-born workers. In an 1879 referendum, for example, Californians cast 154,638 ballots against permitting Chinese immigration, 883 in favor; Nevada had similar results the next year (Hutchinson 1981, 75-77). Such overwhelming support suggests that these doctrines appealed to Americans' anxieties and economic interests, but also to their loyalties, their hopes, and their minds.

In sum, if we accept that ideologies and institutions of ascriptive hierarchy have shaped America in interaction with its liberal and democratic features, we can make more sense of a wide range of inegalitarian policies newly contrived after 1870 and perpetuated through much of the twentieth century. Those poli-

cies were dismantled only through great struggles, aided by international pressures during World War II and the Cold War; and it is not clear that these struggles have ended. The novelties in the policies and scientific doctrines of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era should alert us to the possibility that new intellectual systems and political forces defending racial and gender inequalities may yet gain increased power in our own time.

The civil rights reforms of the 1960s and 1970s are not as seriously threatened today as were the civil rights measures of the 1860s in the 1890s. Yet leading scholars like Richard Epstein now argue that the nation should eliminate all race-conscious laws, even the 1964 Civil Rights Act, in favor of programs of black self-help in the marketplace—precisely the position many nineteenth-century “liberals” used to justify abandoning Reconstruction (Epstein 1992). Also like these nineteenth-century predecessors, Epstein ultimately grounds his laissez-faire views not so much on a doctrine of human rights as on evolutionary biology, undaunted by how others then and now have used such views to explain racial as well as economic inequalities (Epstein 1985, 341, n. 19; Fairchild 1991). But though this blend of economics and sociobiology has disturbing precursors, some influential contemporary black leaders, such as Justice Clarence Thomas and economist Thomas Sowell, like Booker T. Washington before them, are aligned with such “self-help” views.

Racial, nativist, and religious tensions are also prominent in American life, as the Buchanan and Duke campaigns, the Christian Coalition, the Los Angeles riots, the English-Only agitation, the popularity of anti-Japanese novels, renewed patterns of residential segregation, and the upsurge of separatist ideologies among many younger minority scholars all indicate. The discourse about the “ethno-underclass” is particularly striking, for as Lawrence Fuchs notes, poor urban minorities are often portrayed as historically and socially conditioned to possess foreign moral values (1990, 487–89). The political message that these accounts convey often resembles, however unintentionally, that of Lodge’s similar characterizations of undesirable “races”: these groups appear so irreparably different and dangerous that they do not merit equal status in the political community.

It is too early to assess the significance of these aspects of current American life. The achievements of Americans in building a more inclusive democracy certainly provide reasons to believe that illiberal forces will not prevail. But just as we can better explain the nation’s past by recognizing how and why liberal democratic principles have been contested with frequent success, we will better understand the present and future of American politics if we do not presume they are rooted in essentially liberal or democratic values and conditions. Instead, we must analyze America as the ongoing product of often conflicting multiple traditions.

Notes

1. The percentage varies according to whether one dates the United States from 1776, the Declaration of Independence, or 1789, the ratified Constitution. State policies prior to 1789 on the whole made nonwhites and women ineligible for full citizenship. Women could always formally be U.S. citizens, but they were almost universally denied the vote until 1920, making them clearly second-class citizens. Other overt legal discriminations on their political and economic rights continued through the 1960s. Naturalization was confined to whites from 1790 through 1868 and closed to most Asian nationals until 1952. By then, the national origins quota system of immigration restrictions, enacted in the 1920s, prevented most Asians and many southern Europeans from coming to the United States and becoming permanent residents or citizens, explicitly because of their original nationality or ethnicity. That system was not repealed until 1965. Despite formal constitutional guarantees enacted in the mid-1860s, blacks were also widely denied basic rights of citizenship until the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act (Higham 1975, 29–66; Kettner 1978, 287–322; Smith 1989). Thus, though the specifics changed, denials of access to full citizenship based explicitly on race, ethnicity, or gender always denied large majorities of the world’s population any opportunity for U.S. citizenship up to 1965. That represents about 83% of the nation’s history since the Constitution, 88% since the Declaration of Independence. If, controversially, one assumes that women became full citizens with the vote in 1920, then a majority of the domestic adult population became legally eligible for full citizenship then. This still means that a majority of domestic adults were ineligible for full citizenship on racial, ethnic, or gender grounds for about two-thirds of U.S. history (from either starting point).

2. Orren (1991), a major alternative critique of Tocquevillian accounts, shows ascriptive inegalitarian labor systems long prevailed even among white men.

3. From early on, many American intellectuals and politicians believed that “like the Chain of Being, the races of man consisted of an ordered hierarchy” (Haller 1971, 11; Russett 1989, 201–3). Some believed in a natural order of rank among the races, some that cultures fell into a higher and lower levels of civilization. Most thought race and culture linked. Scholars disagreed about the relative ranks of Asiatics, blacks, Native Americans, and other races and cultures, but these gradations mattered less than the supremacy of whites over nonwhites. Mulattoes, for example, were legally treated as an intermediate racial group in antebellum America, but by the 1850s whites began to reduce their status to that of “pure” blacks (Williamson 1980).

4. A tradition here is comprised by (1) a worldview or ideology that defines basic political and economic institutions, the persons eligible to participate in them, and the roles or rights to which they are entitled and (2) institutions and practices embodying and reproducing those precepts. Hence traditions are not *merely* sets of ideas. The liberal tradition involves limited government, the rule of law protecting individual rights, and a market economy, all officially open to all minimally rational adults. The republican tradition is grounded on popular sovereignty exercised via institutions of mass self-governance. It includes an ethos of civic virtue and economic regulation for the public good. Adherents of what I term ascriptive Americanist traditions believe true Americans are in some way “chosen” by God, history, or nature to possess superior moral and intellectual traits, often associated with race and gender. Hence many Americanists believe that nonwhites and women should be governed as subjects or second-class citizens, denied full market rights, and sometimes excluded from the nation altogether. My thesis—that an evolving mix of these traditions is visible in America’s political culture, institutions, and the outlooks of Americans of *all* backgrounds—is indebted to Orren and Skowronek 1993.

5. Other major Tocquevillian works include Daniel

Boorstin's (1953) *Genius of American Politics* and S. M. Lipset's (1963) *First New Nation*.

6. As a full survey of pertinent works is impossible, I shall note some broad categories of scholarship in which most participants employ a misleading Tocquevillian framework, focusing on recent general discussions of American political culture and citizenship, where the limits of Tocquevillian premises are most damaging.

7. This Tocquevillian outlook has since been endorsed by writers as different as Samuel P. Huntington, who wrote in 1981 that the United States is virtually unique because the "political ideas of the American Creed"—not ancestry, ethnicity, religion or culture—have been the basis of American national identity, and Michael Walzer, who in 1990 endorsed Gleason's formulation and added that in America, with "severe but episodic exceptions," tolerance "has been the cultural norm." Walzer reached this conclusion while setting aside discussion of blacks and, implicitly, women's second-class citizenship as well (Huntington 1981, 23–25; Walzer 1990, 597–98, 610–11 [including n. 30]).

8. Several earlier works on citizenship employed frameworks closer to the one developed here. Hans Kohn's (1957) *American Nationalism* analyzed American nationality in terms of three similar foundations: the Enlightenment tradition of liberty, federal republicanism, and the interaction of the predominant Anglo-American cultural tradition with those of other national origins (pp. 9, 135, 165, 173, 252, n. 45). But writing before Bailyn and Pocock, Kohn treated federal republicanism as essentially a structural determinant of American nationality and saw its ideological content as derived chiefly from liberalism. And though Kohn recognized that the United States had often demanded assimilation into a "distinct national identity" built on English roots, his focus on the English commitment to liberty led him to downplay how illiberal-exclusivist this conception often was (pp. 13, 21, 28, 165–69). Mark Roelofs's (1957) *Tension of Citizenship* analyzed citizenship generally—and American citizenship incidentally—in terms of three patterns focusing on (1) "pride and participation" in the "communal life of the civic republic"; (2) "loyalty and service" to an "organic community"; and (3) individualistic and universalistic defiance to claims of particular communities and concern for protection of personal privacy. Though he labels these three "Greek," "Hebraic," and "Christian-Roman," they resemble the civic republican, ascriptive Americanist, and Enlightenment liberal elements I argue to be the chief original ideological traditions shaping American civic culture. Roelofs, however, conforms to orthodoxy in emphasizing the dominance of individualistic, rationalistic Enlightenment liberalism in America (pp. 31, 37, 76, 116–18, 125–31, 150–65). Yehoshua Arieli (1964) also chiefly identified American nationality with liberal republican political principles. But he discerned an "awareness of belonging to a national organic community whose values are to a certain degree not transferable." Thus he saw the "tension created by these two competing types of national consciousness" as perhaps the chief determinant of the "structure and course of American nationalism" (pp. 29–30). The present argument is partly an elaboration and justification of that insight. James Kettner (1978) published a seminal study of citizenship laws that attended to the status of women, blacks, and Native Americans. But like Myrdal, Kettner treated liberal and republican ideals as Americans' genuine beliefs and racially inegalitarian ones as simply "deep-seated prejudices," not explicit ideologies (pp. 3, 10, 349–51). More recent writers have combined the republican and religious revisions of Hartz by identifying three strands in American nationality, placing a "biblical" or "Christian" tradition alongside civic republican and individualistic liberal ones (Bellah et al., 1985; Kloppenber 1987). But religious elements are better seen as bound up with all three of the traditions identified here. When they are taken as grounds for denying citizenship, as in Protestant nativism, they are closest to ascriptive Americanism; but religion is not the only source of Americanism, nor can Americanists claim to be the "authentic" voices of American religiosity. Sinopoli (1992) analyzes American citizenship only

in terms of liberalism and republicanism, ignoring issues of racial, ethnic, and sexual civic statuses entirely.

9. I also agree that tensions between liberal and democratic ideas and institutions have been vital factors in American history, visible, for example, in the great struggles between the defenders of property rights and populist and labor movements. Those conflicts have, however, also always involved battles over the nation's racial, ethnic, and gender ordering.

10. From colonial times, American elites studied European naturalists' classifications of humanity into races, whose distinctive moral and intellectual characteristics created, at least implicitly, a rank order among them. Johann Blumenbach designated the "Caucasian" race as the original and "most beautiful" human race, of which others were progressive "degenerations" (Haller 1971, 5). In the antebellum period, Blumenbach's work was a reference for the "American School" of ethnology, led by physicians Samuel Morton, Josiah Nott, and John Van Evrie and supported by Harvard biologist Louis Aggasiz. Their apparent evidence of biological racial inequalities made racial exploitation of blacks and Native Americans seem reasonable to many (Haller 1971, 6–10; Horsman 1981, 125–35; Lofgren 1987, 99–101). By 1870, Americans had also long entertained doctrines, favored by northern European historians and philosophers, holding that the "Teutonic" and "Anglo-Saxon" peoples had been historically conditioned to be specially capable of self-governance and hence of paternal governance over lesser peoples. These views were echoed even by Whig politicians like Daniel Webster and romantic intellectuals like Ralph Waldo Emerson, who opposed slavery and extermination of the native tribes (Gossett 1963, 84–100; Horsman 1981, 9–42, 158–86; Howe 1979, 38–40; Jordan 1968, 339–41).

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