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# Conservatism in the Black Community

To the Right and Misunderstood

Angela K. Lewis



# Conservatism in the Black Community

“Professor Lewis’ work offers a detailed and penetrating analysis of African American conservative ideology and how it differs from mainstream conservatism. More importantly, she offers unique and rarely seen insights and findings about how well the Reagan Administration succeeded in altering African American public opinion and ideology. Hence, her new book is a must read and the place to start understanding the micro-level characteristics and features of African American conservatism. There is no peer at the moment.”

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“*Conservatism in the Black Community* provides answers to some important questions. Why do so many Blacks identify as conservative? Will Blacks increasingly embrace this ideology as they move into the middle-class? And, perhaps most critically, does this represent a potential opportunity for the Republican Party? Lewis addresses these questions and more with balance, creativity, and care. Her results are both intriguing and surprising.”

—Vincent L. Hutchings, *University of Michigan*

*Conservatism in the Black Community* examines the contemporary meanings of Black Conservatism, providing a basis for understanding the impact this phenomenon has on black political behavior. Lewis analyzes conservatism within the black ideological framework, while also explaining the meaning of conservatism in the black community.

While scholars have argued that the level of support for conservatism among blacks is minimal because conservatism is antithetical to black interest, there are a cadre of conservative political intellectuals and political elites in America. Do their views influence those of the wider Black community? Or does the media merely amplify their voices but with little support from the black community? What part of contemporary Black conservatism has found a home in the Tea Party movement?

Focusing on what conservatism means to Blacks in the community and in what issue areas Blacks as a whole tend to have more conservative views, this work neither critiques nor praises Black Conservatism. The results of Lewis’s mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be of strong interest to students and scholars of Black politics, Black studies, and political behavior more generally.

**Dr. Angela K. Lewis** is associate professor of government at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her research appears in the *National Political Science Review*, *American Review of Politics*, *Journal of African American Studies* and the *International Journal of African Studies*. She was also a contributor for *Whose Black Politics* and *The Constitutionalism of American States*.

## Routledge Series on Identity Politics

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Group identities have been an important part of political life in America since the founding of the republic. For most of this long history, the central challenge for activists, politicians, and scholars concerned with the quality of U.S. democracy was the struggle to bring the treatment of ethnic and racial minorities and women in line with the creedal values spelled out in the nation's charters of freedom. We are now several decades from the key moments of the twentieth century when social movements fractured America's system of ascriptive hierarchy. The gains from these movements have been substantial. Women now move freely in all realms of civil society, hold high elective offices, and constitute more than 50 percent of the workforce. Most African-Americans have now attained middle class status, work in integrated job sites, and live in suburbs. Finally, people of color from nations in Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean now constitute the majority of America's immigration pool.

In the midst of all of these positive changes, however, glaring inequalities between groups persist. Indeed, ethnic and racial minorities remain far more likely to be undereducated, unemployed, and incarcerated than their counterparts who identify as white. Similarly, both violence and work place discrimination against women remain rampant in U.S. society. The Routledge series on identity politics features works that seek to understand the tension between the great strides our society has made in promoting equality between groups and the residual effects of the ascriptive hierarchies in which the old order was rooted.

Some of the core questions that the series will address are: how meaningful are the traditional ethnic, gender, racial, and sexual identities to our understanding of inequality in the present historical moment? Do these identities remain important bases for group mobilization in American politics? To what extent can we expect the state to continue to work for a more level playing field among groups?

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### **Conservatism in the Black Community**

To the Right and Misunderstood

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*But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me.*  
1 Corinthians 15:10 NLT

**Dedicated to Aiden-Lewis**  
**My absolute joy**

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# 1 Introduction

During the summer of 2008, then Democratic presidential hopeful Senator Barack Obama (IL) gave a Father's Day sermon at the Apostolic Church of God in Chicago, where he urged fathers to step up to raise their children. Although Obama spoke of the need for the government to do more to help families, he also stated

Of all the rocks upon which we build our lives, we are reminded today that family is the most important. And we are called to recognize and honor how critical every father is to that foundation. They are teachers and coaches. They are mentors and role models. They are examples of success and the men who constantly push us toward it. But if we are honest with ourselves, we'll admit that what too many fathers also are is missing—missing from too many lives and too many homes. They have abandoned their responsibilities, acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it. You and I know how true this is in the African-American community. We know that more than half of all black children live in single-parent households, a number that has doubled—doubled—since we were children. We know the statistics—that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of schools and 20 times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems, or run away from home or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it.

Traditional family values are at the heart of the conservative tradition in America. But yet, here is a liberal black presidential candidate, Barack Obama, preaching conservative traditional family values. He goes on to state, “We need fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception. We need them to realize that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child. It's the courage to raise one” (*Politico.com* 2008). As a candidate, Senator Barack Obama had a progressive agenda; however, this speech is similar to the rhetoric heard from black conservatives. In the same

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speech, Senator Obama goes on to state, “If we are honest with ourselves, we’ll admit that too many fathers also are missing, missing from too many lives and too many homes” (*Politico.com* 2008).

An enduring dilemma exists in the study of black politics. That dilemma is conservatism in the black community largely because Smith (2010) argues that conservatism in America as a governing ideology is hostile to Blacks and is incompatible with the black struggle for freedom. Dawson (2001) defines the key components of black conservatism as a “reliance on self-help, an attack on the state as a set of institutions that retard societal progress in general and black progress in particular, and belief in the anti-discriminatory aspects of markets, all in the name of service to the black community” (20). He goes on to state that black conservatives believe that political strategies are second to economic strategies for the black community and any program or policy (i.e., affirmative action) that undermines black talent is unproductive and that Blacks should not receive any special privileges due to past treatment because other groups have suffered also. In short, black conservatives support capitalism. They also believe that Blacks’ failure in obtaining the American dream is not due to inequality but rather to the pathological behavior on the part of Blacks.

Due to these beliefs, black conservatives such as Ward Connerly, Alan Keyes, Star Parker, and Clarence Thomas cause controversy. Their rhetoric and views on welfare, affirmative action, abortion, racism, and discrimination are alarming to many. Moreover, scholars suggest their positions are not representative of Blacks. These same scholars also argue that these black conservatives have minimal support within the black community. In short, they are individuals who are co-opted by the Right to provide an alternative voice to black liberalism.

Since the advent of the Reagan revolution, political pundits and scholars alike are perplexed by black conservatives and the existence of conservatism in the black community. The complexity of contemporary conservatism in the black community is that as an electoral group, they provide overwhelming support to the Democratic Party, which equates to support for liberal policies (Meyerson 1984; Tryman 1986; Welch and Foster 1987; Bolce et al. 1992; Dawson 1994; Goode 1996; Simpson 1998). In short, conservatism in the black community is not deducible to Republican partisanship and vote choice in most national elections. Considering the historical evidence of black ties to liberalism which is played out through their support for the Democratic Party, do Blacks in the community support conservatism either as communicated by black conservatives in the media or by mainstream white conservatives? Or do Blacks in the community exhibit a different kind of conservatism? Ultimately, the question this book addresses is, despite support for the Democratic Party and its liberal policies, What does conservatism in the black community mean?

## BLACK CONSERVATISM?

Notwithstanding the fact that Dawson (2001) firmly establishes black conservatism as a part of the black ideological tradition, many argue that the level of support for conservatism among Blacks is minimal because conservatism is antithetical to black interest. In fact, many scholars ask what Blacks are conserving in America especially considering the gross disparities between Blacks and Whites in this country and the permanence of racial inequality (Ondaatje 2010 and Smith 2010). Many believe that there is little conservatism in the black community and that the media amplifies the views of a “minute cadre of political intellectuals and political elites” who gained high government positions as a result of their conservative views (Bracey 2008; Smith 2010; Taylor 2011). This amplification by the media makes it appear that black conservatism is more common than it really is. They conclude that black conservatism is not a movement but an exaggeration of a cadre of individuals who have been strategically placed in the public eye by think tanks, universities, and the Right, consisting solely of journalists, politicians, or academicians who are given more opportunities by the media, the government, corporations, and research organizations to have their views heard (Kilsin 1993; Bracey 2008). This cadre consists of two groups of individuals whose ultimate objective is getting paid (Reed 1997). One group consists of individuals who identify as conservative or take conservative public policy positions and simply espouse their views through various media sources. The other group consists of activists, who are conservative, take conservative public policy positions, but also actively seek to influence public policy by seeking either elected or appointed government office or by running nonprofit organizations. Whether they are activists or merely individuals who espouse their views, the media serves as a conduit for these black conservatives (Randolph 1995), whose audience is whoever is listening. So, do the views of black conservatives in the public eye influence the views of the black community? In other words, have the views of the black conservative cadre permeated the black community?

Major black public opinion organizations argue that a gulf exists between black conservatives and the black community. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies find that Blacks reject a major belief of black conservatives, limited government involvement in social policy (Gaiter 1991). Even as scholars document a conservative trend in the electorate, Blacks often feel that supporting this trend along with their white counterparts is inimical to their interests (Tryman 1986). Smith and Seltzer (1992) also find that Blacks are more liberal than whites in ideological identification and on many policy issues. Consequently, the cadre of black conservatives are unable to convince most Blacks that political conservatism is advantageous. Black conservatives who choose to politically act on their views by running for office as Republicans also tend to lack electoral support from Blacks. Black voters reject successful black conservative candidates at the

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polls; instead they get their support from majority-white districts, not from Blacks (Dawson 2001; Dillard 2001; Mwakikagile 2004; Fauntroy, 2007). In fact, in the 2006 election, Bositis (2006) concludes that Blacks did not shift toward Republicans. In short, the black vote, including the presidential vote, is solidly Democrat (Bositis 2004, 2008, 2010).

Studies also find that conservatism does not have grassroots support among Blacks (Dawson 2001) and it is the least popular ideology in the black ideological tradition (Harris-Lacewell 2004). Taylor (2011) concludes that although Blacks are socially conservative, as a group, they have not mobilized in support of socially conservative policies, nor do Blacks embrace the operational meaning of conservative. Jennings (2002) concludes that the claim made by Faryna et al. (1997) of an increasing number of black conservatives in the community is false. He concludes, "The claim of burgeoning numbers and social influence is not discussed further in the anthology" (226). Mwakikagile (2004) finds further evidence of the lack of black support for conservatism. He concludes that black conservative publications have not gained wide readership in the black community, which is why *Headway*, formerly *National Minority Politics*, ceased publication. In a composite study of conservatism, Walton (2002) finds that the proportion of self-identified conservatism among Blacks has not changed much between 1972 and 1992. Instead, he argues that the Republican Party's strategy is to manipulate black public opinion and give the illusion that there is a conservative movement among Blacks. An important part of this tactical strategy is for black conservatives to saturate the news media, television, print, and radio. They are particularly skilled at utilizing print media through op-ed pieces in newspapers and by writing books that are factually distorted (Hall 2008). Their ultimate objective is to publish research which supports the conservative agenda and to give visibility to black conservatives. For example, the Reagan administration placed several black conservatives in high positions: Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, and Walter Williams. No matter the perceived success of the strategy, Walton (2002) concludes that it is a failure; the views of black conservatives have not permeated black public opinion. For example, Blacks rate Republican candidates less favorably than they rate Democratic candidates. Moreover, Republicans continue to solidify the gulf between themselves and most of the black community. For example, former President George W. Bush's handling of race-related issues sealed the deal between Blacks and Republicans as a tempestuous relationship at best. First, the Bush administration filed a brief in support of the plaintiff against affirmative action in the 2003 *Gratz v. Bollinger* case. Secondly, George W. Bush's lack of a quick response which left millions of Blacks stranded without food and shelter during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina prompted famous rapper Kanye West to accuse him of not liking black people. Finally, his appointment of several conservative judges to the bench drastically reduced the possibility of black support for Republicans. Bush's appointment of Samuel Alito, who is a staunch

conservative who has a record of opposition to affirmative action, further alienates Blacks from the Republican Party. Even more alarming to many was a statement made by the 2012 Republican nominee for president Mitt Romney that he did not have to worry about nearly half of Americans who would vote for President Barack Obama. Romney went on to state that this group of Americans perceived themselves as victims who were dependent on the government. This comment sparked negative reactions among voters both black and white, but Romney later admitted he was wrong for making the statement. Thus, the Republican strategy of utilizing black conservatives has not reshaped black public opinion toward conservatism, and whites are still more likely than Blacks to say they are conservative (Mitchell 2000). In short, a majority of Blacks see black conservatives as race traitors who do nothing to help the black community.

Race traitor and conservatism go hand in hand due to the idea of linked fate or the notion of a black identity or black consciousness. This black identity could explain why political conservatism among Blacks has a negative connotation. Linked fate posits that Blacks have similar experiences and their fate is tied to the fate of other Blacks. Dawson (1994) concludes that regardless of socioeconomic position, Blacks utilize this linked fate as a proxy for voting behavior. Linked fate implies that any variation that may exist in black political attitudes is meaningless because of the similarity of the black experience. As such, race continues its saliency in U.S. politics. Therefore, if linked fate is the driving factor behind black political behavior and black political attitudes, any attempt to explain, study, or discuss differences in black political attitudes to some scholars is futile. Thus the study of black conservatism is unwarranted.

## CONSERVATISM AS A BLACK POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Linked fate or a feeling of closeness to Blacks provides a possible explanation as to why Blacks who have conservative social views continue to vote Democrat. It suggests that because of the unique and shared history of being black in America and the fact that Blacks have a collective fate, Blacks utilize the group as a proxy for their voting behavior. Both Smith and Seltzer (1992) and Dawson (1994) provide possible explanations as to why Blacks continue to vote Democrat.<sup>1</sup> They both discuss the economic liberalism of the black community, which the Democratic Party strongly advances. Despite linked fate and the fact that Blacks vote Democrat, scholars should expect more diversity of opinion (Simpson 1998). Simpson (1998) expands and challenges the stability and consistency of group identity by studying the importance of race to the post-civil rights generation. She concludes that the strength of group consciousness as a variable to explain political attitudes weakens considerably among young black adults. Her work demonstrates how Blacks can and do have different

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opinions although race continues its importance. Furthermore, Cohen (2010) finds that black youth are more socially conservative than youth in general on same-sex marriage, premarital sex, and abortion. She goes on further and concludes that black youth are skeptical as to whether America is now “post-racial.” Thus, Cohen (2010) identifies black youth who are conservative yet at the same time understand the significance and continued salience of race in America.

There is no reason to expect all Blacks to have the same views. Historically, different leaders utilize different strategies and approaches. Obvious examples include Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois as well as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Scholars should not expect the present to be an exception. It is a valuable exercise to analyze and understand the phenomenon of black conservatism within the black ideological tradition. There is also hearty debate over the mere existence and significance of the support for conservatism in the black community. As the general tide of the country moved towards conservatism (Robinson 1984; Robinson and Fleishman 1984; Knight and Erikson 1997; Mitchell 2000), Blacks have not been far behind. It was during the Reagan administration that the Republican Party recouped its efforts to recruit Blacks to the party. Despite these efforts by the conservative right, until recently, scholars and political commentators suggest that conservatives are a homogenous group consisting mostly of white faces, and the possibility of Blacks supporting this group was dim. Dillard (2001), however, notes that conservatism is becoming a multicultural affair, which includes Blacks, Latinos, and homosexuals. Faryna et al. (1997) states, “Social, political, religious, and economic conservatism is a point of view eagerly embraced and aggressively defended by many African Americans today” (xiii) and there are a number of prominent black conservatives. For example, Clarence Thomas, Supreme Court justice; Thomas Sowell, economist; Star Parker, commentator and policy expert; and Anne Wortham, sociologist, are all conservatives who are quite successful in spreading their views (Jones 1987; Toler 1993; Randolph 1995). Dawson (1994) even suggests that a growing black middle class would lend support for a black conservative group. In short, black conservative Star Parker (1997) argues that “There are an overwhelming number of black conservatives in this country, but many are still in the closet” (201).

Analyses of national survey data substantiate the claim that there are black conservatives in the community. Both Lewis (2001) and Tate (1993) document an increase in the percentage of self-identified conservatives. In addition, Simpson (1998) finds that members of the integration generation, the post-civil rights generation, espouse conservative beliefs. Bositis (2004) finds that 25 percent of young Blacks self-identify as conservative and 31 percent as moderates. The same study finds that 66 percent support school vouchers. Additional research finds that Blacks “support prayer in schools, business incentives, tougher sentencing for criminals, school vouchers,

smaller government, welfare reform, and lower taxes” (Reiland 1996, 9)—all beliefs espoused or similar to those of conservatives.

The Republican Party is today’s party of conservatism, yet despite support for some conservative policies Blacks seem unwilling to support the Republican Party. Republicans do however make efforts to understand why they do not have black support. This was especially important during the Reagan administration when the party actively pursued black conservatives by hiring a black public-relations firm to court this group. They offered this new group immediate access to funding and leadership positions within the party. The party also named several Blacks to top governmental positions. The main objective of this new group of leaders was to attack current black leadership and create a voice of dissent among Blacks. This new Republican strategy was to utilize the arguments of those such as Booker T. Washington, making the case that the opinions of the black liberal establishment were wrong and that Blacks should instead rely on themselves as opposed to the government for social advancement. This led to the Black Alternatives Conference held at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco in 1980, where the cadre of black conservatives gathered to discuss alternatives to the black liberal establishment. Evidence of the success of this new strategy by Republicans after the Reagan administration includes the fact that a growing number of Blacks are open to supporting the Republican Party. For example, in several state elections in California and New Jersey, Republicans garnered well over 25 percent of the black vote in 1994 (Reiland 1996). The 2000 federal elections also saw 24 black Republican nominees for Congress and three Republicans that ran for statewide office with only one victorious (Bositis 2004). Three Republicans received over 20 percent of black votes in their reelection campaigns: Mike DeWine (OH) received 23 percent, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN) received 21 percent, and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX) received 22 percent of the black vote in 2000 (Bositis 2004). By the 2006 election, Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX), along with Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (CA), both garnered 26 percent of the black vote (Bositis 2006). More recent evidence of a change in the policy attitudes and electoral behavior of Blacks is that the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies released a report in October 2004 which found that black support for George W. Bush doubled from 9 percent in 2000 to 18 percent in 2004. The same report also found gains in Republican partisanship among younger Blacks; between one and two-thirds are sympathetic to Republican positions. Lastly, in 2004 there were over 60 black Republicans in state and local government offices. Most notable black Republicans who have held state office include J. Kenneth Blackwell, former secretary of state of Ohio; former lieutenant governors of Maryland and Ohio Michael Steele and Jeanette Bradley; and Michael Williams, chair of the Texas Railroad Commission. In 2008, there were nine black Republicans running for federal office, all of whom lost, averaging 19 percent of the vote (Bositis 2008).

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Less than three months after the nation elected its first black president, the Republican Party chose Michael Steele as its first black chair. Shortly after his term began, he was in battle with Rush Limbaugh as to who was the leader of the Republican Party. Steele apologized for referring to Limbaugh as just an entertainer and caused party insiders to question his ability to strategize and lead the party to victory. Although Steele did not resign, he lost his bid to keep the chairmanship in 2011. Despite Steele's problems, even in the polarizing 2010 midterm elections, 6 percent of black women and 14 percent of black men voted Republican (Bositis 2010). However, two Republican candidates in California that lost, Meg Whitman and Carly Fiorina, garnered 21 percent and 17 percent of the black vote, respectively (Bositis 2010). In the same elections, there was only one black Republican statewide candidate for office who was victorious, Jennifer Carroll, lieutenant governor of Florida. On the federal level, 15 black Republicans ran for office but only two won, Tim Scott (SC) and Allen West (FL), both members of the House of Representatives.

There is also a rather small percentage of Blacks who are supportive of the grassroots Tea Party movement in America. In a national survey conducted March 2010, the Gallup poll found that about 6 percent of Tea Party supporters were Black. Whereas the *New York Times*/CBS Poll conducted the next month in April 2010 indicated that only 1 percent of Tea Party supporters are Black (Montopoli 2010). Whatever their percentages are, black Tea Party supporters cause just as much controversy as black conservatives because of the racist undertones of the movement. For example, some Tea Party supporters carry signs at rallies with racial epithets while others clearly believe President Obama is a closet Muslim who was not born in the United States. There were also reports that some Tea Party supporters yelled racial epithets at black members of Congress (Kucera 2010). However, Lloyd Marcus, a black conservative Tea Party supporter whose claim to fame was his penning the Tea Party anthem, exclaims, "They call us racists and we are not. This is the nicest 'angry mob' that we have ever seen" (Harris, January 31, 2010). In fact, some black conservatives are finding an ideological home with the Tea Party and at least one black Republican elected official, Allen West (FL), has come to their defense. In a letter written to the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, he explains that the Tea Party stands for "taxed enough already." He also urges the chair to condemn statements by other members of the caucus about the Tea Party or he would have to reconsider his membership to the caucus. Other black conservatives are finding a platform with the Tea Party, one they say did not exist within the Republican Party. For example, William Owens, author of *Obama: Why Black America Should Have Doubts*, states that the Republican Party is out of touch. He utilized the Tea Party Express tours as a way to get his anti-Obama message out. In short, similar to the successful efforts of the Republican Party in 1980 to provide a voice to black conservatives, the Tea Party is doing the same

thing two decades later, providing a voice to individuals like Marcus and Owens (Berger 2010).

## **BLACK CONSERVATISM: BEYOND THE HYPE**

Evidence supporting both arguments is convincing. Some research indicates there is conservatism in the black community, while others reject the notion of conservatism among Blacks. Anecdotal evidence, casual mentions by scholars and contradictory research findings create conflicting views of conservatism in the black community. This book eliminates the confusion surrounding this issue by answering several questions. Although there are several notable Blacks who profess a conservative ideology, can we conclude that Blacks show some elements of conservative thought? A larger question is how has the black conservative political philosophy changed over time? In attempting to understand the entire realm of black political philosophies, this research also seeks to explain what conservatism means to Blacks, in what issue domain are Blacks conservative, and what are the socioeconomic characteristics of the black conservative in the community. Finally, this research considers the implications of a black conservative group in the community.

This work does not attempt to critique or praise conservatism among Blacks, a task that previous scholars accomplish quite well. Instead, this book simply attempts to combine and extend existing discussions about conservatism particularly within the black community. It also seeks to expand debates by analyzing conservatism in the black community. How do Blacks in the community feel about conservatism? Do Blacks who self-identify as conservative take conservative positions on public-policy issues? What are their thoughts and beliefs when it comes to issues where mainstream conservatives are vocal? How do they feel about policies that are debated between the right and left such as affirmative action, abortion, same-sex marriage, and immigration?

A caveat here is worth mentioning. The conservatism discussed here firmly rejects an idea commonly held by the cadre of black conservatives; namely, that racism is no longer an obstacle to success. In its place, this work posits that Blacks can be conservative or a variant of conservative and still reject the notion that race is somehow now irrelevant in the United States, as Cohen (2010) finds in her analysis of black youth and Simpson (1998) finds in her work of black college students. Furthermore, this work agrees with Clarence Page's explanation of black conservatism. He states, "I distinguish between black conservatives and conservative blacks. The former is a relatively small, if high profile movement of avowed conservatives who happen to be black. The latter best describes the black masses who harbor many conservative attitudes, but part company with traditional conservative party lines, especially the line that says black people make too much of racism" (194–195).

Several existing works provide a framework for this analysis. Smith and Seltzer (1992) provide the background for this work. In their groundbreaking study of black public opinion, they identify two dimensions of black political philosophy, economic liberalism, and social conservatism of which only the latter is class based. They also find, using data from the 1982–1987 General Social Survey that Blacks are less likely to self-identify as conservative. Does this still hold true today? Tate (1993) examines black political behavior in the 1980s, and finds a slight conservative trend among Blacks. More specifically, she finds that Blacks are more conservative in their policy views, particularly views concerning class inequalities. Dawson's (1994) analysis finds class differences in black political attitudes. Building upon Dawson's (1994) work, Simpson (1998) analyzes racial identity among young Blacks and concludes, "We can look forward to more diversity of opinion" (159).

This diversity of opinion is evident in Dawson (2001), where he carefully operationalizes black ideology and includes black conservatism as one of the major six political philosophies among Blacks. He finds conservatism to have the least support among Blacks. Similar to Dawson (2001) and Simpson (1998), Harris-Lacewell (2004) looks at the everyday talk of ordinary black people. She includes conservatism as an ideological category among Blacks but finds it to be an unpopular and alien ideology of the four categorizations.

Taken together, previous research leads to the conclusion that we should expect some elements of conservatism among Blacks. Simpson (1998), Harris-Lacewell (2004), and Cohen (2010) also document the existence of conservatism among Blacks in the community and they provide the rationale for combining both qualitative and quantitative data into a work about black ideology. While understanding the views of the elite are important to the study of politics, mass opinions are equally as important. However, current research fails to provide an in-depth analysis of conservatism in the black community. The research in this book seeks to fill this gap. This work is an expose on black conservatism and conservative blacks. It will enlighten the reader on conservatism among Blacks, by analyzing how Blacks define conservatism, by identifying those who espouse conservative views, and by discussing the political implications of conservative blacks.

The focus of this work is similar to Harris-Lacewell (2004) because it questions Blacks in the community. This work is also similar to Smith and Seltzer (1992), Tate (1993), and Dawson (1994, 2001) because it relies on national survey data and elite opinion to define conservatism. Dawson (2001) suggests that when studying black political ideologies, scholars should focus on dialogue in the black community and in the general U.S. community. He also suggests that each ideology presented in his work deserves a book of its own. Price (2009) begins this journey in the study of black ideology. Her work provides the best comparison to the approach utilized in this research. In *Dreaming Blackness*, she utilizes national

survey data and focus-group data to uncover the meaning of one political philosophy identified by both Dawson (2001) and Harris-Lacewell (2004), Black Nationalism. This work is similar. It also utilizes national survey data and focus groups to uncover the meaning of one political philosophy also discussed by both Dawson and Harris-Lacewell, black conservatism. The major departure between the research in this book and the research of Smith and Seltzer (1992), Tate (1993), Dawson (1994, 2001), Simpson (1998) and Harris-Lacewell (2004) is that the main objective here is to deal with one political philosophy discussed in all previous works, conservatism. Among Blacks, the conservative political philosophy is the least studied, the most controversial, and the most misunderstood. In short, this text provides the reader with a thorough understanding of black conservatism by using both quantitative and qualitative data.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This work utilizes two sources of data, quantitative data from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and qualitative data. Quantitative data from ICPSR consist of public-opinion surveys. The qualitative data consist of focus groups conducted in several large metropolitan areas.

The data from ICPSR come from the American National Election Study Cumulative File (NES), 1948–2004, 2008 NES; the National Black Election Study (NBES), 1984, 1988, and 1996; and the National Politics Study (NPS) 2004. Although the NES typically contains only about 200 African Americans, it is a number sufficient to do general analysis. Because there is no longitudinal data covering the same time period as the NES with oversamples of Blacks, I also utilize the NBES and the NPS as primary data sources. Survey research on black political opinions is severely limited with only four datasets targeting African Americans. While these datasets are rich because they provide questions which provide us with the opinions of Blacks on various measures that are linked to black political philosophies, there are only four of them conducted sporadically over the past 28 years, with anywhere from four to eight years between them. However, taken together, they provide us with rich data which allow us to flesh out the opinions of Blacks in this area of study.

The qualitative data comes from 12 focus groups. Focus-group research is often used to supplement the limitations of survey research. In survey research, respondents can only give information researchers know to ask. In the case of black political ideology, scholars of black politics are limited to questions on national surveys utilizing the standard and very limited liberal conservative scale which does not capture the full extent of black political philosophies. In fact, the two most leading works on black political philosophy utilized a combination of both qualitative and quantitative

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techniques (see Dawson 2002 and Harris-Lacewell 2004). In this research, focus groups are utilized to allow participants to express their true feelings on conservatism. These groups also allowed participants to bring up any other topic that they feel is important, thus providing richer data across multiple groups. In short, focus groups provide a broader understanding of a concept.

Focus groups have three distinct advantages. First they produce results that more closely reflects realities because people are in groups and not in isolation as they are in survey research. Second, they provide more insight into what people actually think as opposed to what researchers believe they are thinking. And lastly, they provide scholars with a way to interpret quantitative findings (Brians et al. 2011).

Focus groups were conducted in three large cities, Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; and Chicago, Illinois. In an effort to assist the reader in understanding responses from focus-group participants, those from Atlanta are labeled “A,” participants from Birmingham are labeled “B,” and participants from Chicago are labeled “C.” (Please refer to the Appendix for a detailed description of the research methods utilized for this study.) Chapter 4 contains the results of the data analysis from both the quantitative and the quantitative data.

### OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

Before we can understand what conservatism means within the black community, we must first have a clearer picture of the theoretical and historical foundations of conservatism and its context in contemporary U.S. politics. Chapter 2, “Conservatism in America,” provides a basic history of the American conservative tradition. It also explains contemporary conservatism and it discusses ideological trends in America. Chapter 3, “Black Conservatives,” provides the reader with the theoretical foundations of black conservatism. More specifically, it provides information about black conservative intellectuals, elites, journalists, and political leaders as well as black support for the Tea Party movement. This chapter relies on biographies, autobiographies, newspapers, editorials, and case studies as secondary sources from “highly regarded intellectuals, government officials and civic activists” who are black and conservative (Walters 2003, 223). Chapter 4, “Community Support for Conservatism,” defines, analyzes, and discusses conservatism in the black community. This chapter discusses how Blacks in the community view conservatism as a political philosophy. This chapter also provides a description of those in the black community who subscribe to conservatism. The data for this chapter come from national surveys and focus groups. This chapter relies on data from the National Black Election Study, the National Election Study, the National Politics Study, and focus groups conducted in Birmingham, Alabama; Atlanta,

Georgia; and Chicago, Illinois. Chapter 5, “Permanent Interests,” summarizes the text and discusses the implications of conservatism among Blacks in the community while considering the future of black conservatism in the United States.

## 2 Conservatism in America

### IDEOLOGICAL LABELS

Historically, scholars of public opinion use ideological terms to describe how Americans think about politics. The most common terms used when describing ideology in America are “liberal” and “conservative.” Ideology is important to the study of U.S. politics because it affects political behavior. Political scientists commonly refer to ideologies as “systems of belief that are elaborate, integrated, and coherent” (McClosky 1964, 362). In other words, an ideology assists the individual in making sense of the political world. It “serves as a filter of what one ‘sees’ and responds to in the social world” (Dawson 2001, 5). An ideology comprises a pattern of opinions on particular issues that stem from a basic underlying belief. The presence of an ideology aids an individual in forming opinions on a wide range of social, economic, and political issues. Ball and Dagger (2002) state, “A political ideology is a more or less systematic set of ideas that performs four functions for those who hold it: the explanatory, the evaluative, the orientative, and the programmatic functions. An ideology, in short, serves as a guide and compass through the thicket of political life” (1).

Because the focus of this book is conservatism among Blacks, I do not spend a significant amount of time discussing conservatism in America. However, it is necessary to provide the reader with a basic understanding of conservatism. Completely understanding the entire realm of conservative thought is too large a task for this text and would shift the focus of the book away from what I am theoretically interested in studying, black conservatism. Moreover, conservatism as an academic study is largely immature, fractured, and inconclusive (Smith 2010). Nonetheless, this work seeks to provide a basic understanding of conservatism in America and its development as a political philosophy. The most basic way to begin this exercise is to provide a simple definition of conservatism. Scholars suggest that “conservatives are consistently opposed to governmental regulation of the economy and civil rights legislation, and in favor of state over federal action, fiscal responsibility and decreased governmental spending and lower taxes” (Tate and Randolph 2002, 1). Conservatism also demonstrates a strong

resistance to government involvement in domestic affairs. In addition, conservatism strongly supports economic individualism, a strong defense establishment, and traditional social values. Most scholars would agree that conservatives have a desire to conserve something, usually traditions, or a way of life. However, there are differences in what conservatives want to conserve and how they plan to conserve it. For example, there are four streams of conservatism in America, individualist, classical, neoconservatives, and the new right, which are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, for illustrative purposes each of these types of conservatives have different objectives. Both classical conservatives and the new right are concerned with the moral fabric of the country and are accepting of utilizing government policy for conserving traditional family values. On the other hand, individualists are opposed to government restriction on individual freedom.

## CONSERVATISM

Conservative thought in America evolved from a tradition rooted in 18th-century political thought. Generally, conservatives agree that human imperfection is the primary cause of the current human condition. Conservatives are distrustful of human nature, and they believe that humans primarily act in their own self-interest. Conservatives also believe that human institutions, culture, and trends contribute to the human condition. However, humans acting in their own self-interest, through government, are the primary cause of our condition, a view derived from the work of Edmund Burke, the founding father of conservatism. At the core of conservative thought is the idea that individuals are flawed and self-interested and that government is needed to control and restrain individuals and to maintain order, peace, and morality (Ball and Dagger 1991).

Resistance to change and a respect for tradition are more common and well-known beliefs of conservatives. They believe that radical change is wrong, especially change that is precipitated by force. Conservatives accept the idea that change should come slowly because of the human condition of imperfection. They believe that attempts to improve society will do more harm than good; thus society should seek change cautiously. Tradition works, even if not well. People cherish the present because change may not produce the best outcome. There is intrinsic value in current traditions and institutions. The older a tradition, the more trusted. In the end, conservatives trust tradition over reason. Human reason is incapable of improving the human condition; thus change does not necessarily mean progress.

Conservatives agree on the importance of private property. The United States supports the principle of an individual's right to life, liberty, and property, which means that the government supports the free pursuit of profits in the economic marketplace. The government should not entangle

itself with the affairs of the marketplace and hinder individuals' ability to accumulate or use their property. Moreover, the government should not legislate in matters of social equality or improving the human condition. Instead, market conditions will determine an individual's fate, not the government. Individuals, not government, are best equipped to resolve society's inequality by hard work and personal initiative. If the government attempts to correct these inequalities, individuals will rely on the government and ultimately be unable to help themselves.

Conservatives recognize that there are differences among people and not all are capable of progress. Some are better adept at succeeding in a capitalistic marketplace and the government should not be used to reconstruct society to make everyone equal. They argue that inequalities have always existed, and it would be senseless to think they will not continue to exist. Conservatives also believe that the talented and skilled should govern society.

Conservatives are extremely anticommunist. They are hesitant to accept faith in progress. They believe that sudden social change does not necessarily bring about better conditions. There is a consequence to every change. Fundamental to their argument against communism is the idea of planning society. They are vehemently against any planning of society; the economic marketplace and competition should determine society, not broad and comprehensive planning. In short, government intervention in protecting the morality of society is acceptable but government should stay out of the market.

## CONSERVATISM IN AMERICA

Scholars understand conservatism in America from several perspectives, each holding a different set of objectives and views. In order to provide a basic understanding of the development of conservatism in America, this work identifies two conservative movements, the early conservative movement occurring before the 1960s and the most recent movement occurring after the 1960s (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Nash 1998). Early conservative thought included antistatist/laissez faire/individualist and classical/traditional/organic/social conservatives (Dolbeare and Medcalf 1988; Funderburk and Thobaben 1989; Ball and Dagger 1991; Randolph 1995). Recent additions into the conservative camp include neoconservatives and the new right (Dolbeare and Medcalf 1988; Funderburk and Thobaben 1989; Ball and Dagger 1991; Randolph 1995).

"Anti-statist thought originated in the 18th century and proponents of this school of thought opposed expanding the role of the state. More specifically, anti-statist thought comprised these ideas: (1) it places greater emphasis on the role of the individual (i.e., unlimited individual freedom); (2) it supports strict limits on governmental authority; (3) it advocates a very narrow role of government in the marketplace; (4) it adamantly opposes communism and socialism; (5) it opposes the welfare state" (Randolph 1995,

150). Antistatists believed that most social problems are a result of too much government interference in the operation of the free market. The only role of government is to enforce contracts, protect property, punish criminals, and preserve order. Any government activity beyond the aforementioned is unnatural and undesirable. Strongly supported by the business community, antistatists supported the idea of government financial assistance to businesses to ensure economic stability but not government regulation of businesses. The state has no legitimate role in economic affairs. Antistatist conservatives were extremely critical of the welfare state and the ever-growing bureaucracy, which severely limits personal freedoms. It is imperative to keep a lid on government growth, because if left unchecked, antistatists believe the government will eventually grow into a totalitarian state, which would seek to control the economy and strip individuals of personal liberty and property. As such, society should limit the size of government to ensure an individual's freedom.

Supporters of antistatists thought are strongly individualistic in their approach to life. The individual is the focus of all concerns. There is no public interest except to protect the individual's right to property, which is most sacred. The right to property ownership is elevated above all other rights. The individual must be allowed to compete and acquire property free from government interference. The public good is served best when individuals can compete. Social Darwinist in its approach, antistatists believed that the advancement of society is contingent upon free competition between individuals. There will be winners and losers but competition between individuals is what is best for society.

Organics/traditional/social/classical conservatives represent the second strand of conservatism in America. Originating from the Burkean tradition, unlike antistatist conservatives who view the individuals as the focus of all concerns, organic conservatives view society as the fundamental entity for protection, not the individual. The interests of the community supersede that of the individual. In their critique of liberalism, traditional conservatives believe that liberalism provides a justification for a large human appetite. The loss of government authority contributes to the individual's sense of entitlement, which does not serve the public interest. Government is unable to act for the good of the whole because it contributes to the individual's large appetite. Traditional conservatives do not see the size of government as a problem; they are supportive of using government for the right kinds of social welfare. In fact, they mandate an active role for the state to protect the interest of the community and to preserve tradition. They believe that government exists to regulate individual choices and to interpret and enforce the laws to maintain a civil society. As long as the government is in the hands of the elite, it is to guide society in the right direction and to teach morality.

Classic conservatives respect the importance of property, but they maintain that the state has an interest in the use of that property for the public

good. As such, obligations accompany property rights. As for equality, they do not believe the state should promote equality but that it should guarantee equal rights to individuals.

Traditional conservatives are anticommunist and are primarily “concerned more with social and cultural dimensions of life, that is with the moral values and religious or ethical spirit that suffuse the social order and give meaning to life” (Randolph 1995, 150). Because organics have a negative view of human nature, they are heavily influenced by religion. Religion is the key to protect man from his selfish and dangerous nature. Both the church and the family are integral parts of the community that help uphold high moral standards. Classic conservatives believe that individual behavior and moral opinions are not private matters but issues of concern for the entire community.

Both antistatist and classic conservatives believe that the welfare state has undermined values that are fundamental to U.S. society: family, church, God, self-reliance, and hard work. However, antistatist conservatives are not in strong support of using the government to promote these values but classic conservatives believe the government has some responsibility for upholding high moral standards. In fact, antistatist conservatives do not usually support social conservatives’ attempt to impose their religious views on others.

It is extremely important to note that within early conservative thought, in both the individualist and classical conservatives, Southern conservatism manifests itself. Southern conservatism is invariably linked to racism. In an effort to protect slavery and the Southern way of life, Smith (2010) argues that Southern conservatives stressed a “militant laissez-faire capitalism, its emphasis on the soil, limited government, states rights, concurrent majorities, tradition, and all the rest are little more than reactions to modernity and to antiracist movements” (39). Noted as a fraud to the conservative tradition in America, Southern conservatism is rooted in hyperracism mainly because the South embraced the idea of inalienable natural rights for Whites but not for Blacks. Southern conservatism developed because the South lost power to the federal government in its attempts to protect the institution of slavery. As a result, Southerners embraced states’ rights, all in an attempt to continue to deny freedom to Blacks. And, although supportive of capitalism, Southern conservatism rejected the notion of free labor and instead opted to support the use of African slaves because they believed in the inferiority of Blacks. Somewhat similar to classic conservatives because they place the group over the individual, Southern conservatism believed that Southern society could deprive some men of their natural rights if they so choose. As such, the South could deny rights of Blacks. Thus Southern conservatism is more closely aligned with classic conservatism rather than antistatist conservatism.

In politics today, antistatists represent the “establishment” or the moderate wing of the Republican Party. They usually control the White House as well as the party’s national candidates. In relation to black conservatives,

prior to the 1980s many black elites who identified with the Republican Party were aligned with this camp of conservatives. Classic conservatives are supportive of a moderate welfare state. They believe government assistance is necessary to provide national strength and social cohesion. It is important that social policy work to strengthen institutions such as the family and the church and to provide a buffer for individuals. Antistatist conservatives give financial and political support to black conservatives.

## CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATISM

In addition to the antistatist and classical conservatism of the past, contemporary conservatism in the United States now includes two additional camps, the radical or new right and neoconservatives. These more recent versions of conservatism are considerably similar to the older versions, antistatist and the classic (see Figure 2.1). For example, all new versions believe fiscally in capitalism with very little government regulation of the economy. The idea of little government intervention with the market is central to both antistatist and classic conservative thought. In the social realm, similar to older versions of conservatism, particularly traditional conservatives of the past, contemporary conservatism supports bans on abortion, support for prayer in schools, opposition to the teaching of sex education, evolution, and a belief in traditional family values. The early classical form of conservatism is supportive of government regulation of individual choices for the protection of the community. Contemporary conservatism extends this tenet; they now believe it is the government's responsibility to maintain order and to teach morals. Lastly, in the area of foreign policy, extending the opposition to disband communism, contemporary conservatives are supportive of a strong military. The radical or new right is a new perspective of conservatism very closely related to traditional conservatism because religion is very important. The new right, which emphasizes religion and moral values, currently has the largest following of all conservative perspectives. These conservatives, characterized as the "New Christian Right" or the "Religious Far Right," are part of a populist social movement of evangelicals, Pentecostals, Protestants, and some Catholics and Jews. They also have support from lower-middle-class Whites in the South, the West, and the Middle American Radicals (MAR), representing about 25 percent of the U.S. population (Dolbeare and Medcalf 1988). They believe that America has lost its way and is morally corrupt. Evidence of this moral decay is the legalization of abortion, high sexual content in the media, the decline of patriotism, and high crime rates (Ball and Dagger 1991).

The religious right mobilized to counter the moderate wing of the Republican Party after the appointment of liberal multimillionaire Nelson Rockefeller as vice president by Gerald Ford. By the late 1970s, they were well established with organizations and several congressional victories. Notable Christian

evangelists Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority (1979–1989), who died in 2007, Pat Robertson, and the Christian Coalition created in 1989 lead the religious right. Politically they are a powerful voice that mobilizes grassroots opposition to moderates. Although the religious right has the same policy views as other conservatives on foreign policy, that is, they would like to regain military superiority and they support a strong military and defense establishment, they are primarily concerned with social issues such as school prayer, abortion, pornography, and sexual deviancy (Sargent 1990; Nash 1998). They believe in traditional family values, which consist of the view that the proper place for a woman is in the home. They were opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment. A major point of departure between the Christian Right and other strands of conservatism is that the former wants an expansion of government, especially in areas of life that most would deem private. For example, the Christian Right seeks to ban abortion and are generally against homosexuality or recognizing same-sex marriage.

They are especially against the teaching of evolution in schools and instead have a desire for schools to teach creationism. They read the Bible literally and support the idea that every word in the Bible expresses the will of God. They also want prayer in schools and religious displays to be allowed. The religious right strongly supports the notion that America is a Christian nation, founded on Christian principles, and that the country should return to its roots. In turn, they have called for Congress to institute a national day of prayer. This group emphasizes that the government should regulate social behavior. This emphasis stands in contradiction to the long-standing tradition of conservative thought consisting of less government intervention.

The new right, however, is similar to other conservatives. They are fiscal conservatives. They are opposed to government regulation of the economy and high taxes. Supporters of the new right, many of whom may be lower-middle income, are highly critical of welfare programs because they believe the new class of bureaucrats forces the costs of such programs onto the working class. However, they are not overly supportive of free enterprise if it advances immorality. For example, they would not support the establishment of a topless bar as a part of a free market. They are also against affirmative action.

Neoconservatism is also part of the most recent conservative movement. Neoconservatives or right-wing liberals are primarily composed of social scientists, ex-liberals, original proponents of the Great Society programs, ex-black power advocates, and former socialists. They are more liberal than other conservatives because they are disaffected liberals who later aligned with conservatives during the 1960s. They offer poignant critiques of the liberal establishment because they are former liberals who have seen the error of their ways. Generally, they support traditional family values, self-help programs, capitalism, a minimal welfare state, vouchers for education, and traditional limits for the courts. Neoconservatives have some classic conservative beliefs. They are accepting of tradition, defer to authority, and are respectful of moral, religious, and spiritual values.

What distinguishes neoconservatives from other conservatives is their minimal support of the welfare state. They are somewhat comfortable with New Deal programs but they are highly critical of the Great Society programs of the 1960s, particularly the War on Poverty. While the purposes of the programs were good, they believe the outcomes were problematic because they were paternalistic. They also believed that these programs went too far in creating an equalitarian society. Kristol (1995) argues that ultimately the welfare state created a class of people who benefited more from welfare than they did working low-wage jobs. Moreover, welfare created a safety net for women and children without a father present. Neoconservatives also believe that social welfare programs created a new class of bureaucrats that foster a corrupt culture devoid of morals while at the same time creating an urban underclass that is deprived and dependent upon government. This new class of bureaucrats fosters a culture of indulgence and self-gratification. As a result, government programs try to accomplish too much because people began expecting too much. Neoconservatives argue that the problems of the urban poor which were cultural cannot be solved by government programs. Government programs were in fact making the problems worse. These problems are best resolved through market forces and traditional mechanisms like the church and the family. Neoconservatives posit that people want lower taxes, but they also want increased support for special programs, which often leads to excessive government debt. In short, people have unrealistic expectations of government, and social programs become social problems.

This equalitarian philosophy derives from the new class of intellectuals and academics. Even though neoconservatives support the state's role in promoting welfare to contribute to the character of the citizen, they are suspicious of it because it fosters an attitude of abundance that people transfer to government. This abundance attitude places an overwhelming demand of equality of outcome on the government that is far beyond the basic equality of opportunity envisioned by the founding fathers. They also suggested that inequality between Blacks and Whites was not a result of racism but was psychological or cultural. Instead of large government programs, neoconservatives believe that self-help is central to progress. Intermediate private and voluntary structures such as churches, families, and charitable organizations should provide resources to individuals for them to become good citizens.

Neoconservatives believe that the new class of professionals and their affluence are too egalitarian and antibusiness. They argue that liberals try to give everyone the same opportunities even though they may be unwanted. As such, neoconservatives are against set-aside programs and affirmative action because they see it as a form of government expansion and government-sponsored discrimination. Neoconservatives believe these programs are a form of government coercion, which leads to angry public reaction. In short, affirmative action fosters a sense of equality of results not just equality of opportunity, which is the only right guaranteed by the Constitution.



Neoconservatives are instrumental in influencing corporate-funded policy centers such as the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, set up in opposition to the New Deal. Among the journals representing neoconservatives are *The Public Interest* and *Commentary*. Black conservatives who identify with this group usually agree with neoconservatives on matters surrounding self-help and education.

Neoconservatives offer several ways to fix the problems posed by liberal social programs. Most fundamental to their solution is a movement away from big government. They contend that government cannot solve social problems. Although neoconservatives support government-sponsored welfare programs, they believe that these programs should move towards devolution and charitable organizations. They believe devolution, shifting responsibility from the federal government to state and local governments, could assist in relieving demands on the federal government. Mediating structures such as the church, family, and civic and social organization should ultimately assist individuals instead of the government.

In terms of contemporary conservatism, the new right and neoconservatives often mute the traditional perspective now commonly referred to as the old right. The old right is at the mainstream of conservative thought, representing a mixture of both the antistatist and classic strands of conservatism. They believe in traditional moral values and are fiscal conservatives. They oppose government spending and government growth outside defense spending. Excessive government spending and business regulations led to past economic problems. Thus the size of government should be kept at a minimum. Government should not overspend; it should have balanced budgets and small programs.

The old right is also particularly critical of the new class of power holders in government. They believe this new class has greatly expanded the concept of equality. Instead of focusing on equal treatment, they focus on equality of outcome or redistributive policies, which is an unacceptable form of government policy. Supporters of the old right argue that the marketplace will produce losers, but any government interference into the market to redistribute is undesirable. Only the market can direct resources to their best use and only the market can reward and punish in a way to maintain social harmony.

## CONTEMPORARY SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATISM

Support for all conservative camps in America substantially increased in the 1960s. During this time, conservatism experienced a transformation into a powerful political voice. The left was particularly adept at collaborative efforts between intellectuals and politicians, a skill the Right did not develop until William F. Buckley, Jr. founded the *National Review* in 1955, which served as a means to present coherent conservative viewpoints to society. Part

of this viewpoint represented a reaction to the civil rights movement and the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In several *National Review* pieces, Buckley expressed his opposition to the civil rights movement, his belief that the South should prevail in determining whether to desegregate, and that Blacks were culturally and educationally inferior. He also expressed the beliefs of earlier conservatives who attacked the *Brown* decision on constitutional grounds, arguing that the court had gone beyond the intentions of the framers of the Constitution and had overstepped its boundary by limiting the private property rights of individuals. Conservatives argued that states had the right to determine the question of segregation, not the federal government. Similar to Southern conservatism, which attacked federal powers and argued for smaller limited government and a return to states' rights, which are often code words for racism and discrimination, this new conservatism propelled its views to the forefront of American politics. Buckley was instrumental in espousing this new conservatism and in forming the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), a conservative student organization which actively fought against the civil rights movement. This conservatism is largely steeped in racism and ultimately became an integral part of contemporary conservatism in America (Smith 2010).

Notwithstanding the conservative takeover of the Republican Party with the Goldwater candidacy in 1964, scholars do not liken the conservative ascendancy to racism alone. Rather, racism, along with a dislike for unions, government taxation and regulations, and support for the restriction of government power, all played a role in conservatism's rise. Nonetheless, Goldwater's acceptance of the Southern strategy to exploit the vulnerabilities of the Democratic Party in the South and his vote against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 make it difficult to detach the modern conservative movement from racism. Furthermore, George Wallace, Democratic Party candidate for president in the same year, ran on conservative principles that were also racist. Although both candidates lost, it was clear that conservatism had a firm base from which to begin its national ascendancy. This rise to national attention was aided by a speech given by Ronald Reagan the night before the presidential election. Shortly after the election, Reagan became the national spokesperson for the conservative movement, and won California's gubernatorial race. Soon afterwards, he was talking about running for the presidency. What further cemented the racist element in contemporary conservatism was Wallace's run as an independent candidate for president. His support came from the same states that conservative candidates carried in previous elections; thus it was apparent that the South was conservative in supporting laissez-faire capitalism, limited government, individualism, and racism.

Finally, the advent of the Reagan administration in the 1980s cemented conservatism's rise in America by electing their first president. Reagan, who was a neoconservative, adopted a conservative economic policy, supply-side economics, which served to bolster collaboration between conservative intellectuals and politicians. Deregulation, military buildup, antiabortion,

ending school busing, and drastically reducing the tax rate were all at the heart of the Reagan era. He was supportive of limited government, states' rights, and the protection of private property against the government, even if the protection of private property meant opposing civil rights laws. Reagan also supported self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and individualism. The publication of conservative materials was vast before Reagan, but it increased at a remarkable rate during his administration. Every camp of conservatism had developed its own publications. Student newspapers on college campuses even appeared for the conservative cause.

The most notable development in conservatism was the work of the Heritage Foundation, which became the epicenter of the Reagan administration. The Reagan administration ushered in a more conservative Republican platform supporting free enterprise, military buildup, and rhetoric that was antiabortion and supportive of school prayer. The Heritage Foundation was the clearinghouse for conservative thought with a list of over 2,000 supporters, academicians, and policy experts. The foundation established the first *Directory of Public Policy Organizations on the Right* that listed 288 organizations. It published the *Policy Review*, the outlet for conservative thinkers to publicize their agenda, and *The Insider*, which gave a list of conservative announcements and publication abstracts.

By the early 1990s, states were also a part of the growing support for conservatism. For example, conservative organizations at the state level established groups in support of school choice. In addition, a number of media, public-policy organizations, and law firms were established to advance the conservative cause. Most notable organizations include the Cato Institute, the Hoover Institution, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Committee for the Free World. More specialized areas also saw the establishment of conservative organizations. In law, the Washington Legal Foundation was established to challenge government growth in the courts. In the environmental arena, the Political Economy Research Center was founded and they adopted a new conservative environmental policy, free-market environmentalism. Moreover, the religious right saw the establishment of the Focus on the Family an organization founded by James C. Dobson, Ph.D.

Although there has been a growth in all camps of conservatism, this growth did not occur without some dissent. For instance, there is some conflict between classic conservatives and neoconservatives. Classic conservatives are highly critical of neoconservatives. They view them as trespassers into the conservative ranks because they remain essentially supportive of government bureaucracy. Pat Buchanan, who ran unsuccessfully for president in 1992, represented classic conservatives. Traditional conservatives supported a nationalist stance that was concerned about the lack of an isolationist foreign policy. Traditional conservatives were also concerned about the decline in moral values. Although Buchanan was unsuccessful in his bid for the presidency, the public did believe something was morally wrong with the country.

This expansion of conservatism in U.S. politics is evident in public-opinion data. Since 1979, there has been a shift in voter attitudes toward conservatism. In an analysis of the issue positions of the electorate during the 1970s and early 1980s, Robinson (1984) finds evidence of a conservative trend. During that time period, more Americans took conservative stances on a variety of issues. They were more opposed to abortion, the abolition of the death penalty, government spending on social programs, homosexual rights, and racial integration.

Robinson and Fleishman (1984) find an increase in the number of conservatives between 1938 and 1973. Although there were larger proportions of liberals than conservatives until 1964, by 1970, self-identified conservatives outnumbered liberals by more than 64 percent. They also found that other national surveys such as the General Social Survey and the Roper organization reflected general conservative trends in the electorate. Further research by Miller (1992) finds similar results among the young. This study finds that the proportion of young identifying themselves as conservatives increased from 17.8 percent in 1974 to 30.7 percent in 1986. Knight and Erikson (1999) also find an increase in conservative identification. Utilizing data from the National Election Study from 1972 to 1994, they conclude that voters are now self-identifying more as conservative than liberal, a trend that is growing. Mitchell (2000), utilizing data from the General Social Survey, finds that there is a slight tilt to the right among Americans in their political leanings. Finally, Lewis (2001) finds that there is a steady level of support of conservatism among Whites where usually at least one-third of Whites self-identify with the conservative label.

During the same time, scholars document an increase in conservative identification in the electorate through partisanship; Republicans firmly embraced conservative ideas in the Contract with America. The 1994 takeover of Congress ushered in a conservative trend in the federal government. Led by former college professor of history Newt Gingrich, who was associated with the Progress and Freedom Foundation, a conservative think tank, the Republicans helped propel conservatism to the forefront of U.S. politics.

More recently, the religious right solidified their union with the Republican Party. Christian evangelicals and those who regularly attend church are now important components of the Republican Party's base. The proportion of Christian evangelicals identifying with the Republican Party increased 8 percent in the last 12 years (*The Economist*, November 13, 2004). The 2004 presidential election demonstrated the importance of the Christian evangelical base. Exit polls from the election revealed that 22 percent of voters said that moral issues were most important in the campaign (Rosenberg and Sinderbrand 2004). Further reports indicate that eight out of ten people who said moral concerns were most important in the campaign voted for Bush. Abortion and gay marriage were extremely important issues in the campaign that severely hurt the Democratic Party. The gay-marriage issue was particularly salient to a large number of voters because 13 states passed referendums to ban it (*The Economist*, November 13, 2004).

Although the arrival of the Tea Party in American politics may not be situated within the American conservative tradition, they have had a profound impact on the conservative revival in this country. The Tea Party is described as “a loose confederation of groups with no central leadership” that supports a limited federal government and states’ rights (Liptak 2010). Yet they have grown into a group within the Republican Party that has forced the party closer to the right and removed liberal and moderate incumbent Republicans from office. For example, they helped remove Senators Robert Bennet (UT), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), and Representative Mike Castle (Delaware), who was defeated in the Republican primary by a candidate financially backed by the Tea Party, Christine O’Donnell. O’Donnell later lost in the general election to the Democratic candidate. The Tea Party was also instrumental in the election of Scott Brown (MA), the first Republican senator from Massachusetts since 1972. In addition to their political activism in elections, the Tea Party actively fights against the programs of the Obama administration which they say are moving the country towards socialism (Montopoli 2010). They also state that Obama’s administration favors the poor over the middle class and rich and about 25 percent believe that the administration favors Blacks over Whites. They are concerned about social policy, but most are more concerned with economic issues (Montopoli 2010; Wallsten and Yadron 2010; Zernike and Thee-Brenan 2010). They protested against the economic stimulus bill, taxpayer bailouts of homeowners, and health-care reform. Gallup indicates that Tea Partiers are Republican, conservative, more likely to be male, and less likely to be lower income. There are conflicting reports about the demographics of Tea Party supporters. Some reports indicate that they are generally representative of the U.S. population in their age and educational background, yet other reports find that they are more educated (Saad 2011; Zernike and Thee-Brenan 2010). There are also conflicting reports regarding how much black support the Tea Party has, with findings indicating that somewhere between 1 percent and 6 percent of supporters are black (Montopoli 2010; Saad 2010).

Conservatism is a firmly entrenched tradition in American political philosophy. Its variants are mixed, but they all have the same objective: to rid the country of moral decline and to limit the size of government. The election and subsequent reelection of George W. Bush to the presidency in 2000 and 2004 substantiate and solidify the conservative base in this country in its attempts to restore morals to America. His candidacy returned the country to discussion of character, integrity, and faith. The discussion of faith intertwined with politics and Republican opposition to gay marriage prompted a renewed effort to discuss alliances between conservatives and Blacks. Likewise, the appearance of the Tea Party provides a new platform for a younger cohort of black conservatives. The next chapter discusses these renewed efforts and opportunities for black conservatives to connect with the black community. It also asserts how contemporary public-policy debates help bolster support for conservatism among Blacks.

### 3 Black Conservatism

Research which addresses conservatism in the black community has one of two perspectives; it is either supportive of black conservative thought or it is opposed to black conservative thought. Research supportive of black conservatism is conducted by the cadre of conservatives who bias the information in such a way as to convince readers that their views are mainstream (Conti and Stetson 1993). While these works provide the reader with information about black conservative thought, its biased nature makes it difficult to understand this phenomenon fully. Moreover, this research also fails to address whether the black community shares these views. Those opposed to black conservatism provide the second type of research. Similar to the work of the cadre of black conservatives, the biased nature of their work against conservatism does not allow the reader to fully understand the nuances of black conservative thought. There is such a disdain for black conservatism that discussions about it are problematic. Elder (2000) puts it best when he talks about what black people call him because of his views. According to Elder, he has been called “Oreo. Uncle Tom, Boot-licking Uncle Tom. Straight-up Uncle Tom. Judas. Boy. Bug-eyed. Foot-shuffling. Sugarcane Negro. Handkerchief head. Trojan Horse” (2). The list goes on, but this provides the reader with the contemptuous feelings that arise when many Blacks think about other Blacks having a conservative political philosophy. In short, current discussions about black conservatism fail to untangle the complex web of conservatism that exists among Blacks.

This chapter seeks to provide information about black conservatism and conservatism in the black community. First, the chapter provides a brief description of black conservatism situated within general conservatism. To understand the importance of conservatism in the black community, the chapter provides evidence of ideological trends, particularly trends of conservative self-identification among Blacks. The chapter then provides a history of the development of black conservatism. Next, it provides a detailed analysis of contemporary black conservatism, which includes brief accounts of the cadre of contemporary black conservatives and an explanation of contemporary camps of conservatism in the black community. Lastly, the chapter provides information about contemporary

conservatism by discussing the contemporary black conservative view on racism, individualism, linked fate, and several public-policy issues. This chapter provides the reader with a general understanding of this stream of thought in black politics.

Before moving forward, it is important to discuss the relationship between partisanship and ideology. There is some correlation between the two; however, self-identification in one category of ideology does not necessarily equate to self-identification in a certain category of partisanship. Political scientists accept the idea that conservatives are more than likely Republican and liberals are more than likely Democrats. And notable black conservatives who chose to run for office often run as Republicans. The idea of black Republicans is often problematic for many Blacks, which is why discussions about black conservatism are unpopular especially since there is a Democratic president in the White House who is also Black. Many black conservatives discussed in this chapter are supporters of the Republican Party, but support for the Republican Party by this cadre of black conservatives does not translate into support for Republicans by the larger black community.

## WHAT IS BLACK CONSERVATISM?

Defining black conservatism is difficult because its views are not homogeneous (Dawson 2001 and Ondaatje 2010). Moreover, any attempt to provide a detailed and complete definition will face two limitations. First, it will not be true of all black conservatives and second it will be true of many who are not black conservatives (Eisenstadt 1999). Bracey (2008), however, provides some common features of contemporary black conservatism. First, all elements of black conservatism provide a critique of the black community. They also all believe that true black empowerment comes from Blacks themselves; thus they all support the notion of self-help and directing one's own life through obtaining an education. They all prefer strategies of empowerment that have immediate results, and they all believe that economic empowerment is integral to true black empowerment.

However, there are differences in how different facets of black conservatism critique the community. There are also differences in whether they believe white society has a responsibility in helping to remove obstacles to empowerment; and, if Whites do have some responsibility, to what extent should they assist? Black conservatives also disagree as to whether economic empowerment should be purely market driven or whether the government should be involved.

Similar to the difficulty in defining and explaining conservatism among Whites, likewise it is difficult to capture the entire realm of conservative thought in the black community. However, this work identifies four distinct camps of contemporary black conservative thought (which are more fully

developed later), the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, individualist conservatives, and neoconservatives. These camps of black conservatism are largely based on the differences by which they critique the community, the extent to which they believe Whites bear responsibility for the conditions in the black community, and whether economic empowerment should be purely market driven, government subsidized, a combination of both, or strictly within the black community. It is important to note that these camps are manifestations of conservatism within the black community and not necessarily those represented by the cadre of black conservatives. The black right is similar to the mainstream religious right. They focus on the moral values of Blacks and see the lack of these values as the cause of the black condition. Afrocentric conservatives also have a religious dimension similar to the black right and they support self-help and the patriarchic family. Nonetheless, they depart from other groups of conservatives because they have a strong racial identity and they see racism as the primary cause of the black condition. And because these conservatives have a strong racial identity, they are often misunderstood because they do not fit very well with other camps of black conservatives. There is no white equivalent to Afrocentric conservatives. Individualists and neoconservatives are similar. They support a limited government, a free market, and they believe that the black condition is largely a result of the inability of Blacks to compete. The major difference between these two groups is that neoconservatives were former liberals and individualist conservatives have low levels of group consciousness; they do not have feelings of closeness to other Blacks.

Although it is difficult to define black conservatism, this work identifies its basic tenets as would be defined by the cadre of black conservatives. Dawson (2001) defines conservatism as a “reliance on self-help, an attack on the state as a set of institutions that retard societal progress in general and black progress in particular, and belief in the antidiscriminatory aspects of markets” (26). This definition is very similar to mainstream conservatism’s belief in limited government action. Harris-Lacewell (2004) defines it as “advocating the idea that African Americans must be entirely self-sufficient, and demanding no official recognition of or redress for any historical or contemporary inequalities stemming from racial discrimination” (20). Toler (1993) provides the basic tenets of black conservatism. First, black conservatives believe racism is no longer an obstacle. They also believe that the demands of the civil rights movement have gone too far. In addition, today’s black conservatives believe that the government cannot provide solutions to black poverty and race relations through the use of welfare and affirmative-action programs but instead Blacks should focus on self-help.

Generally, black conservatism shows great respect for Western civilization, its institutions, its culture, particularly the notion of individualism. There is great support among black conservatives for individualism. They believe individualism is a central component to achieving the American

dream and that the idea of group consciousness perpetuates a victim status among Blacks. Black conservatives posit that America is the land of opportunity and nothing separates those who grow up in lower-income versus upper-middle income families; all are equally capable of obtaining the American dream. For example, several in the cadre were raised in poor families and they believed America provided them the opportunity to succeed.

Black conservatism has a deep appreciation for capitalism. Economic development is the key to black community development and capitalism is the preferred strategy (Dawson 2001). Black conservatism sees capitalism as an advantageous tool for Blacks because it gives everyone an equal opportunity for success. This is evident through black entrepreneurs such as Martin Delany and Earl Graves and the number of black-owned businesses in America before the Civil War. During the 1820s and 1830s, Blacks flourished in such businesses as real estate, construction, manufacturing, and transportation. For example, black conservative James Forten, a Philadelphia abolitionist and entrepreneur, was an example of the possibilities business success could bring to Blacks. He was a strong defender of economic success for Blacks, and he employed Whites. Similarly, Stephen Smith, a successful lumber merchant, earned annual sales of over \$100,000 by the mid-19th century. Prosperity in a capitalistic market, according to black conservatism, depends not on personal connections or one's inherited position but on the individual's innate talent. In fact, research shows that enslaved Blacks in the South took advantage of free enterprise. Records indicate that slaves were able to hire other slaves from their masters and some slaves were able to purchase their own freedom. Although some Blacks view capitalism negatively, black conservatives believe that "collective self-advancement" through capitalism is a lasting strategy of success for Blacks. Black conservatives argue that excessive government involvement in the market is problematic for capitalism.

Black conservatism believes that Blacks can succeed in U.S. society through their own resources. Thus, it supports the idea of the "Protestant work ethic." Black conservatism sees individual achievement, not government assistance, as the key to success. As a result, black conservatism opposes any policy that would provide benefits to Blacks, particularly benefits that Whites perceive Blacks did not earn. Therefore, material success garnered through self-help is a major component of black conservative thought. Western institutions and laws provide all citizens with an equal chance for success. These institutions and laws leave the rest to the individual. Hard work, self-help, and personal responsibility are the keys to success. Supporters of black conservatism argue, "If we play by your rules and prove our worthiness according to your standards, you will have no choice but to accommodate to us" (Eisenstadt 1999, xi). In short, they argue that no matter how Whites attempt to block Blacks from full participation in

the U.S. system, the universality of the U.S. system ultimately defeats them because it does not exclude individuals.

### **Black and Conservative: Evidence from Elections and Public-Opinion Polls**

Some of the strongest voices in black political discourse include the voices of the cadre of black conservatives. Cornell West (1994) maintains that these black conservatives do not have true ties in the black community; instead, white conservatives promote them in the media. This is evident by the unsuccessful election bids of major black conservative candidates. For example, Alan Keyes rarely obtains electoral support from Blacks. CNN exit-poll data reveal that only 8 percent of Blacks supported Keyes in his bid for the Illinois Senate seat (CNN Exit Poll Data, 2004). In addition, prior to the 2010 midterm elections, there were only two black Republicans elected to Congress since the end of World War II: J. C. Watts (Oklahoma) and Edward Brooke (Massachusetts), both elected from primarily white districts (Eisenstadt 1999). However, the 2010 midterm elections ushered two additional black Republicans into the United States House of Representatives: Tim Scott (SC-1), who ran unopposed, and Allen West (FL-22). But both candidates won in majority white districts.

Despite the lack of electoral support from the black community, however, scholars speculate that some middle- and upper-class Blacks are conservative. Researchers argued that the growing economic gulf in the black community results in attitudinal differences (Welch and Combs 1985). Scholars expect that middle- and upper-income Blacks are conservative because higher-income people tend to be more conservative and are thus less likely to believe that government should be involved in funding social programs (Welch and Foster 1987). The cadre of black conservatives tout that the growing problems of poverty that persist after years of government programs have left an increasing number of Blacks to wonder if the liberal solution, government programs are counterproductive and ineffective (Gaiter 1991). Furthermore, some black voters believe that the solutions of the past simply no longer work in the black community (Reiland 1996). Although Blacks continue to support the Democratic Party and its liberal policies unanimously, a large number of them are looking beyond the party for alternative solutions. This is largely due to how the Democratic Party has treated Blacks. Take, for instance, the outsider treatment Jesse Jackson received in his bid for the Democratic nomination for president in 1984 and 1988, the disaffection of the Clinton administration towards Blacks in the passage of welfare reform and the three-strikes law, or the treatment of Senator Barack Obama in his bid for the Democratic nomination for president. Smith and Seltzer (1992) even speculated whether more harsh treatment by the Democrats of Jesse Jackson in another campaign could shift some black support to the Republicans or a

new third party. Although Jackson did not run in 1992, Blacks paid very close attention to the Clintons' and the Democratic Party's treatment of then Senator Barack Obama.

Scholars are also reporting changes in black public opinion. For example, Simpson (1998) concludes that scholars should expect more diversity of opinion among Blacks as the significance of group identity decreases and the integration generation becomes politically active. Tate (1993) provides evidence of this diversity of opinion by finding a slight move toward conservatism among Blacks. Smith and Seltzer (1992) find that Blacks have more conservative views than Whites on the role of women, abortion, and school prayer. In addition, a *Washington Post* poll reported that 26 percent of African Americans identified themselves as conservative. "They support prayer in schools, business incentives, tougher sentencing for criminals, school vouchers, smaller government, welfare reform, and lower taxes" (Reiland 1996, 9). Finally, Dawson (2001) and Harris-Lacewell (2004) include conservatism in their discussion of black ideology.

There are several reasons to expect an increase in the number of black conservatives in the community. Among them is increasing upward mobility. The more Blacks integrate with the white middle class, the more scholars would expect them to imitate their political beliefs and become more conservative. Scholars state that the views of Blacks, especially middle-class Blacks, will probably change over time. They note that the black middle class will eventually have the same views as middle-class Whites. The cadre of black conservatives also argue that the black middle class would be inclined to take more conservative positions on the role of the federal government and the economy. They would desire the same policies and programs as middle-class Whites. In fact, Welch and Foster (1987) conclude that middle-class Blacks are conservative on affirmative action and that the attitudes of upper-middle-class and upper-class Blacks who make more than \$50,000 may be conservative.

In addition, Calhoun-Brown (2001) discusses the centrality of the black church in electoral politics. She concludes that church attendance can promote conservative political attitudes among Blacks especially in churches without covert political messages. In short, the church is a strong predictor of conservative positions on moral and social issues. For example, a columnist for the *Sun Times* discussed the 2004 election with a law professor who suggested that his daughter, a "Pentecostal sister" who attended church regularly, would carry every sermon she has heard into the voting booth, which could very well prompt her to vote her conscience instead of following a tradition of Blacks voting Democrat (Mitchell 2004).

One scholar put it this way: "The growing black middle class would be drawn toward a conservative platform as it became more prosperous" (Ashbee 1999, 241). Scholars expect this because we know that higher-income people tend to be more conservative (Welch and Foster 1987). In

general, Blacks tend to agree with conservatives on issues such as personal values, crime, and the death penalty. Moreover, DeVaux (1997) states, "The fact is, most Blacks have a conservative understanding of people and things. They have deep and abiding appreciation for traditional values" (22). Another scholar concluded, "Blacks are conservative. So when you look at the same-sex marriage, death penalty, school choice, prayer in school and the list goes on, you'll find we subscribe to a conservative doctrine" (Mitchell 2004). We also know that increasing numbers of Blacks are displeased with the failure of government programs. Black conservatism, once referred to as an oxymoron, may now be "an important and controversial movement in America that touches raw nerve among liberals" (Gaiter 1991, 1). The agreement between conservatives and Blacks "is more likely to lead them to vote Republican" (Ashbee 1999, 241). Thus, despite evidence to support the notion of black allegiance to the Democratic Party, it is important to note that there is diversity of opinion among Blacks. The black conservative phenomenon challenges the assumption that black political attitudes are homogenous, as indicated by the level of black support for Democratic presidential candidates. Research documenting black public opinion in this area produces conflicting and contradictory results.

Studies show that even as the general electorate becomes more conservative, Blacks remain overwhelmingly liberal (Seltzer and Smith 1985; Welch and Combs 1985). Many scholars conclude that few in the black community support conservatism. Despite the paucity of numbers, the media serves to amplify the views of the cadre of black conservatives. Some argue that black conservatives fail to engage in discourse with the black community, which severely limits their credibility (West 1994). Others argue that black conservatives will not be able to mobilize support until they earn the trust and respect of the larger black community. Gilliam (1986), for example, states that most Blacks were politically socialized during the civil rights movement, an era in which government intervention was necessary and thus do not identify with conservatives. Black conservatives disagreed with every aspect of the civil rights movement. They criticized how the movement forced federal encroachment on state powers and they were skeptical of the motives of liberals who pathologized black culture. Toler (1993) goes as far as to argue that the term "African-American conservative" is an oxymoron. In sum, most Blacks would agree with West's (1994) statement that "Black liberalism is indeed adequate, but black conservatism is unacceptable" (83).

Several sources suggest that Blacks remain overwhelmingly liberal. Today, for example, middle-class Blacks are just as likely to be liberal as lower-class Blacks. Furthermore, college-educated middle-class Blacks are *more* liberal than lower-class uneducated Blacks, and Blacks in the North are more liberal than Blacks in the South (Welch and Combs 1985). Though Welch and Foster (1987) argue that the black middle class is more conservative in regards to affirmative action and social welfare, Blacks as a

group are still more liberal than Whites at all income levels. Many studies suggest that there is no new black middle-class conservative group (Seltzer and Smith 1985; Welch and Combs 1985; Welch and Foster 1987). In fact, Smith and Seltzer (1992) conclude that Blacks are more liberal than Whites are in terms of ideological self-identification and that middle-class Blacks do not have the same views as middle-class Whites. Their views mirror the opinions of working-class people.

Other research hints at the possibility of support for conservatism among Blacks in the community. Tate (1993) examines the role racial identity has on black ideological identification. Most interesting is the finding that there is a slight conservative trend among Blacks, which is concentrated among Blacks that are more affluent. In short, race is still an important factor in political behavior, but Blacks are more conservative in their policy views, particularly in views concerning class inequalities. Although Tate (1993) documents conservatism among Blacks, she concludes that Blacks still promote a more liberal agenda than Whites.

Reaching conclusions similar to those of Tate, Dawson's (1994) analysis of the relationship between race and class finds that the black utility heuristic explains black political unity. He states that the black utility heuristic suggests "that as long as race remains dominant in determining the lives of individual Blacks, it is 'rational' for African Americans to follow group cues in interpreting and acting in the political world" (58). Thus, Blacks utilize group cues to form political attitudes and to influence political behavior. As a result, utilizing the heuristic, Blacks would see liberalism and the Democratic Party as more beneficial to the group rather than conservatism and the Republican Party. While Dawson does find class differences in black attitudes, linked fate, "the degree to which African Americans believe that their own self-interests are linked to the interest of the race" mutes these differences (Dawson 1994, 77).

Simpson (1998) extends Dawson's (1994) work and analyzes identity among young Blacks and finds that although there is black unity at the ballot box, there are major differences in the paths Blacks take to get there. For example, class, gender, and region all have an impact on black political behavior; often muting the impact of race. Other factors involved in black political behavior may result in more heterogeneity of opinion among Blacks and thus more conservatism. Cohen (2010), in her analysis of black youth, finds that although they continue to understand the salience of race, they are also conservative on a wide range of social issues.

Dawson (2001) illustrates this variety of opinions among Blacks in *Black Visions*, where he provides a complete and detailed history of six major ideological positions: radical egalitarianism, disillusioned liberalism, black Marxism, black conservatism, black feminism, and Black Nationalism. Most important to this work is his inclusion of black conservatism. Although conservatism is more prominent now than in the past, he finds it to have the least support among Blacks. Similar to the work of Simpson

(1998), Harris-Lacewell (2004) argues that to understand the political behavior of individuals, one must look beyond the views of the elite. She discusses four categories of black political thought: Black Nationalism, black feminism, black conservatism, and liberal integrationism. Harris-Lacewell (2004) also discusses how Blacks in normal everyday discourse discuss these ideologies. She views black conservatism, albeit an often looked upon negative ideological categorization, as one that is a part of black intellectual history.

Upon closer analysis, Harris-Lacewell (2004) finds participants accepting of social conservatism. Respondents were supportive of traditional masculine roles and a reduction in welfare benefits. Political discourse often excludes discussions about conservatism. For example, in one experimental test after respondents read a news article without discussing it, they became more conservative, thus lending to the idea that Blacks in the community who are conservative do not want to admit that they are conservative. In fact, respondents accepted conservatism for personal advancement. Therefore, it is generally accepted that conservatism is part of the black historical ideological tradition in America.

## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK CONSERVATISM

There are five distinct eras of black conservatism in U.S. history: Civil War and Reconstruction (before the 1890s), Post-Reconstruction (1890s–1930s), the New Deal Era (1930s–1950s), the Civil Rights Era (1950s–1960s), and the Post-Civil Rights Era (1970s–present). Black conservatism is not a new phenomenon. This work finds its tenets well before Reconstruction among Blacks, particularly free Blacks. It is difficult to trace the development of black conservatism to African culture because the latter supports the notion of collective consciousness. Accordingly, most tenets of conservatism, especially individualism, are antithetical to African culture. Thus, Walton (1969) states:

It is true that Blacks were also aware of an aristocratic tradition in their African Kingdoms. But the impact of this feudal structure upon their thinking is not known nor is the degree of this aristocracy among the different Blacks brought to America known. In other words, the number of Black aristocrats and Blacks with aristocratic thinking that survived the “middle passage” and made it to America is unknown. Moreover, the influence of this group upon Black thinking is also unknown. Thus, for all intent and purposes then Black conservatism emerged on the American continent (151).

Although it is difficult to trace conservatism back to African culture, scholars have documented the development of conservatism among Blacks in

America, when Africans arrived in America. The unique experiences of Blacks in America dominate the political philosophies espoused by Blacks. Racism, slavery, and Christendom all have had major influences on the political philosophy of Blacks, particularly that of conservatism.

The first documentation of conservatism among Blacks is in the early 1600s. During this time, some states hired Blacks as servants and released them after ten years. Upon release, Blacks assimilated, adopted the Anglo-American culture, and took advantage of the opportunities presented to them. They learned English, became Christians, and learned a trade and acquired property.

Most black scholars conclude that black conservatism is the result of slavery and racism (Randolph 1995). As racism became the dominant way of life in America and the number of slaves increased in the late 1600s and 1700s, Blacks had different living situations (Orey 2003). While slaves were working in the abolition movement, free Blacks were able to acquire property, education, and wealth. Free Blacks understood that the key to success in Anglo-American culture was property ownership. During this period, distinctions in America were between those who owned land and those who did not. Some free Blacks had the same rights as Whites. In court cases, they could easily win as much as they could lose. They also had white indentured servants. Over time, the small number of free Blacks began to increase their wealth and emulate the aristocratic ideas of Whites. This created a large gulf between freed Blacks and slaves. The harsh realities of slavery and racism left free Blacks with no alternative but the status quo. Free Blacks accepted the ideology of Whites, accepted the politics of assimilation and accommodation, and supported the ideals of the American Revolution. Support for conservatism allowed them to keep their positions of privilege (Hwang et al. 1998). In short, "Free Blacks in the seventeenth century worked hard, educated themselves, worshipped the Christian god, supported their family members, participated in community affairs, served in the militia, asked no special favors based on race," characteristics integral to contemporary black conservatism (Jones 2002, 27). In addition, Jupiter Hammon, the first African American to publish poetry, was a Long Island slave and literary figure. His writings demonstrated some of the first expressions of black conservative thought suggesting that it was the responsibility of free slaves to act morally to help others become free (Eisenstadt 1999; Bracey 2008). In his address in 1787, he states to free slaves, "If you are idle, and take to bad courses, you will hurt those of your brethren who are slaves, and do all in your power to prevent their being free" (1787). He closes his address by urging free Blacks "to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness and honesty" (1787, 19). In short, not only did free Blacks attempt to assimilate into white culture, but some enslaved blacks urged them to act morally for the sake of all.

Although Hammon was a slave his entire life, he strongly believed in Christianity, often referring to biblical passages in urging slaves to obey their

masters. And even though Hammon seemingly had a desire for freedom for younger Blacks, he was most concerned with the soul of his brethren. He states, "If God designs us to be free, he will do it, in his own time, and way; but think of your bondage to sin and Satan, and do not rest, until you are delivered from it" (18). His writings provided a strong foundation for the beliefs of the American Moral Reform Society (AMRS) and ultimately one of the contemporary camps of black conservatives, the black right.

By the 1800s, the AMRS, which developed from the American Society of Free People of Color, began to represent another aspect of the conservative black tradition in the United States. They represented the first appearance of a black organic conservative group which, according to Randolph (1995), were a group of black conservatives that are "concerned more with social and cultural dimensions of life, that is with the moral values and religious or ethical spirit that suffuse the social order and give meaning to life" (150). The AMRS believed that the problems of the black community were internal not external. In other words, white racism was not impeding the progress of Blacks; rather, the immorality and culture of Blacks impeded their progress. Led by Blacks in Philadelphia, this group focused on achieving total integration with Whites. They believed the best way to do this was to concentrate on educational uplift and morality. Most importantly, they believed that alcohol consumption gave Whites the right to exclude Blacks. Acknowledging the effects of racism, the leader of the Free People of Colour, William Whipper, stated that the objective of the organization was to work "by promoting sound morality, by the influence of education, temperance and economy, and all those virtues that alone can render man acceptable in the eyes of God or the civilized world" (Weems 2002, 33). Whipper believed that if Blacks showed good character and morals Whites would no longer demonstrate racial prejudice.

The AMRS sought to suppress racial identification and race-based institutions. They urged Blacks to drop the term "people of colour" from all correspondence because it represented degradation, which is why they changed the name of the organization. This urging to disassociate with Blacks set the foundation for contemporary individualist conservatives, who also want to distance themselves from Blacks. In a proposal which sought to educate black youth, Whipper suggested the program also consider the needs of white youth, which did not go over very well with most Blacks. They also preached nonresistance to physical aggression. Not surprisingly, the existence of the AMRS was short lived because they failed to garner black support. Blacks thought their message was too conservative because it argued that moral reform must go hand in hand with a rejection of group consciousness in order to lessen racial animosity, which seemed unrealistic at the time. Their message of nonresistance to violence was also problematic to Blacks. Some Blacks like Nat Turner believed that "God helps those who help themselves." The official demise occurred in August 1841. Ultimately, the leader, William Whipper, later transformed his views and beliefs. In the final issue of the

AMRS' official publication the *National Reformer*, Whipper stated that it was complexion not educational uplift and morality that "deprived the man of color of equal treatment" (Weems 2002, 38).

Unlike the AMRS, other black conservative groups were not against race consciousness similar to contemporary Afrocentric conservatives. Both the first black mutual aid organization, the Philadelphia Free American Society, founded in 1787, and the United Order of True Reformers, a fraternal organization, were proud of their African heritage. In fact, the leader of the Free American Society boasted about his rich heritage, proclaiming he was a pure African who "never mingled" with Whites (Weems 2002, 39). Both groups, however, did agree with the AMRS' stance on morality demonstrating their organic conservatism. The Free American Society stipulated as a part of their membership rules that no drunkard could be a member.

The Post-Reconstruction Era (1890s–1930s), which is often called the "Age of the Conservative," saw the emergence of several notable black conservatives. Booker T. Washington served as a spokesperson for Blacks during this time. Particularly interesting to many was his 1895 Atlanta Compromise address where Washington describes the relationship between Blacks and Whites as one of economic cooperation and social separation (White 1985). More specifically, he stated, "In all things that are purely social, we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress" (Harlan 1983, viii). Washington states in his address that it is imperative that Blacks work together to cultivate relationships with Whites. Whites saw Washington as a "model Negro" who was not interested in radical or swift change. Instead, he believed that Blacks would eventually "be accorded 'all the political rights' to which their 'ability, character, and material possession' entitled them" (Suggs 1999, 82). In line with black conservative political thought, he emphasized self-help, entrepreneurship, and perseverance despite the harsh circumstances under which Blacks lived. His focus was on industrial education instead of obtaining full equality for Blacks. He believed Blacks needed to prove themselves worthy of equal rights. Washington established several organizations and founded Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute to assist Blacks. He sought to make Tuskegee a vehicle towards self-help to assist Blacks in living by his social philosophy. He also established the Negro Organization Society and the National Negro Business League, which were organizations that sought to improve living conditions of Blacks through self-help programs.

Washington heavily influenced Marcus Garvey, the leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, who also served as a black leader during this time. His organization's platform openly listed issues that were central to black conservative thought. Although most scholars would not classify Garvey as a conservative, his underlying social conservatism is evident if one examines his movement, which along with the mutual aid organizations, may have been the first evidence of Afrocentric conservatives because he was also proud of his racial heritage. Garvey's movement

had an emphasis on business enterprise. In an effort to take advantage of the free-market system, Garvey established the Negro Factories Corporation in 1919, which was set up to manufacture every marketable commodity. The corporation developed grocery stores, a hotel, a printing press, and a restaurant. Garvey's business ventures also included the Black Star Line (BSL), a fleet of black-owned and -operated steamships that only sold shares to Blacks. He authorized the BSL to own, operate, and charter ships and to carry freight, passengers, and mail. Garvey held fast to the beliefs of Washington, whom Garvey viewed as his mentor. He acknowledged that although circumstances handicapped Blacks, society was not keeping Blacks from progress. Garvey was also in agreement with Washington on ideas regarding self-help, the importance of religion, and self-sufficiency. It should be noted however, that Garvey called attention to racial discrimination and sought autonomy for people of African descent.

"The reconciliation and reunion of North and South" also characterizes this era, which was plagued with violence against Blacks and white supremacy. John Mitchell's statement in the *Richmond Planet* described how Blacks felt about government action for protection; they believed "it is useless to look to the President of the United States, Congress, or the Supreme Court of the country for the betterment of our condition" (Randolph 1995, 152). The Republican Party had befriended Blacks during Reconstruction, often relying on their votes for political victories. But after Reconstruction, the policies of several Republican presidents, Garfield, Hayes, and Harrison, the permanency of white supremacy, and the Republican Party's wooing of Southern Whites, Blacks could no longer look to Republicans for assistance. Knowing that they lacked protection from the federal government, Blacks, especially the middle class, sought to forge political alliances with white conservatives. During this time, in order to survive, Blacks had to go along with Democrats in supporting the conservative politics of the Democratic Party. For example, Isaiah Montgomery voted against full enfranchisement for Blacks at Mississippi's constitutional convention. Montgomery's failure to support black enfranchisement followed along the lines of Washington's teachings, which was conservative (Walton 1975; Dillard 2001). Thus, disfranchisement became the way of life in the South. Hammon's literary work emphasized the importance of respectability, humility, morality, Christianity, and deference towards authority. Conservatives like Hammon and Washington believed that free Blacks had a responsibility to set examples for others by upholding high moral standards. This included proving themselves worthy of freedom, to avoid being lazy or stealing, and dispelling myths about black incapacity and undirected lives. Because of the conservative nature of their political views, free Blacks maintained their societal status and received rewards under the new system of segregation. For example, conservative Blacks obtained high positions in education as principals of black public schools and as presidents of black state colleges. Similar to the speech made by Hammon in 1787, Booker T. Washington espoused a conservative political philosophy in his

Atlanta Exposition speech in 1895 urging Blacks to forsake political activity. Instead, they should focus on accommodating Whites. Blacks who went against Washington's leadership during this time were subject to losing their jobs and their positions in government, which Washington helped to secure (Randolph 1995).

Black conservatism declined by the end of the Post-Reconstruction Era. Several major events contributed to this decline. They included the Harlem Renaissance, the black shift to the Democratic Party, the civil rights movement, and the transfer of power from Southern states to the federal government. The rise in liberal integrationist ideologies also helped undermine the support of conservatism in the black community. As a result, two distinct camps emerged in black politics: the liberal camp, which supported full integration and equal rights, and the conservative camp, which favored cautious incrementalism. W. E. B. Du Bois, Monroe Trotter, and Frederick Douglass represented the liberal camp, while Booker T. Washington represented the conservative camp.

During the New Deal Era, 1930s–1950s, there was minimal support for black conservatism because of the liberal policies of the federal government. When the material benefits from the New Deal, jobs and money, reached Blacks, the influence of black conservatism declined. Moreover, by the Civil Rights Era, there was almost a silencing of black conservatives. The hostility directed toward Blacks in general and the moral and religious convictions of the movement, along with the support of white America, helped silence Blacks who were opposed to the civil rights movement. Moreover, middle-class black business owners who espoused their conservative views lost customers because they were shunned socially and economically.

Although black conservatism declined during the Civil Rights Era, it survived through the voice of George Schuyler, an influential black journalist who significantly contributed to prominent conservative magazines. His autobiography serves as verification of his conservative political thought. One of the most controversial pieces written by Schuyler was an article where he argues that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an unworthy recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. He also helped organize the Conservative Political Union and ran against Adam Clayton Powell for a congressional seat in Harlem. While black liberals sought full equality and integration during this era, Schuyler argued that cautious incrementalism was the best possible way to achieve lasting racial harmony. In short, the civil rights movement enraged Schuyler. He believed it focused too much on black failures and not enough on the success of the black middle class.

The arguments of Schuyler and other black conservatives such as the Reverend J. H. Jackson, pastor of one of the largest congregations in Atlanta, who was vocal about his opposition to the radical approach of the movement, fell mostly on deaf ears between the 1950s and 1960s. Black conservative rhetoric largely diminished from political discourse during this era. It is this absence from political discourse which makes the seeming

reappearance of conservatism in the black community so noteworthy. During the post-Civil Rights Era, black conservatives experienced a revival. While most black moderates supported full equality, black conservatives were skeptical of federal encroachment on state powers and decisions by the Warren Court, which expanded civil rights and further limited state power. The lack of support for conservatism during this period is obvious when one analyzes black support for the conservative presidential candidate in 1964. More than 95 percent of Blacks rejected the conservative presidential candidate for Barry Goldwater and supported the liberal Democrat, Lyndon Johnson, in the election (Eisenstadt 1999).

The continued negative portrayal of Blacks by the liberal establishment made black conservatives who had been silent uneasy. For example, to black conservatives, the pathologizing of black culture by liberals reached its peak with the publication of the Moynihan Report in 1965. This report emphasized that the major cause of poverty was the breakdown of the family structure. Many labeled the Moynihan Report as fatuous, and black conservatives were compelled to speak. In particular, Schuyler, in his 1966 autobiography, referred to liberal pathologizing as the “culture of poverty” school of sociology (Eisenstadt 1999, xxiv). Schuyler was not the only one who opposed black liberalism. Others included Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray.

During this time, the number of Blacks who described themselves as conservative was negligible. However, this changed with the Reagan administration. By the late 1970s, the Republican Party, with national committee chair Bill Brock, hired Wright-McNeil and Associates, a black political consulting firm, to help to reach out to Blacks. The firm was unsuccessful in increasing black support because preelection surveys revealed Blacks continued to support Carter for president. Some Republicans, however, regarded the loss of the black vote as a weakness possibly harming their base of support and sought to change it. The label of racism would hover over the Republican Party if they did not recruit Blacks. In short, black support for the Republican Party was a moral imperative.

The party also formed several organizations to rebuild support in the black community. The Heritage Groups Division had a focus on minority issues. The National Black Republican Council and the Council of Concerned Afro-American Republicans all made special attempts to win back black support for the Republican Party. Still later, the party hired a black-owned consulting firm to assist in these efforts, which proved successful. The rise of the new right, as well as the party’s previous failures to reach black constituencies, all led to the visibility of the black conservative again. Not only had a prominent black conservative, Thomas Sowell, been prepared to take the education secretary post in the Reagan administration but a conference of black dissidents was also held. This conference, organized by Edwin Meese, leader of Reagan’s transition team, set up the 1980 Fairmont Conference that served as a conduit for Blacks who were sympathetic to Reagan’s goals. Meese promised those in attendance positions

in the Reagan administration. He stated, "We will further black political participation by way of the appointments process in the government itself" (Bracey 2008, 123).

Several notable black conservatives also participated in the Second Thoughts conferences in 1987 and 1990 organized by David Horowitz and Peter Collier, both radicals turned conservative. The first conference criticized liberalism and published papers by Glen Loury and Julius Lester. The second conference attacked black radicalism, collectivism, or any idea of black cultural identification which juxtaposed itself against individualism. The second conference involved many critiques by black conservatives like Stanley Crouch, Shelby Steele, and Walter Williams. Included among those critiques was an attack on race consciousness, which led to the failure of Blacks to identify with U.S. culture and the civil rights movement for making poverty and the ghetto life culture civil rights issues. In short, the conference served as a channel for black conservatives to publicly criticize the failure of liberalism as it relates to Blacks. The proceedings of both conferences were published in *Second Thoughts: Former Radicals Look Back at the Sixties* and *Second Thoughts about Race in America* (Dillard 2001).

Despite these efforts by the right, some scholars suggest that contemporary black conservatives who support the Republican Party are often disappointed because they are moderates. There are also questions about the increasing prominence of black conservatives because of the failure of the Republican Party to recoup black support. As Ashbee (1999) notes: "Both the Reagan and Bush administrations and successive party leaders proved largely unresponsive to the politics of Black Conservatism" (244).

Nevertheless, conservative presidents rewarded black conservatives for their support. They obtained federal funding and positions in the government and in research institutes. Many were more willing to espouse their views and beliefs. As a result, they became prominent because they received media coverage. At this time, political scholars and commentators began to speak of a black conservative movement. They pointed to Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, Glen Loury, and Walter Williams, who were increasingly visible. The appointment of Clarence Thomas to the United States Supreme Court gave black conservatives legitimacy. Shortly after the appointment in 1991, the cadre of black conservatives flourished.

A year later, in 1992, Project 21, The National Leadership Network of Black Conservatives, was organized as an initiative of the National Center for Public Policy Research (NCPFR), which was started in 1982. The NCPFR is a communications and research foundation that espouses conservative views. Although not as powerful as the Reagan administration's promise to provide jobs, Project 21 aims to actively promote the moderate and conservative viewpoints of its members by serving as a public relations network for black conservatives. In their Progress Report, they state that they are building the conservative movement with a new generation of over

300 black leaders by breaking into the monopoly black liberal leaders have in the media by providing media opportunities to their members (National Center for Public Policy Research 2011).

And, more recently, after the election of the nation's first black president, President Barack Obama in 2008, the Tea Party movement now provides a new platform for black conservatives. While reports find that less than 10 percent of Tea Partiers are black and there are varying accusations of racism within the movement, black conservatives like Thomas Sowell and various members of Project 21 have come to the group's defense (Thompson 2010). Other black conservatives have found a new home within the Tea Party partly because they want limited government, lower taxes, and more states' rights. One black conservative, Emery McClendon, a Project 21 member and Tea Party organizer, writes that Blacks have things in common with the Tea Party (McClendon 2011). Stacy Swimp, also a Project 21 member, argues that the Tea Party is the 21st-century civil rights movement. He goes on to argue that their stance for limited government and individual freedom are the same rights that past civil rights leaders fought for (Swimp 2011). Other black conservatives say they are drawn to the Tea Party because their values are similar. The Tea Party supports limited government, controlled spending, smaller government, and fewer taxes (Bauman 2010).

## CONTEMPORARY BLACK CONSERVATISM

### Contemporary Black Conservatives: The Cadre

It is worth noting that today's black conservatives come from a variety of backgrounds and have different views on issues. Moreover, they break from the conservative political tradition of Washington and Garvey because they did not originate within the black community; rather, most received their notoriety from the American conservative tradition through the Reagan administration or the more current Tea Party movement (Smith 2011) and, as such, this section is limited. While understanding the cadre is important to the tradition of black conservatism, they do not inform this work; neither do they speak for Blacks in the community who are conservative.

Members of the cadre are diverse. They did not have the same teachers nor did they attend the same schools; thus, their views are varied. For example, some in the cadre support the economic nationalism of Garvey, while others espouse the racial uplift of Booker T. Washington (Ondaatje 2010). Some espouse libertarian views opposing the government while others embrace morality and support the government enforcing morals. They are government officials, intellectuals, activists, journalist, and media pundits. For purposes of this discussion, elected officials are excluded because their views often change dependent upon the circumstances surrounding their elections, that is, challenger, district, and constituency. Instead, this

work focuses on individuals whose beliefs are well documented and consistent. Some members of the cadre merely espouse conservative views while others are political activists seeking to change public policy; however, very few are activists. Among the leading black conservatives today are Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, and Glen Loury, to name a few (Singer 1981; West 1987). Interestingly, many of them owe their success to the Reagan administration, while others owe their success to the Tea Party, namely Deneen Borelli (Bracey 2008; Smith 2011).

The most well-known conservative government official is probably Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Confirmed to the court in 1991 after widespread outcry by civil rights groups and the controversy over sexual harassment charges by Anita Hill, Thomas is the poster child for black conservatives. His maternal grandfather, whom he states taught him the value of hard work and self-reliance, heavily influenced him. A single mother raised Thomas after his father abandoned the family. He attended a segregated Catholic school in the South where he states the nuns taught him self-discipline. After attending a high school seminary in 1967, Thomas entered Immaculate Conception Seminary to prepare for the priesthood but decided to leave after experiencing racism from Southern Whites. He eventually attended Holy Cross College in Massachusetts and later Yale Law School. It was in his second year at Yale where he developed his conservative beliefs and became an opponent of affirmative action. Thomas often felt stigmatized as a beneficiary of affirmative action. He also believed that faculty at Yale harbored resentment because he was there. Although earlier in life Thomas embraced Malcolm X, by the time he graduated from Yale, he was firmly entrenched in the rhetoric of the right.

Thomas' rise to fame was inconspicuous. Before becoming a Supreme Court justice, Thomas had numerous high-profile government positions. In 1980, he attended the Fairmont Conferences, and by 1981 he was appointed as assistant secretary for civil rights in the Department of Education and later promoted to chair of the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC). Under his leadership, the culture of the EEOC changed by which the burden of proof in discrimination cases shifted from the employer to the employee. By 1988, Thomas developed a good relationship with then Republican presidential aspirant George H. W. Bush and was later nominated by him and confirmed to the Supreme Court. Not only did Thomas's confirmation increase the visibility of the cadre of black conservatives; it also served to cement some of their policy views on the appropriate role of the government.

A conservative of a different kind, but also well known, is Colin Powell, who was born in New York to a middle-class two-family household with a large extended family (Powell and Perisco 2003). He is a retired general in the U.S. military. While attending City College of New York (CCNY), a public institution established for people who could not afford more prestigious universities, he got involved in the ROTC and pledged a fraternity, the

Perishing Rifles (PR), where he found a mentor. It was his experience in the PR that peaked his interest in becoming a soldier. Powell's attendance at an ROTC camp in North Carolina revealed his leadership capabilities because he won second place in the best cadet category. Despite this revelation though, his attendance at this camp also revealed the racism in America because a white sergeant told him he did not come in first place because he was black. However, those experiences did not stop him and upon graduation, he was commissioned as an officer in the military.

Powell is an intriguing element to contemporary black conservatism. Highly regarded by Blacks, unlike other conservatives, yet he is a black conservative Republican. He states, "I am a fiscal conservative with a social conscience" (Powell 2003). Powell embraces America, but at the same time recognizes his black identity (Harris-Lacewell (2004). His views are not as extreme as other black conservatives because he is pro-choice and supportive of affirmative action. Powell is also an advocate for public education. Like most other conservatives, he is supportive of limited government, a free market, promoting hard work, and values (Powell 1995, 1996). His fiscal conservatism is also evident in his belief that the free market works by generating new wealth and jobs because he states his family came to America looking for jobs, not government assistance. But yet, he recognizes that the government can provide some things that were beneficial to his family, like education, transportation, and laws to protect their labor. He also recognizes the need for government intervention in the protection of civil rights and equal opportunity. Further, he has also made attempts to urge the Republican Party to sincerely reach out to people of color and abandon the Southern strategy of attracting Whites at the expense of people of color. Powell also expresses the conservatism of Jupiter Hammon and Booker T. Washington when he talks about traditional families, the amount of sex, crime, and violence in the media, and instilling in children a sense of volunteerism and a strong work ethic. Powell is the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State in the George W. Bush administration, the first black person to hold this position. In addition, Powell was the highest-ranking black man in the military and the federal government and was well liked by many Blacks who hoped he would run for president. In fact, a black conservative intellectual expressed disappointment in Powell's decision not to run for president. Steele states that Powell "said the right things and stood for the right things" (Conti and Stetson 1997, 145). Black conservative intellectuals believe that Powell is the person who could have realigned Blacks to the Republican Party as a presidential candidate. Harris-Lacewell (2004) however finds that in 1995, a majority of Blacks stated they would support Clinton over Powell. According to Conti and Stetson (1997), popularity polls showed that Powell had higher ratings than President Clinton. Harris-Lacewell (2004) goes on to conclude that those who once supported Powell changed their minds because they were concerned over his identification with the Republican Party and believed that he was too conservative.

The last public official who is also a conservative is Condoleezza Rice. She was born in Alabama and raised in a middle-class family who were part of the black educational elite. Although Rice moved to Colorado early in her childhood because her father wanted to escape the racism of the South, she did experience the segregated South in Birmingham, Alabama. Her father was a minister and a guidance counselor, and her mother was a teacher. She was only two miles away from the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing that killed four little girls, of which one was a friend of Rice's. She was also kept out of school for many days because her parents were fearful that she would become involved in the movement. Also fearful of bombings in their neighborhood, her father was part of a group of men who patrolled their neighborhood at night. Rice recalls how frightening it was during the time. But despite the segregation of Birmingham, Rice lived in a black middle-class community, Titusville, where there were black schools, churches, and social clubs that shielded her from much of the real world. The neighborhood was one where people shared the beliefs of Washington of self-help and gradual acquisition of civil rights. Rice's parents supported these views and especially tried to protect her from the thought that she was considered a "second-class citizen." It was known in the neighborhood that "Condoleezza Rice would be 'twice as good'" (Bumiller 2007). Rice was trained in political science. She has a PhD from the Graduate School of International Studies at Denver in Soviet studies. It was during her time in school that she became interested in Russia and was trained to believe that America had a responsibility to help other countries. After an internship in Washington, Rice later became a U.S. military expert. According to her autobiography, she comes from a long line of strong Southern women who married late or not at all and raised few if any children.

Although it is difficult to adequately place Rice in the tradition of black conservatism because of her private nature, she is a Republican and embraces the party because of its focus on individualism. She states that in America, you can become anything with education and hard work. Typical of many black conservatives, she focuses on her individuality instead of her race and speaks of self-help and self-reliance. For example, she recalls a situation in a class at the University of Denver where a professor lectures about the inferiority of Blacks. She raised her hand and challenged the professor, stating that the information was not factual and there was plenty evidence to the contrary. Rice eventually stated that "I'm better in your culture than you are" (Bumiller 2007, 55). Similar to other black conservatives, Rice does not see herself as a victim but rather as a victor. Rice also notes that Blacks were thriving in a segregated society, being self-reliant and teaching their children long before integration. A beneficiary of affirmative action who did not let it bother her, Rice believes it is important as a tool to create opportunities, but she also realizes it limits. As provost at Stanford University, she discontinued utilizing affirmative action during tenure cases because she believed it implied people of color needed more

help (Bumiller 2007, 92). Rice is also pro-choice because she believes in individualism, meaning a woman is an individual and she should have the right to choose her own destiny. Although Rice was not a participant in the Fairmont or Second Thoughts conferences, she was an integral part of the administration of Republican President George H. W. Bush, where she served as the Soviet and East European affairs advisor, national security advisor, and as the first woman Secretary of State under President George W. Bush (Bracey 2008).

Thomas Sowell, who briefly attended Howard University, is an economics professor at Stanford University. Thomas admits that Sowell was his mentor. Born in North Carolina, Sowell lived in Harlem and dropped out of school at the age of 16 and worked several menial jobs. After being drafted and fighting in the Korean War in the Marine Corps, he went back to school. Sowell attended Howard University and was accepted at Harvard for graduate school. He later studied at the University of Chicago under noted economist Milton Friedman. Sowell taught at several institutions, including his alma mater Howard University. He wrote several books, including *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies* and *Race and Economics*. However, his rise to fame was a direct result of his book *Ethnic America*, which critiqued liberalism and civil rights. Despite the acclaim afforded to Sowell with the publication of his book on liberalism, some scholars note that his rise to fame was a direct result of the Reagan administration's search for Blacks who would support his urban agenda. By 1981, he was the recipient of a fellowship at the Hoover Institution, which relieved him of teaching responsibilities and allowed him to devote all of his time to writing.

Sowell's personal experiences and struggles heavily influenced his beliefs. He is adamantly opposed to welfare because of the struggles he had to overcome, which include living in homes without running water, electricity, and heating. Sowell even accused black liberals of not speaking for the masses of Blacks because they had middle-class backgrounds and they could not relate. Sowell's approach to critiquing liberalism was too abrasive for the Right and too far away from most Blacks to remain useful.

Glen Loury, from Chicago, holds a Northwestern University undergraduate degree in math and currently teaches at Boston University. His academic experience includes stints at Harvard, the University of Michigan, and Northwestern University. He received his doctorate in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Loury has shifted between periods of neoconservatism, liberalism, and progressivism. His conservative swing occurred after the civil rights movement, which, according to him, blamed racism for every dilemma among Blacks. More importantly, Loury confesses to be a born-again Christian, a transformation that occurred after he lived an empty life that he characterizes by stating that "life has no meaning." Loury goes on to state that he had experienced a failed marriage, a life of drugs, alcohol, and infidelity, which ended after he found Christ.

Loury was more subtle than Sowell in his attack on liberalism and the civil rights establishment. In fact, Loury acknowledged the role racism had played in affecting the life chances of Blacks in America. But he fell short in placing the sole responsibility of the black condition on racism. Instead, Loury suggests that it is the responsibility of Blacks to change their conditions by utilizing the church, the family, schools, social clubs, and neighborhoods. Blacks should reclaim the values of black communities in the past to ensure black economic development in the future. Although Loury posits black responsibility in his formula for black uplift, he does not advocate the total end of welfare. Yet he does embrace America's capitalistic structure to assist in black economic development. Similar to Sowell, Loury believed that black leaders utilized affirmative action to help themselves and not the masses of Blacks who really needed help.

Loury's subtle approach was attractive to the Reagan administration and he was soon nominated as deputy to the secretary of education. However, he withdrew his name after assault charges by his mistress and charges of drug possession. Loury went back to academia and reemerged as a changed man in the 1990s.

Walter Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University and served as department chair from 1995 to 2001. He received the doctorate in economics from UCLA. Williams is a newspaper columnist, sits on several boards, and is the author of six books. As an adamant supporter of capitalism, Williams's background speaks to humble beginnings. He was born in Philadelphia, raised by a single mother who was a domestic worker, and he worked as a taxicab driver in the 1950s before being drafted into the military. After returning to the States, he and his wife moved to California, where he enrolled at California State University to study economics. He worked at night and went to classes in the morning.

Similar to Sowell, Williams's public persona may be considered abrasive because he posits that state intervention is a violation of individual rights. As such, affirmative action and minimum wage requirements were fundamentally wrong and removal of these intrusive government obstacles would pave the way for greater black success. Although a trained economist, Williams also took public positions on racial matters on the Civil War and the Confederate flag. For example, he supported Southern states' taking a stance during the Civil War and states flying the Confederate flag. Williams has also defended discriminatory hiring practices based on his support of capitalism. He argues that if employers refuse to hire young black males, it was based on preexisting knowledge that they have a bad work ethic and low levels of education, not on the fact that the employer is discriminating. Similar to others in the cadre, Williams became part of the Reagan team as a member of the inflation and welfare task force and the transition team for Health and Human Services as a result of his participation in the Fairmont Conference.

Shelby Steele, raised in an all-black working-class community by a black father and a white mother who were both members of the Congress of

Racial Equality (CORE), is a professor of English at San Jose State University. He attended Coe College, where he was a member of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He received his doctorate from the University of Utah. Author of several books, most notably *The Content of Our Character*, Steele strongly supported the Reagan administration for what it had to offer Blacks. Not as strong a supporter of capitalism as Sowell and Williams, Steele argues that Reagan's emphasis on family, traditional values, and self-sufficiency was just what Blacks needed for upward mobility. Yet Steele suggests that the government has a role as a supporter of individual effort. His main argument is that the black community is imprisoned by a "victim" mentality which severely limited black opportunity. As such, government programs that created the black underclass should end.

Steele is a different kind of conservative because he suggests that Blacks ceased to be individuals by taking on this victim mentality. Although other black conservatives may have implied that Blacks had a victim mentality which led to a collectivist thought pattern, Steele's entire career hinged on his demonstration of this mentality. Unlike the economist and the lawyer, Steele's writings failed to offer any solutions to the administration; thus he was not invited to join the Reagan team. However, he did become a fellow at the Hoover Institution and wrote a second book attacking Great Society programs that perpetuated black victim mentality, *A Dream Deferred: The Second Betrayal of Black Freedom in America*.

Similar to Steele, but not as well known, John H. McWhorter is a professor of linguistics at the University of California Berkley and senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. McWhorter is considerably younger than others in the cadre. His upbringing is also different, having been raised in a middle-class family and attending private schools. McWhorter's rise to fame came as a result of his adamant opposition to teaching Ebonics. Similar to Steele, McWhorter argued that racism is no longer an obstacle, that the civil rights movement had failed in some respects, and finally that black people had a victim mentality that blamed Whites and racism for every problem. He also argued that this victimology led to a "cult of separatism" where Blacks believe they live under a different set of rules. However, McWhorter's position on affirmative action was very popular among the Right. While acknowledging the initial need for affirmative action, he also believed that its usefulness had been outlived and its use perpetuates the victim mentality. Moreover, McWhorter believes that affirmative action creates anti-intellectualism where being smart or making good grades is synonymous with "acting white" (McWhorter 2001). He published three books, *Losing the Race*, *Authentically Black*, and *Winning the Race*.

Lastly, also an intellectual is sociologist Anne Wortham, raised in the South in a working-class family. She has taught at Harvard and Illinois State University and wrote *The Other Side of Racism*, where she argues against civil and human rights activism. Not invited into the Reagan administration, Wortham's work illustrates her commonality with McWhorter and

Steele in her efforts to rebuke any idea of a common race consciousness among Blacks. Instead, Wortham supports the individual over the group. In fact, she was an opponent of the civil rights movement, asserting that resulting laws were unconstitutional because they stripped individual economic rights. Wortham argues that individuals should be deracialized and this deracialization does not deprive individuals of their culture; neither does it suggest that they are somehow ashamed or have low-self-esteem. She merely suggests that thinking in terms of a group is too confining. Wortham's writings are indicative of some of the community's rejection of the cadre, because they seem to have forgotten where they came from.

There are a few activists, individuals who actively engage in influencing public policy through organizations, or who have started organizations, in the conservative cadre. Among them are Robert Woodson, Star Parker, Deneen Borelli, and Ward Connerly. Robert Woodson's story is similar to other conservatives in the cadre. He was raised by a single mother, was a high-school dropout, and was in the military. Like the others, Woodson's time in the military changed his life. He later finished high school and earned a graduate degree in social work from the University of Pennsylvania. However, Woodson is far different from the intellectuals in the cadre. For example, Woodson is a former liberal and civil rights activist who later became a community activist, often working alongside people who lived in neighborhoods that needed uplift. In fact, not only does Woodson attack black liberals but also many black conservatives. He dislikes the liberals because he believes they take advantage of poor Blacks for their own benefit. But yet he also critiques many black conservatives because they merely pander to the ideas of the Right without offering real solutions or having a connection to the people that they claim to represent.

Woodson believes that liberalism and the civil rights movement failed to improve the conditions of poverty that affected Blacks. As such, he looked for new alternatives to existing government programs. Woodson posits that government programs grew the bureaucracy and failed to improve the conditions of poverty that surrounded many Blacks. Thus he established the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) to "help residents of low-income neighborhoods address the problems of their communities" (Center for Neighborhood Enterprise 2012). His organization sought to provide training, technical assistance, information, and support to impoverished neighborhoods. Their founding principles are including those who are suffering in formulating the solutions to the problems, utilizing the principles of the market economy, and utilizing mediating structures, that is, the church and the family, to change neighborhoods. Although a supporter of capitalism, Woodson also believed in the people he sought to help. For example, while many black conservatives in the cadre referred to poor Blacks as psychologically and culturally deprived, he believed they were decent people who, when given the correct training and tools, could overcome obstacles and form stable, safe, and economically successful

communities. Although offered a position in the Bush administration, he turned it down.

Star Parker is a self-confessed former schemer of the welfare system. She later became a conservative evangelical Christian who preaches about the horrors of the welfare system. Parker's two-parent household gave her a strong foundation, but upon moving to California to become a Soul Train dancer, Parker became involved in bad relationships, ended up pregnant several times, had four abortions, and used drugs. She discusses in her autobiography *Pimps, Whores & Welfare Brats* that because it was so easy to defraud the system, she lived off welfare for a long period of time, exchanging public assistance for, as she states, "the good life." After launching an urban Christian magazine destroyed by the Los Angeles riots of 1993, she now leads the Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education, a nonprofit organization that seeks to influence public policy on issues of race and poverty. She ran for Congress in 2010 in California's 37th district as a Republican but was defeated by the incumbent, Laura Richardson (D), after receiving less than 25 percent of the vote (CNN.com 2010). The district is about 25 percent black (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

Deneen Borelli is an official contributor on the Fox News Channel and is relatively new to the scene. She has training in managerial marketing from Pace University and has worked in a variety of jobs including positions at Phillip Morris and as the manager of media relations with CORE. She also recently released a book, *Blacklash: How Obama and the Left Are Driving Americans to the Government Plantation*, where she provides a vivid critique of the Obama administration. In this book, Borelli speaks of her working-class background where her parents instilled a strong work ethic. She also speaks of working to help contribute financially to her household. Borelli compares her upbringing to President Obama's but not Michelle Obama. In fact, Borelli belittles the challenges Michelle Obama says she faced at Princeton University, stating, "If all of us could have been so lucky!" (Borelli 2012, 10). Borelli worked her way through school as an employee at Phillip Morris, where she utilized their tuition reimbursement program.

Very similar to older black conservatives who were offered positions in the Reagan administration, Borelli has become a conservative spokesperson and an employee of FreedomWorks, a conservative group headed by former House Republican Leader Dick Armey (TX), which also backed Tea Party rallies (Somasekhar 2010). After serving as a fellow of the organization, she was named as the director of minority outreach in June 2012 to help the Tea Party distance itself from charges of racial insensitivity (Demby 2012). Borelli's message is clear. She is a conservative who is critical of Obama's "progressive" agenda and his argument that the Constitution places constraints on his ability to enact progressive policies that she believes would redistribute wealth. Similar to the old guard, her work is typical in pointing out black success and that Blacks have overcome racism.

However, unlike the old guard, Borelli can point to the election of Barack Obama as the nation's first black president as a demonstration of how far Blacks have come.

Borelli is interesting, however, because of her affiliation with the new Tea Party movement, which has been accused of being racist. Cose (2011) directly questions Borelli as to why the Tea Party has not issued a statement declaring that they will not tolerate any white racists or white supremacists from the group or why they did not simply denounce any affiliation with these groups. Borelli did not provide a direct response, but instead offered information that the Tea Party was a grassroots movement that has nothing to do with race, but was a group of individuals who were against big government and Obama's policies. However, a 2010 *New York Times* study finds that barely a third of Whites who support the Tea Party believe Blacks are hardworking while only 45 percent believe Blacks are intelligent. Instead of the Tea Party denouncing racism, they attempted to show how racists Blacks were by releasing a video of a black employee of the United States Department of Agriculture explaining how they had discriminated against white farmers. The video later proved to be untrue because it was edited, and the white farmer defended the employee, Shirley Sherrod, who had in fact helped to save his farm. Sherrod was fired from the department but was soon offered numerous apologies.

Ward Connerly was born in Louisiana and raised in California by family members after his father left and his mother died. He first lived in a working-class family in a primarily black section of Sacramento before living with his maternal grandmother, whom he says struggled financially, although family members suggest he exaggerates this information. He graduated from Sacramento State College with a degree in political science and later gained recognition and expertise in the housing industry. He is an entrepreneur and currently owns Connerly & Associates, a consulting and land-use company, and he became a millionaire.

Connerly is one of the most controversial conservative figures. His notoriety is a result of his tenure as a member on the University of California Board of Regents. Connerly states that he was approached by parents of a white student who claimed their son was denied admission to a medical school in California. After researching the issue, Connerly concluded that California's affirmative-action policy was the same as "reverse racism." He created and campaigned for Proposition 209, which banned consideration of race, gender, or ethnicity in hiring, contracting, college admissions, or any state programs. Similar propositions were later passed in several states including Michigan, Nebraska, and Washington. Other states, such as Florida, simply utilized legislative action to decrease affirmative-action programs (Ellis and Smith 2010).

The brief discussion of the cadre of black conservatives illustrates that their lives and experiences have led them to have a belief system that embraces conservatism, which Toler (1993) states rests upon five points:

- 1) Although lingering racism still exists, thanks to the victories of the civil rights struggles, racial discrimination is no longer a critical obstacle to Black progress. We can speak of a racist American past, but not of a racist contemporary America.
- 2) African American demands for equal opportunity made during the Civil Rights era now go too far in demanding equal outcomes. A non-discriminatory America does not ensure equal outcomes. Capitalism maximizes skill and talent and any differences among ethnic groups, or between genders, is a function of each group's particular strengths and weaknesses.
- 3) Today's problems of race relations and Black poverty cannot be remedied by government policy alone. The roots of today's problems are located first and foremost within African Americans: in our inability to successfully compete in a free market system, in the poor values and irresponsible and offensive behavior of poor Blacks, in our psychological hang-ups about group identity and past victimization, and/or in our failure to take full advantage of existing opportunities. In this light, not only are government social welfare and legal remedies, such as affirmative action programs, unnecessary, they are detrimental to the development of Black people. Social welfare programs destroy Black families, foster debilitating dependency, and reward irresponsible behavior.
- 4) Affirmative action programs lower Black self-esteem since Whites will always diminish Black accomplishment as reflecting only affirmative action imperatives and Black beneficiaries of affirmative action programs can never be fully confident that their success stems from their talent. These programs are also detrimental to Blacks because of the white (male) resentment they engender. Affirmative action has, in any case, only benefited more advantaged Blacks.
- 5) The appropriate strategy for African Americans is one focusing on self-help. First we need to de-emphasize racial identity and loyalty in favor of an American identity. Second, African Americans should compete on the basis of merit only. Third, we need to de-emphasize government programs and civil rights legislation in favor of racial self-help. Blacks need to focus on Black entrepreneurship, building and supporting Black business, particularly in poor Black neighborhoods. And most important, the Black middle-class needs to teach poor African Americans appropriate values and behavior. (5-6)

### **Contemporary Camps of Black Conservatism**

Notwithstanding the importance of the black conservative cadre, this work is primarily interested in how conservatism manifests itself within the black community. As such, based on the classification of mainstream conservative thought, analyses of the black conservative cadre, and analysis of the

development of black conservatism, this work posits that there are four camps of today's black conservatives, the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, individualist conservatives, and neoconservatives (Bracey 2008; Randolph 1995; Dillard 2001; Tate and Randolph 2002; Watson 1998; Weems 2002). This classification system is not mutually exclusive; neither is it an exhaustive list of the different types of conservatism among Blacks. Moreover, the cataloguing of individuals into this system is not exhaustive. Individuals may shift their positions from time to time, prompting their placement into the different camps, or they could be in two different camps simultaneously. Simply put, the classification system and the cataloguing of individuals seek only to launch a dialogue about a group that is varied, diverse, and often misunderstood (Bracey 2008; Ondaatje 2010). To some extent, there are common threads found within the four camps of black conservatism. With the exception of Afrocentric conservatives, most of the camps of contemporary black conservatism embrace Toler's (1993) five points, but some focus almost exclusively on one point over other points. One camp may devote its energies to the notion of self-help, and yet others focus exclusively on changing the welfare state.

The black right is one of the four camps of contemporary black conservatives. The foundational elements of the black right derive from the writings of Jupiter Hammon and the AMRS. They could be considered social conservatives because their focus is on traditional black family values and they believe embracing religion and living a decent moral life are the key to black empowerment (Bracey 2008). They view the problems within the black community, namely ghetto poverty, unwed births, and drug use, on culture and immorality rather than white racism. As such, the black right believes that the chief concern of Blacks should be stopping immoral behavior and drug use, not white racism (Weems 2002). Several similarities exist between the organic conservatism of the 1800s, the religious right, and the black right. Previous organic conservatives believed that Whites would grant Blacks rights once Blacks stopped engaging in immoral behavior. They believed that if Whites deny Blacks rights, it must be for some justifiable reason, such as immoral behavior. The black right believes that high values and morals are essential if the black community wants to be successful and reach the American dream. Another connection between the two groups is that older versions of organic black conservatives, particularly the AMRS, wanted to drop all references to skin color. Similarly, some contemporary black organics want people to refer to them as Americans, not black Americans.

Central to the argument of the black right is the idea that black culture is to blame for problems in the black community. Loury argues that the problem of the black poor is a moral one. Utilizing the philosophy of Hammon, Washington, and the AMRS, Loury argues that in order for Blacks to progress, they must prove to Whites that they are worthy to receive the full benefits of being a U.S. citizen. The dysfunctional behavior of the black underclass makes this goal unattainable. He also supports the notion that

Blacks should be accommodationist and not confront Whites because such confrontations would be unbeneficial to Blacks. Loury goes on to state that the better strategy would be to appeal to the sensibilities of Whites by confronting the “enemy within” the pathological culture of the black poor. This pathological culture exhibits a lack of concern for values such as self-reliance and delayed gratification and results in high crime rates, unwed mothers, and poor academic performance of black youth. Loury believes that the moral decay of black communities is beyond the reach of government programs. The primary focus should be on living a life that is worthy of the privileges and benefits that America has to offer.

In mainstream America, scholars refer to organic conservatives as the “religious right.” Similar to the religious right, although more moderate, the black right believes religion is central. Religion and righteous living will restore the black community. Moreover, religion will resolve all social, moral, or political issues faced by Blacks. Just like the religious right, the black right stresses traditional family values and high moral standards. They are also against abortion and affirmative action, but they support prayer in schools and the death penalty.

Notable individuals such as Alan Keyes and Armstrong Williams represent the black right (Bracey 2008). The black right is also supported by the black evangelical movement, which supports traditional family values and is against legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Black evangelicals such as T. D. Jakes (megachurch minister), Donnie McClurkin (gospel singer), and Tyler Perry (producer, actor, writer) could also be categorized as part of the black right, but most would not necessarily categorize them as conservative. Their message however, is conservative, and it gives credence to conservative dialogue. For example, T. D. Jakes is noted as having endorsed the predominantly white religious organization Promise Keepers, which encourages men to practice “Christianlike masculinity.” This movement is supported by Jakes, who also sponsors a “Manpower” conference which advises men in quite the same way as Promise Keepers (Simpson 1998). In addition, Donnie McClurkin, not often thought of politically, performed at the 2004 Republican National Convention to support President George W. Bush’s stance against gay marriage. Although McClurkin minimizes the significance of his appearance at the Republican convention because he sang at the Democratic convention in 1992, he is adamant in his fight against society’s acceptance of homosexuality. Black support for the Republican Party’s stance against homosexuality in the 2004 presidential election could have provided the beginning of an alliance. But the alliance was short lived. Generally, research notes that Blacks are more disapproving of homosexuality than Whites. Moreover, black homosexuals have more difficulty coming out of the closet than Whites because the black community is not accepting of the lifestyle (Lewis 2003). President Barack Obama’s announcement in May 2012 supporting marital rights for same-sex couples places him squarely at odds with the black right and many in the black community. For example,

the Conference of National Black Churches, made up of nine denominations reaching 10 million people, all oppose gay marriage. Some are fearful that President Obama's announcement may decrease voter turnout among Blacks in the 2012 presidential election. Its group members were warned by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which also supports same-sex marriage, that former President George H. Bush received over 10 percent of the black vote because of same-sex marriage initiatives on the ballot in Ohio in 2004 and that it was important that the Republicans not do the same in the 2012 presidential election (Douglas 2012). And lastly, Tyler Perry, named by *Forbes* in 2011 as the highest paid man in entertainment, is a successful producer of black urban movies that exhibit the basic tenets of black evangelical beliefs, traditional family values, and having faith in God. His movies have grossed over \$500 million at the box office. Critiques state that Perry "is the most prominent Black conservative evangelical on earth" (Willis 2008).

Afrocentric conservatives represent the second camp of contemporary black conservatives and are strikingly similar to both black mutual-aid organizations founded in the late 1700s who agreed with some of the views of the AMRS. Afrocentric conservatism is somewhat similar to Black Nationalism, although some scholars have labeled Afrocentric conservatism as nationalist conservative (Simpson 1998; Austin 2006). Afrocentric conservatism is complex and far different from other camps of contemporary black conservatives. It is this type of conservatism in the black community that is often ignored and misunderstood because Afrocentric conservatives may feel a sense of alienation in American society because they have a strong black identity. They also believe in black pride, self-determination, and autonomy (Davis and Brown 2002). While other camps of black conservatives focus their belief system on the appropriate role of the government, Afrocentric conservatives base their views on self-reliance and are antigovernment, but not in the same sense as other conservatives or even the American conservative tradition. They are antigovernment because they understand that American society has utilized the government to enslave Blacks. In fact, some Afrocentric conservatives may actually view the government as racist and oppositional to Blacks partly because of the founding documents like the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. They have a variety of things to point to how racism is evident in the United States. For example, they can point to the Declaration of Independence and how parts of it were removed, particularly the part condemning the British king for engaging in the slave trade, although the author of the declaration also participated in slave trading. They can also point to the fact that despite America's declaration and condemnation of the British king, America had no intention of ending slavery after independence (Walton and Smith 2012). They can also point to how the Constitution in Article I, Section 3 describes Blacks as three-fifths of a person or how it contains the fugitive slave clause in Article IV, Section 2, indicating that Blacks were not discharged from service even if they escaped to a free territory or state. In

short, Afrocentric conservatives understand the dilemma of being black and American. Despite this major divergence, they do share the focus on religion and morality with the black right and they have the same views as the black right about homosexuality. Similar to the differences between black organic conservative groups like the AMRS and the mutual-aid organizations, the point of departure between the black right and Afrocentric conservatives is their view of Whites and their level of race consciousness. The black right does not see racism as a primary cause of inequality in America, and they attempt to transcend race through religion. Instead, they see morality and life choices as vital, and they do not want others to focus on the fact that they are black, but the fact that they are American. Afrocentric conservatives, however, view racism and Whites as the culprits of inequality. They are pro-black and have a strong sense of black pride. Afrocentric conservatives support black entrepreneurship and the patriarchic family. Afrocentric conservatives are wary of the government creating a sense of dependency, thereby reducing black dignity (Bracey 2008). The major component of Afrocentric conservative belief is a focus on self-determination (self-help), which is at its core a fundamental tenet of black conservative thought and very similar to black nationalist thought (Davis and Brown 2002). They urge Blacks to have an entrepreneurial spirit and to shop in black stores (Brown and Shaw 2002). This focus on economic well-being is similar to the thought of Booker T. Washington, who urged Blacks to focus on economic self-sufficiency in light of the continued political oppression faced. In addition, once Blacks obtained economic independence, political freedom would follow. This view is also similar to that of Chuck Stone, senior editor and columnist with the *Philadelphia Daily News*, who attended the Fairmont Conference in 1980 and stated that the black community needed economic leadership that might involve embracing Black Nationalist ideas (Bracey 2008).

A common thread found among contemporary black conservatives, the black right and Afrocentric conservatives is a demand for high moral standards and good character. Several members of the cadre of black conservatives identify being born again as a critical point in their lives, which often contributed to their conservative political philosophy. A major component of black conservative political rhetoric is strong religious beliefs, a turn toward an evangelical Christian way of life. For example, Loury publicly recognizes the role religion plays in his life, how his life was full of drugs, alcohol, and pride before attending church regularly. Parker also explains how a change happened in her life when she became a Christian. This took place after years of partying, abortions, and defrauding the system, when she volunteered at a shelter and met her current husband. She also discusses how attendance at minister Fred Price's megachurch, with one of the largest sanctuaries in the United States, on a regular basis influenced her decision to live rightly and morally.

Similar to the black right, among Black Nationalist there is a demand for high moral standards. The Nation of Islam (NOI), started in the 1930s by

Wallace D. Fard, demonstrates elements of Afrocentric conservatism. The NOI, whose focus is on religious devotion, strong families, and a rigid code of behavior, could be considered an Afrocentric conservative organization because their rhetoric embodies many parts of the black conservative tradition and is socially conservative (Bracey 2008). The NOI's work in the area of criminal rehabilitation, which is extremely successful, accurately illustrates the black right and Afrocentric group of black conservatism. Their program is strict in defining a moral life as one of rejecting alcohol, tobacco, pork, premarital sex, drugs, and dancing (Weems 2002). The Nation takes ex-convicts and turns their lives around by adhering to a code of conduct. The NOI also promotes black self-sufficiency, a core belief of black conservatism (Davis and Brown 2002). Moreover, the NOI's work under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad mirrored the work of Garvey just a few decades earlier. Under his leadership, the Nation built schools and businesses to empower Blacks, they purchased farmlands and provided jobs to Blacks, and they taught Blacks self-reliance without white support. However, it was Malcolm X who ultimately provided mass support for the Nation. While supporting the rigid lifestyle of the NOI and the thriftiness of Washington, Malcolm X also preached against black civil rights leaders for wanting to integrate with Whites. Instead, similar to Garvey, he posited that the key to black empowerment was the formation of a black nation that was strong and economically independent of Whites. The Nation also embraced the historic tradition of black conservatism, self-help, self-empowerment, self-reliance, and living a moral and chaste lifestyle. Similar to the writings of early black conservatives, the Nation believed that Blacks living a moral life would ultimately prove the hypocrisy of Whites. It was important that members of the Nation not engage in violence with Whites unless attacked by Whites first. As such, they never fought against America's discriminatory laws and policies against Blacks, but, in its place, sought to live a life of racial uplift and autonomy. It is important to note, however, that the Nation does not embrace all elements of the tradition of black conservatism. While they utilized capitalism as a source of uplift for Blacks, they reject Western institutions, do not vote, prefer not to serve in the armed forces, and ultimately seek to isolate themselves from the rest of society (Bracey 2008).

Louis Farrakhan, current Nation of Islam leader, who sponsored the "Million Man March" in October 1995, continues to espouse Afrocentric conservative viewpoints. Black political commentators suggest that this march signified a moment in history when black Americans began to see the restoration of morality and traditional family values as a priority. More specifically, the event garnered support from one million black men who wanted to take responsibility for their families and the community. The march had a general Black Nationalist tone to it with conservative underpinnings. Following the NOI's teachings, Farrakhan continues to demonstrate the conservative nature of the NOI. In short, the Million Man March with its conservative theme and the goals of the Nation of Islam are conservative (Farrar 1999).

Many scholars would not include a section about Black Nationalists and Afrocentrists as part of a dialogue on the subject of black conservatives. However, this work posits that attempts to situate some elements of the black conservative tradition, that is, Afrocentric conservatives, within the American conservative tradition give an inaccurate and often misunderstood conceptualization of black conservatism. Furthermore, when attempting to understand the phenomenon of black conservatism one must fully illustrate and describe all facets of conservatism among Blacks. Although some elements of Black Nationalism support a separate nation for Blacks, their philosophy of self-help and self-determination is synonymous with black conservative thought. Furthermore, Austin (2006) identifies the beginning of conservative Black Nationalism during the 1980s and 1990s, referring to it as Afrocentric nationalism. Similar to what I refer to as Afrocentric conservatives, Afrocentric nationalists tend to believe the social problems of Blacks come from a lack of values, and the best way to solve these problems is with an Afrocentric education. Austin goes on to state that mostly the black middle class supported this conservative nationalism. It manifests itself through Afrocentric educational programs, the celebration of Kwanzaa, wearing African clothing, referring to black Americans as African Americans, and giving children African names. In short, Afrocentric nationalism urges Blacks to practice restraint, responsibility, excellence, and respect, and to embrace traditional family values. The following quote best captures the essence of conservative nationalism: "One of the most revolutionary things you can do is to keep your marriage intact and raise your children" (Austin 2006, 168). It should be noted that there are limitations in defining black conservatism because commonly used definitions will apply to many who are not black conservative, and they may not necessarily be true of all black conservatives. In fact, many Black Nationalist would hate the idea of being placed in the same intellectual tradition as black conservatism. They would also dislike being placed into the same category as white conservatives.

The two remaining camps are individualist conservatives and neoconservatives. Both camps have commonalities because they both are anti-government (Bracey 2008). Individualists oppose government intervention in social welfare issues and are less confident than liberals in the ability of human beings to be rational. Therefore, they place their faith in the economic marketplace, capitalism. Karenga (1986) states black conservatives subscribe to the "minimal state whose principal business is protection, securing contracts, and above all non-intervention in the lives of good, property-holding citizens" (44). In fact, this group of contemporary black conservatives, like Walter Williams, would label the state an evil force. The only tolerable government involvement is in the business community to stabilize the economy.

To minimize government action, individualists argue that America must eliminate mandatory minimum-wage requirements, affirmative action, and

regulation to ensure market success and progress for all. Sowell and Williams argue that government programs constrain the freedom of all citizens to succeed, not just Blacks. Some conservatives believe that the mandatory minimum wage hurts black youth in today's labor market. They say the passage of minimum-wage legislation denies black youth opportunities for employment because it overprices labor. This denial of employment carries over into other social problems in the black community such as drug use and broken families. They stress that employment opportunities for black youth would give them valuable work experience, which would in turn make them more marketable.

Individualists also believe that government social welfare programs create a sense of dependency, which weakens the black community. They argue that the government cannot resolve the problems of the black community, and nongovernment sources such as churches and civil organizations should solve them. Noted supporters of this camp of black conservatism are Larry Elder, Anne Wortham, Stanley Crouch, and Shelby Steele. Their dialogue has strengthened the conservative cause (Dillard 2001).

In addition to the views listed above, and in contrast to the other camps of black conservatives, most notably Afrocentric conservatives, individualists support the notion of the individual over the group. As such, they favor individualism, which is similar to the AMRS's attempt to suppress racial identification. Any attempt to focus on group or racial consciousness is a barrier to full assimilation for Blacks. Individualists would therefore not utilize linked fate as a filter by which they make political decisions. They would instead look at their own individual situation, not the situation of Blacks, before forming opinions or voting. They also subscribe to the ideas of universal equality instead of equality for the group. Therefore, collectivism is unimportant (Smith 2002).

Unlike individualist conservatives, neoconservatives are primarily ex-liberals and ex-radicals who dislike liberal policies of the New Deal and the civil rights movement. Neoconservatives are opposed to liberals and government expansion of the welfare state, but they are closer to the Left than other camps of conservatives. They also stress individual responsibility and merit but not to the same extent as individualist conservatives. Neoconservatives believe Blacks should stress self-help and should transcend racial barriers. They are not supportive of affirmative action, quotas, and set-aside programs. According to neoconservatives, the civil rights movement took the focus off individual achievement and placed group equality at the forefront. Similar to individualists, neoconservatives tend to focus on the individual by supporting civil and political liberties for all. Neoconservatives believe that charitable organizations and the state should play a role in resolving the problems that the New Deal attempted to solve. Steele, who is a neoconservative, believes that mediating structures such as churches and civic organizations should help people progress. In sum, the family, not government, is the foundation upon which individuals build success.

### **View of Racism, Individualism, and Linked Fate**

Several commonalities exist among the black right, individualists, and neo-conservatives (see Table 3.1). One commonality is their view on the impact of racism. Sowell articulates this best when he dismisses statistics on the disparities between Blacks and Whites in income, wealth, employment, and home loans. He concludes that the economic marketplace has an equalizing effect and that any disparities that exist between groups are a direct result of the marketplace, not racism. He and other conservatives argue that racism and slavery cannot explain the status of Blacks because other groups in America have risen out of poverty, such as Chinese Americans and Jewish Americans (Sowell 2004). As a result, they reiterate that black culture, not racism, is the problem. Although Afrocentric conservatives would agree that Blacks should have a strong moral foundation and a rigid code of behavior, they do not dismiss the effects that racism has on Blacks. Nonetheless, other black conservatives like Steele reject the idea that racism is the cause of problems for Blacks. He believes that racism has declined tremendously and that Blacks use racism as an excuse to conceal their own personal failures. Steele goes on to argue that racism is not the problem; rather, it is that Blacks are afraid to try and they doubt their own ability, so success seems far removed. He calls this integration shock “the shock of being suddenly accountable on strictly personal terms” (Steele 1998, 23). In sum, he believes that Blacks who suffer from integration shock see themselves as victims instead of those who fail to try.

Some black conservatives agree, however, that although Blacks endured racism, this suffering does not translate to the country having a current responsibility to deal with that legacy. Loury contends that racism is not the problem for Blacks, but rather their own dysfunctional behaviors. He goes on to state that compensatory damages would not help resolve the inequalities in this country. Loury goes on further to state that tort law, which stipulates that one who injures another party must make him or her whole, is difficult to apply to slavery. As such, he questions how one places a monetary value on the damages caused by slavery. McWhorter agrees with this and distinctively argues in his book *Losing the Race* that victimology, separatism, and anti-intellectualism hinder black progress. Although he acknowledges that racism still exists, he argues that Blacks’ fixation upon the vestiges of racism fosters separatism, the idea that there are separate rules society must follow to deal with Blacks. Instead of this separatism and focusing on the past, black conservatives are optimistic and choose to focus on black accomplishments in the face of obstacles rather than on the problems of slavery and racism. To those who argue that Blacks have more to achieve, black conservatives point to black achievements, which often come at the expense of racial identity. Sowell argues that groups that have successfully assimilated into U.S. society have abandoned their cultural identity in exchange for a U.S. identity. For black conservatives, there is a pride in accomplishment and a respect for cooperation with Whites for

the advancement of the race. Armstrong Williams, part of the black right, agrees with this assessment and suggests that Blacks should focus on the opportunities that America has to offer as opposed to acting as victims. In short, Elder provides a summation of black conservatives' view on racism. He concludes "that racism no longer represents a serious threat to black upward mobility" (Elder 2000, 2).

Table 3.1 Typology of Black Conservatism

	<b>The Black Right</b>	<b>Afrocentric Conservatives</b>	<b>Neo- conservatives</b>	<b>Individualist Conservatives</b>
Although lingering racism still exists, thanks to the victories of the civil rights struggles, racial discrimination is no longer a critical obstacle to black progress. We can speak of a racist American past, but not of a racist contemporary America.	N	N	Y	Y
African American demands for equal opportunity made during the Civil Rights Era now go too far in demanding equal outcomes. A nondiscriminatory America does not ensure equal outcomes. Capitalism maximizes skill and talent and any differences among ethnic groups, or between genders, are a function of each group's particular strengths and weaknesses.	N	N	Y	Y
Today's problems of race relations and black poverty cannot be remedied by government policy alone. The roots of today's problems are located first and foremost within African Americans: in our inability	Y	N	Y	Y

*Continued*

Table 3.1 Continued

	<u>The Black Right</u>	<u>Afrocentric Conservatives</u>	<u>Neo- conservatives</u>	<u>Individualist Conservatives</u>
to successfully compete in a free-market system, in the poor values and irresponsible and offensive behavior of poor Blacks, in our psychological hang-ups about group identity and past victimization, and/or in our failure to take full advantage of existing opportunities. In this light, not only are government social welfare and legal remedies, such as affirmative-action programs, unnecessary; they are detrimental to the development of black people. Social welfare programs destroy black families, foster debilitating dependency, and reward irresponsible behavior.	Y	N	Y	Y
Affirmative action programs lower black self-esteem since Whites will always diminish black accomplishment as reflecting only affirmative-action imperatives and black beneficiaries of affirmative-action programs can never be fully confident that their success stems from their talent. These programs are also detrimental to Blacks because of the white (male) resentment they engender. Affirmative action has, in any case, only benefited more advantaged Blacks.	N	N	Y	Y
The appropriate strategy for African Americans is one focusing on self-help. First	Y	Y	Y	N

*Continued*

Table 3.1 Continued

	<b>The Black Right</b>	<b>Afrocentric Conservatives</b>	<b>Neo- conservatives</b>	<b>Individualist Conservatives</b>
we need to deemphasize racial identity and loyalty in favor of an American identity. Second, African Americans should compete on the basis of merit only. Third, we need to deemphasize government programs and civil rights legislation in favor of racial self-help. Blacks need to focus on black entrepreneurship, building and supporting black business, particularly in poor black neighborhoods. And most important, the black middle class needs to teach poor African Americans appropriate values and behavior (Toler 1993; 5–6).	Y	Y	Y	N

Focusing on America's promises and forgetting the past translate into Blacks focusing on the individual and minimizing race. With the exception of the Afrocentric conservative, contemporary black conservatives, the black right, and individualists minimize the importance of race (Dillard 2001). (see Figure 3.1) For example, they explain that they supported the civil rights movement because they believed in the American dream and not necessarily as a struggle for black equality. Blacks in general have a belief system that scholars trace back to African philosophy, which articulates group identity over the individual. As such, Blacks choose careers and make decisions that are central to the uplift of the entire community. Black conservatives, however, believe their life's choices derive from their individual experiences, not some collective awareness or group identity (Smith 2002). In fact, some black conservatives completely reject the notion of group consciousness and Afrocentrism. Black conservatives see this collectivism as perpetuating a victim status whereby all Blacks have shared-life experiences. Instead, black conservatives believe that they transcend race. In short, black conservatives' knowledge comes from "individual reasoning," not from a collective identity. However, Afrocentric conservatives disagree with this assessment.

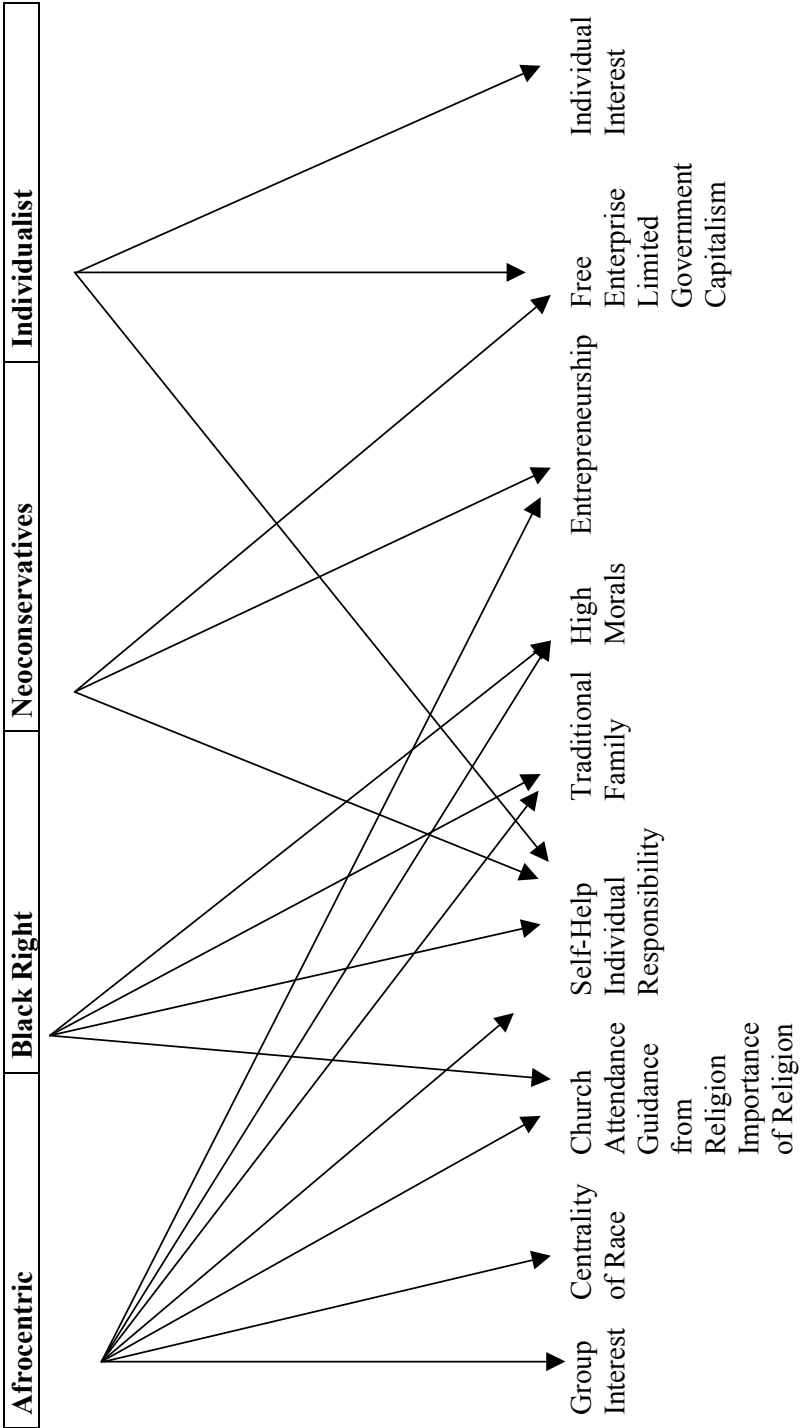


Figure 3.1 Dimensions of Black conservatism.

Black conservatives believe that because of their individualism and the fact that they can transcend race, they have the ability to be honest about the conditions of black people in America. They lay the cause of the problems in the black community to immoral and destructive behavior. Black conservatives go on to state that other black leaders' inability to transcend race perpetuates the problems which exist in the black community. Black leaders are not honest. In fact, they maintain the system, and according to some black conservatives, they are deceitful. They tell their children to study hard and to pursue the America dream while telling the black poor that they are victims of racism and indirectly are not responsible for their conditions.

Black conservatives also express their dislike of liberals (Rueter 1995). They state that liberal ideas are "played out," because they have not solved the problems of the black community. Thomas has stated that all civil rights leaders do is bitch, whine, and moan (Williams 1987). In a critique of liberalism, particularly the civil rights establishment, black conservatives say liberals silence the black community. Robert Woodson believes that if Blacks do not espouse a liberal philosophy in support of the Democratic Party, other Blacks label them as race traitors. Parker echoes this sentiment in her discussion of how America treated Thomas in the confirmation hearings. She states that it is taboo for a black person to speak out against affirmative action; thus a code of silence traps the black community (Parker 1997). Honest discourse about the problems of the black community often does not take place for fear of being labeled a race traitor.

Black conservatives say that they provide a new way to look at old problems. They believe that it is their honesty which sets them apart from liberals. They also posit that there is a general understanding among Blacks that any time black people speak of race matters, the person speaking cannot and will not be objective, and thus the conversation will always favor Blacks. Conservatives, however, believe their ability to be forthcoming and unbiased about race provides them credibility and legitimacy. While liberals are busy increasing government assistance to people, Black conservatives have the boldness to inform this same group that it is their lifestyle and culture that render them incapable of self-sufficiency and thus recipients of government assistance. Their behavior keeps them in poverty, not racism. Because liberals are not honest and choose not to tell those living in poverty about their dysfunctional behavior, they indirectly thrive on the circumstances of the underclass.

Some black conservatives, particularly the cadre, provide a poignant critique of the black middle class. They argue that federal programs and agencies do nothing to help the black poor; Woodson states that these programs victimize the poor. Wright argues that the black middle class is self-interested because these federal programs have only really benefited them because it gives them career choices and jobs. Ultimately, the cadre of black conservatives believes that to eliminate or reduce poverty means to reduce employment for middle-class Blacks.

## Public Policy

Other common threads among the camps of conservatism are their focus on self-help and their opposition to the welfare state and affirmative action. Because Afrocentric conservatives have high levels of black consciousness, they do not fit well with other camps of contemporary black conservatives when it comes to racism and affirmative action. Afrocentric conservatives have a focus on self-determination; they may be supportive of a limited welfare state but their rhetoric concerning the welfare state is certainly not as extreme as other camps of black conservatives. Some Afrocentric conservatives would support a separate nation for Blacks like the NOI, while others believe that Blacks should support black businesses and help to increase the economic independence of the black community. The other camps are adamantly opposed to the welfare state and affirmative action. One of Elder's major arguments for America's problems is the welfare state and its correlation to the number of single unwed mothers. He argues that it is imperative that children have a father in the home, but the welfare state gives the father a walk-away-free card by providing a safety net for the mother and the child. He notes that the illegitimacy rates for Blacks is at 70 percent and that slavery is only partially responsible for this rate. He notes the larger problem is the welfare state and how it fosters a sense of dependency and a lack of responsibility. Parker, a mix between the black right and the individualist conservative, candidly admits that the worst time of her life came largely because of her ability to swindle the system, which is why she is so adamantly opposed to the welfare state.

Black conservatives believe that government social welfare programs created a sense of dependency. This sense of dependency established a major problem facing the black community. It decreases the importance of the solidity of the family and self-reliance. C. Mason Weaver, a political commentator, likens this dependency to a slave mentality where Blacks rely on the government instead of themselves for advancement. His book describes the plantation mentality, analogizing the plantation to the urban city, where overseers who are local black leaders run to the master, which is the government. Parker also comments on the policies of liberalism in her book, where she compares the Democratic Party to pimps and black liberals as whores.

Black conservatives also believe that government programs such as the New Deal and Great Society, whose objective was to fight the "War on Poverty," have largely failed. They note the increase in illegitimacy (out-of-wedlock births) and crime rates in the black community as well as the failure of many black businesses. For example, Parker gives a detailed description of how government programs corrupted her life and influenced her bad decisions. She also discusses how the Left has severed Blacks' relationship to God, which moved society toward more violence and perversion. Ezola Foster, retired public-school teacher in South Central Los Angeles and founder of Black Americans for Family Values, echoes the same sentiments. She argues that the current welfare system fosters promiscuity, teen

pregnancy, and single female-headed households, which ultimately breaks down the black family. This view is often used by black conservatives to attack affirmative action, set-asides, and other tools of federal government intervention. Black conservatives argue that the United States no longer needs these programs because race is not an obstacle to the attainment of education and employment.

The cadre of black conservatives have the same views about affirmative action. According to Carter and Thomas, affirmative action is problematic to most black professionals because it leads to personal doubt, stifles individuality, and stereotypes Blacks as being intellectually inferior. Black professionals must answer the question often posed by others. The question is whether they obtained their acceptance into graduate or professional school and their subsequent degree and jobs on their own merit or whether they were the recipient of some special program. These questions cause uneasiness, which prompts many black conservatives to speak out against the program.

The most formidable opponent of these programs is Connerly, who successfully orchestrated the elimination of all forms of affirmative action in California, by campaigning for Proposition 209, and the California Civil Rights Initiative. An individualist conservative, Connerly was also successful in eliminating affirmative action in Washington State, with the passage of Initiative 200. The major argument against affirmative action among black conservatives is that it is harmful to America and that Blacks do not need these programs. America should be color-blind and not discriminate against Whites to help Blacks. When black liberals argue that the playing field should be level, Connerly replies that no playing field is ever level. Black conservatives against affirmative action also use the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who argued America should judge individuals by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin, which black conservatives believe affirmative action does. For example, at Connerly's victory speech after the passage of Proposition 209 in California he stated:

We ended our season of denial that different standards were being applied to our citizens based on race, gender, and ethnicity. We rejected the premise that race matters, that America is a racist nation. We rejected the growing view that the goal of becoming a color-blind society is unattainable and unworthy of our pursuit.

There are those who defend racial preferences who often speak in glowing terms about "diversity." Let me be clear: Today's vote was not a rejection of diversity. It was a rejection of using diversity as an excuse to discriminate. (November 5, 1996)

Bans on affirmative action have occurred in several states besides California and Washington. Florida and Texas also banned the use of race in college admissions. Connerly was also instrumental in the ban in Florida. In

1999, in a campaign also led by Ward Connerly, then Governor Jeb Bush started the “One Florida” initiative that provided automatic admission to the top 20 percent of high-school graduates regardless of their standardized test scores, but not admission to the college of their choice.

The ban in Texas, however, was a result of a court decision. In 1996, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *Hopwood v. Texas* that it was unconstitutional for any institution of higher education to use race as a condition in admissions. As a result, Texas started the Top 10% Plan, which provided automatic admission to any four-year college of their choice to students in the top 10 percent of their graduating senior class. Research indicates that enrollment of Blacks, particularly black men, and Latinos in institutions of higher learning in California, Texas, and Florida declined. Between 1995 and 2005, black freshman enrollment at the University of California, Los Angeles dropped from 7.31 percent to 2.67 percent. The declines in Texas and Florida were not as detrimental to Blacks mainly due to their alternative plans. In Texas, black enrollment went from 4.89 percent in 1995 to 3.38 in 2002 to 5.05 in 2005. Likewise, in Florida there was a decline from 11.33 percent in 2000 to 9.41 percent in 2005 after the Texas Ten Percent Plan went into affect. Despite the less damaging effects on general black enrollment in Texas and Florida, admissions of black males are disturbingly low. In Florida, black male enrollment was 3.78 percent in 2000 and 3.43 percent in 2005, in Texas, 1.56 percent in 2000 and 1.8 percent in 2005 (Colburn et al. 2008).

Although critics of affirmative action believed that banning affirmative action would match students of color with lower-tier schools, thus increasing graduation and retention rates, preliminary analysis indicates otherwise. Cortes (2010) finds in an analysis of the Texas Top 10% plan, which replaced the use of race based admissions, that the use of the plan lowered admission rates of lower-tier students of color to select institutions. Since the plan went into effect, graduation and retention rates of second-tier students of color have also decreased even though students are seemingly better matched. And while admission rates of nonminority students increased after the plan went into effect, this increase did not translate into higher retention or graduation rates for nonminority students. Thomas, a neoconservative, believes he is a victim of affirmative action. Never really being able to confirm the merit of his acceptance into law school, he opposes a program that would cause Blacks to question their ability to succeed or to make them feel inferior. Although a former recipient of an affirmative-action program, he opposes it because while in law school he always felt that he was not in school because of his own merit but that his admission was to achieve some larger social goal that is to fill some broader social goal of diversity.

Similar to Thomas, McWhorter is a beneficiary of affirmative action and now questions the wisdom of the policy. He dislikes the fact that he was a recipient of affirmative action. McWhorter states it is an insult that he received any position because of his skin color. He maintains that he

worked hard and earned the positions. Even though McWhorter justifies his decision to be a beneficiary of affirmative action, he never felt that he was the best applicant, just the best black applicant. In other words, he describes his acceptance of a minority fellowship at UC Berkley as subpar, that he may not have received a fellowship in the general pool because he was not good enough; instead, he got the minority fellowship. He goes on to discuss how affirmative action shielded him from the rigors of the job market. He does not believe affirmative action helps those who really need it. McWhorter (2000) concludes, "I deeply regret having applied for that minority postdoctoral fellowship, and I consider it my duty to work against tokenism infecting the life trajectories of future members of my race as it has mine" (252). Steele, Elder, Sowell, Connerly, and A. Williams also speak out against the program. Rice and Powell, however, are supportive of affirmative-action programs as long as they do not discriminate against Whites and as long as they provide equal opportunity to Blacks.

Black conservatives' opposition to affirmative action relates to their attack on race consciousness. Racist thinking promotes separatism and limits integration, assimilation, and individualism. The Second Thoughts Conference about race held in Washington, DC, in 1990 provided black conservatives with a platform to voice their beliefs on individualism and group identity. It also gave black conservatives the opportunity to discuss the ways in which black consciousness limits black people's ability to claim the rights and privileges of America's promise. They say that black consciousness leads to a perpetuation of the victim status. Suffice it to say, Afrocentric conservatives do not support this belief system but individualist conservatives embrace it.

Sowell argues that the ultimate success of a group relies on its ability to reduce group identity. The fostering of any group identity limits the success of claiming a U.S. heritage and its values of individualism and freedom. Loury is also vocal about his struggle with his personal identity and the authenticity test. He concludes that his personal identity is not merely a part of a collective thought, but rather his self-definition. He states he is not a victim; he is a child of God, a husband, father, and citizen, roles in which he concludes race is irrelevant. While conservatives such as Wortham and Steele acknowledge their racial identities, they conclude it is only of secondary importance to them. Utilizing group consciousness as primary identity fosters collectivism, which to some black conservatives is at odds with individual achievement. For example, focusing on a group identity usually places an individual in a position to place group interest before individual interest. Black conservatives argue that group thinking will force individuals to vote against their own interest.

Black conservatism, particularly individualist conservatives and to some extent neoconservatives, also has problems with collectivism because it promotes a certain level of authenticity. Because black conservatives often promote individualism over group identity, they are accused of not being

black enough. Moreover, they argue that the black culture promotes failure. Take, for instance, a current problem found in many schools. Smart students or those who speak proper English are often mocked or labeled as “trying to act white” (Carter 2005). Furthermore, black conservatives argue that as Blacks work their way to the middle class, collectivists believe they lose their blackness; they can no longer relate to the neighborhood, and they are resentful of their success and label it as Uncle Tomism. This collective thinking promotes failure, which is problematic to black conservatives. Individualism, vital to the uplift of any group, however, promotes self-sufficiency and success.

Black conservatives liken collective thinking to a slave mentality. Armstrong Williams suggests that the Democratic Party is the plantation, and black support of the Democratic Party is like being a slave. Blacks should instead get their full freedom by returning to the Republican Party. They contend that black liberals argue for social and political freedom, but individually they are not free.

In summary, the black conservative tradition goes far beyond the cadre, extending as early as the 1700s with the writings of Jupiter Hammon and including such groups as the Nation of Islam and the black church. Although the cadre are vocal in their attempts to situate this tradition within their own rhetoric, black conservatism is more complex and extensive than their rhetoric would suggest. For example, while most individuals in the cadre do not have broad appeal to the black community, the beliefs of the black right and especially Afrocentric conservatives may resonate with a larger audience. This work seeks to challenge generally accepted notions of conservatism by exploring how the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, individualist, and neoconservatives have widespread appeal in the black community.

The next chapter will explore the political philosophies of Blacks in the community using several approaches. First, it will reveal the level of conservative self-identification within the black community and identify what groups of blacks subscribe to the conservative label by analyzing national survey data. The chapter will also seek to find how Blacks may subscribe to conservatism, albeit indirectly utilizing the different camps of conservatism, the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, individualists, and neoconservatives. Next, the chapter will provide an analysis of the issue positions of black liberals and black conservatives to determine if there are differences between these groups. This section also includes a brief analysis of black conservatives’ and white conservatives’ issue positions. Finally, based on the findings in previous sections, the last section provides an analysis of conversations with people in the black community concerning what conservatism means. This section also demonstrates differing levels of support for the different camps of black conservatism. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the implications of conservatism in the black community.

## 4 Community Support for Conservatism

There are various ways to measure conservatism, although the primary and most direct way, which political scientists utilize, is the self-identification scale. Ideology is an extremely complex concept which is difficult to measure solely with the self-identification scale; thus this work supplements the self-identification scale with other approaches. Similar to the concept of ideology, an individual's political philosophy is complex and often difficult to grasp in one question. With this in mind, this work utilizes several measures to explain and analyze conservatism among Blacks.

Utilizing the camps of black conservatives provided in the previous chapter, this chapter attempts to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence to help explain conservatism among Blacks. Several sections are included in this chapter. As previously noted, there are differences between conservatism among the cadre and conservatism within the black community. There are individuals who merely self-identify as conservative through the standard survey question. But there are also individuals in the black community who hold conservative positions on public-policy issues. Individuals may self-identify as conservative but hold few if any conservative opinions on public policy. Likewise, those who hold conservative positions on public policy may not self-identify as conservative mainly due to its antithesis to the black struggle for equality in America. This work seeks to deal with both types of individuals. The first section analyzes the political philosophies of Blacks by utilizing the self-identification scale. The next section of the chapter provides an analysis of the different issue positions of self-identified black liberals and black conservatives. It also includes a brief analysis of black conservatives' and white conservatives' issue positions. The next section provides quantitative evidence of how some Blacks may subscribe to conservatism albeit indirectly through their stances on public-policy issues. Finally, the last section provides an analysis of a dialogue with people in the black community concerning what conservatism means. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the implications of black conservatism.

**BLACK AND CONSERVATIVE: SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

There are several ways to measure conservatism among Blacks, through self-identification, partisanship, and vote choice. The self-identification scale gives a percentage of respondents in the survey who identify as conservative. More specifically, the self-identification scale asks respondents the following question.

NES: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is (1996NES: I'm going to show you) a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

NBES: In general, when it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or what? (v.2100)

Do you think of yourself as a strong liberal/conservative or a not so strong liberal/conservative? (v.2101)

Do you think of yourself as more like a liberal or more like a conservative? (v.2102)

NPS: (vB5): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal or conservative?

Partisanship and vote choice provide surrogate measures of ideology. Scholars understand that Republican partisanship and vote choice usually but not always derive from self-identified conservatives. The questions analyzed for partisanship and vote choice are:

NES: Partisan identification (v. 301): Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? (If Republican or Democrat) Would you call yourself a strong (Rep/Dem) or not very strong (Rep/Dem)?

Vote Choice (v. 704): (If r voted) Whom did you vote for?

For the NBES: Partisan identification (v. 1047): Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, and independent, or what? Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?

Vote Choice (v. 2068): (If r voted) Who did you vote for?

NPS: (vB6): Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a republican, a democrat, an independent, or something else?

The self-identification measure in Table 4.1 reveals that almost every year since 1980 at least 25 percent of Blacks self-identify as a conservative. That same year marks the time when there was a rightward shift in American politics ushered in by the election of Ronald Reagan. In 2004, Table 4.2

Table 4.1 Ideology, Partisanship, and Vote Choice<sup>1</sup>

American National Election Study																		
Blacks																		
IDEOLOGY	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2008
Liberal	54%	60%	55%	44%	40%	31%	33%	37%	33%	33%	39%	25%	33%	40%	33%	41%	22%	35%
Moderate	31%	22%	34%	41%	30%	37%	41%	37%	34%	40%	38%	51%	36%	26%	44%	26%	51%	20%
Conservative	14%	18%	12%	15%	30%	32%	26%	27%	33%	27%	24%	24%	32%	34%	24%	33%	27%	45%
<b>PARTISAN ID</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>1976</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>
Democrat	77%	86%	86%	83%	84%	91%	79%	86%	82%	80%	79%	82%	81%	79%	84%	85%	82%	71%
Republican	11%	4%	6%	8%	8%	3%	10%	6%	12%	12%	8%	10%	8%	4%	7%	8%	7%	2%
Independent	12%	10%	8%	9%	7%	5%	11%	8%	6%	8%	13%	8%	11%	18%	10%	7%	11%	23%
<b>PARTY OF PRES. VOTE</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1976</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>								
Democrat	86%	94%	93%	89%	90%	91%	96%	91%	87%	99%								
Republican	13%	5%	7%	9%	8%	5%	1%	7%	12%	7%								
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	4%	3%	3%	1%	2%								
Whites																		
IDEOLOGY	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2008
Liberal	23%	23%	21%	25%	24%	22%	25%	22%	22%	24%	27%	19%	25%	34%	26%	26%	30%	27%
Moderate	38%	39%	38%	36%	31%	35%	33%	37%	31%	36%	31%	33%	30%	26%	31%	28%	29%	25%
Conservative	39%	38%	42%	39%	46%	43%	42%	41%	47%	40%	43%	48%	46%	40%	43%	46%	41%	48%
<b>PARTISAN ID</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>1976</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>
Democrat	49%	49%	47%	52%	49%	52%	45%	41%	41%	49%	46%	25%	43%	36%	44%	42%	43%	27%
Republican	37%	36%	38%	34%	37%	36%	44%	42%	47%	40%	42%	51%	47%	33%	44%	51%	48%	30%
Independent	14%	14%	15%	14%	14%	12%	11%	12%	12%	11%	12%	24%	10%	31%	12%	7%	9%	35%
<b>PARTY OF PRES. VOTE</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1976</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>								
Democrat	30%	45%	33%	36%	41%	42%	48%	46%	41%	44%								
Republican	69%	53%	56%	63%	58%	37%	42%	51%	58%	54%								
Other	1%	2%	11%	1%	1%	21%	10%	4%	2%	2%								

Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1948–2004, American National Election Study, 2008 Pre- and Post-Election Survey.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unweighted data.

<sup>2</sup> The 2008 data was calculated utilizing the ICPSR online data analysis tools. For the 2008 party ID, approximately 4% of Black respondents and 8% of White respondents stated other party or volunteered no party preference.

Table 4.2 Black Ideological Identification

	1984	1996	2004
Liberal	33%	38%	53%
Moderate	38%	39%	9%
Conservative	24%	23%	39%
n	753	996	645

Source: 1984, 1996 National Black Election Study; 2004 National Politics Study.

indicates that 39 percent of Blacks identify as conservative and the 2008 ANES indicates that nearly half of Blacks, 45 percent, identify with the conservative label. Although Harris-Lacewell (2004) concludes that Blacks seem unwilling to publicly admit that they are conservative, this analysis indicates that there are more Blacks that are conservative and are willing to admit it and that being conservative in the black community is not as taboo as once thought. For example, Tate (2010) suggests the absence of black radical leadership moves blacks to become more politically moderate. I also find that as more scholarly research is conducted on black conservatism, situating it within the black conservative tradition and not within the American conservative tradition with racist undertones, Blacks may be more willing to admit to their conservative beliefs.

Although ideology is not the same thing as partisanship and vote choice, scholars conclude there is some relationship between them. This work finds that while in 2004, 27 percent of Blacks self-identified as conservative, 82 percent affiliated with the Democratic Party and 87 percent voted for the Democratic presidential candidate. Although fewer Blacks voted Democrat in 2004 than in 1996 during the Clinton years, Blacks still overwhelmingly voted Democrat.

The 2004 presidential election was an interesting turn of events for Republicans. Not since the 1972 election had Republicans garnered more than 10 percent of the black vote. But by 2004, George H. W. Bush, the Republican presidential candidate, received 12 percent of the black vote. This increase in support for a Republican is largely the result of the fact that 13 states had initiatives to ban gay marriage on their ballots and it is well noted that Blacks do not support gay marriage (Lewis 2005; Douglas 2012). The gay marriage issue may have also contributed to the substantial decrease in the percentage of Blacks who identified as liberal in 2004. That number dropped by almost half between 2002 and 2004 from 41 percent to 22 percent. The disconnect between ideology, partisanship, and vote choice is even more pronounced in 2008, when nearly half of Blacks, 45 percent, self-identified as conservative and 99 percent voted for the Democratic presidential nominee. However, only 71 percent stated they were Democrats. The nearly unanimous support for the Democratic nominee is attributed to President Barack Obama as the first black presidential nominee from one of the two major political parties.

Gay marriage has been a contentious issue in American politics, prompting several states to place bans on same sex marriage. For example, in 2008, California had Proposition 8 on the ballot, which placed a ban on same sex marriage. Although the ban was later ruled unconstitutional, media reports suggested that the large turnout among Blacks had a determinative effect on the law's passing. While black voter turnout increased in 2008, this increase cannot be solely attributed to Proposition 8. Neither can the increased black voter turnout be the sole reason the proposition passed. Abrajano (2010) concludes that even if black voter turnout was at the same level as in 2004, Proposition 8 would have passed. More recently, there is some speculation that President Barack Obama may lose support among Blacks in his reelection bid with his 2012 public endorsement of same-sex marriage. Although the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People supported the president and endorsed gay marriage, several black religious groups are on the opposite side of the political spectrum on this issue. The Conference of National Black Churches is against gay marriage, and the Coalition of African-American Pastors (CAAP), which has more than 1,300 members and supports traditional family values, has rejected the president's endorsement (Flock 2012). Although the group requested a meeting with the president shortly after the president's announcement, to try to change his mind, the White House has been unresponsive. Some black pastors are asking their congregants to sit out of this election but President Obama's announcement may shift black attitudes. There is evidence to suggest that black views on gay marriage are changing, with recent studies reporting that now 27 percent of Blacks believe same sex marriage should be legal, a 20-point increase since the announcement.

When analyzing ideology, partisanship, and vote choice among Caucasians, the results are consistent with what scholars would expect. Roughly the same proportions of Caucasians are conservative Republican and vote Republican. In 2004, 41 percent self-identify as conservative, 48 percent are Republican, and 58 percent voted for the Republican candidate. By the 2008 election, similar to inconsistencies evident among Blacks, 27 percent stated they were liberal and Democrat, but 44 percent voted for the Democratic presidential candidate. However, the historic nature of the 2008 election, the candidates, and President Obama's ability to mobilize millions could contribute to these inconsistencies.

Scholars suggest that there is a relationship between ideology, partisanship, and vote choice. In other words, scholars argue that ideology manifests itself through partisanship and thus vote choice. A conservative will more than likely be Republican and vote Republican; a liberal would more than likely be Democrat. For the most part, this remains true among Caucasians but not for Blacks. As a result, Lewis (2001) concludes that conservatism for Blacks means something different than it does for Whites. Thus for Blacks it is important to measure ideology, particularly conservatism, through nontraditional means, which is accomplished later in the text.

**A PORTRAIT OF THE SELF-IDENTIFIED BLACK CONSERVATIVE**

Knowing that somewhere between 25 and 45 percent of Blacks identify with the conservative political label, it is important to get a sociodemographic portrait of the black conservative. Previous research indicated that as Blacks move up the socioeconomic ladder, they would be more likely to develop conservative views. Furthermore, Simpson (1998) and Cohen (2010) finds that younger Blacks are conservative. This analysis of the black conservative reveals interesting information.

The data from the NBES in Table 4.3 indicate strong relationships between the presence of a conservative political philosophy, education, and income. Large portions of respondents who made less than \$25,000 yearly (47%) and who had less than a college education were twice as likely to self-identify as conservative as respondents in other categories. Over 80 percent of Blacks who say they are conservative have less than a college education. Further, nearly half (45%) of that 80 percent have no college education; they have a high-school diploma or less. Results from the NPS provide similar information. Table 4.4 with data from the NPS indicates that 80 percent of those with less than a college degree identify as conservative. Likewise,

*Table 4.3* Portrait of the Black Conservative, 1996 National Black Election Study

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
*Income	< \$25	35%	41%	47%	
	k\$25-\$50k	40%	38%	34%	
	> \$50k	25%	21%	19%	923
***Education	Grade school	2%	2%	3%	
	High school	26%	36%	42%	
	Some college	45%	36%	41%	
	College degree	28%	25%	15%	993
Church Attendance	Weekly or more	74%	78%	77%	
	Few times a year	20%	18%	20%	
	Never	6%	4%	3%	992
Age	17-24	16%	14%	18%	
	25-34	26%	25%	27%	
	35-44	29%	26%	26%	
	45-54	17%	16%	13%	
	55 and over	12%	18%	16%	958
**Gender	Male	35%	32%	43%	
	Female	65%	68%	57%	996
Marital Status	Married	40%	35%	39%	
	Not Married	60%	65%	61%	994

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

Table 4.4 Portrait of the Black Conservative, 2004 National Politics Study

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
***Income	< \$25	25%	41%	20%	
	k\$25-\$50k	27%	22%	17%	
	> \$50k	48%	37%	64%	642
**Region	Non-South	57%	44%	53%	
	South	43%	56%	47%	645
***Education	Grade school	10%	18%	4%	
	High school	24%	31%	9%	
	Some college	37%	31%	38%	
	College degree	29%	20%	49%	642
Church Attendance	Weekly or more	53%	56%	47%	
	Few times a year	19%	17%	21%	
	Never	29%	27%	32%	598
Age	17-24	10%	12%	6%	
	25-34	15%	19%	18%	
	35-44	20%	24%	26%	
	45-54	23%	20%	24%	
	55 and over	32%	26%	27%	645
Gender	Male	39%	36%	42%	
	Female	61%	64%	58%	645
Marital Status	Married	34%	29%	42%	
	Not Married	66%	72%	59%	639

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

more than half make less than \$50,000 a year. The NPS also indicates that a larger percentage of self-identified conservatives are from the South. Although previous research found that church attendance has some impact on conservatism among Blacks, this research finds the differences among black liberals, moderates, and conservatives in church attendance were statistically insignificant. In short, income, education, and region had the most significant impact on ideological identification among Blacks.

Scholars speculated that middle- to upper-class Blacks were more likely to be conservative than Blacks with lower levels of income. Black conservatives argued that as Blacks climbed the socioeconomic ladder, they wanted the same policies as middle-class Whites. However, Smith and Seltzer (1992) put that notion to rest by finding that working-class Blacks were more likely to profess a conservative political philosophy. Almost two decades later, their conclusion about the presence of working-class conservatism in the Black community still exists today because Blacks with lower levels of education and income are more likely to self-identify as conservative.

This work finds a possible explanation for this working-class conservatism in Hochschild's (1995), which concludes that a significant proportion

of the black middle class have reservations about the American dream. Even though middle-class Blacks have improved their class standing, they continue to have concerns about race in America because too often their race limits their professional advancement, security, and wealth attainment. Working-class Blacks, according to Hochschild (1995), do not think about race as much. Thus, this could explain why Blacks with lower incomes and educational levels are more likely to profess a conservative philosophy. If they still believe in the American dream, they may also have the perception that the way to advancement is to adopt a conservative political philosophy.

The NBES indicates that other characteristics of the black conservative are that a little more than half (57%) of the respondents who are conservatives are female and most of them are under the age of 44 and are unmarried. This groups accounts for 71 percent and 61 percent, respectively. This finding corroborates Simpson's (1998) work, which expects diversity of opinion in the post-civil rights generation. The NPS finds that most conservatives are female, unmarried, but over the age of 34, and residing in the south.

### **Black Conservatives, Black Liberals, and White Conservatives**

Knowing there is a black conservative cohort in the electorate and we have a portrait of this group, the focus of the analysis shifts to include white conservatives and black liberals. This section examines public opinion between self-identified black liberals, self-identified black conservatives, and self-identified white conservatives.

I expect the issue positions of self-identified black conservatives to differ from self-identified black liberals, especially on those issues where the tenets of black conservatism are identified. I also expect there to be differences between the positions of black and white conservatives. In fact, the expectation is that self-identified black conservatives will have some of the same policy positions as the cadre of black conservatives, especially on policies where the cadre's positions are well defined and on issues that are within the black conservative tradition. However, similar to the work of Tate (2010), I also expect that on issues with a racial frame, such as affirmative action, there will be little to no differences between liberals and conservatives. So even though Blacks have shifted to the political center, on issues where race is salient, Blacks remain to the left on some issues despite their ideological identification.

Questions chosen for this part of the analysis represent areas where the cadre of black conservatives have views that are vastly different from the larger black community and where they are quite vocal. These are also questions where it is easy to identify the position within the general conservative tradition or within the black conservative tradition. As such, respondents who identify themselves as conservatives should have issue positions different from those who identified themselves as liberal. For example, on the question dealing with recognizing same sex marriage, liberal respondents

should be more likely to agree with recognizing same sex marriage and conservatives should be more likely to disagree with recognizing same sex marriage. In other words, on issues without a racial frame, that are within the black conservative tradition self-identified black conservatives would mirror the views of the cadre of black conservatives and liberal respondents should take the liberal position. Yet, again the exception will be on issues with racial framing. In short, there should be differences between liberals

Table 4.5 Black Public Opinion and Ideology, 1996 National Black Election Study

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
**Progress	Lot	28%	28%	39%	
	Not much	72%	72%	61%	678
**Black stores	Disagree	33%	33%	46%	
	Agree	67%	67%	54%	678
**Afrocentric schools	Disagree	68%	75%	82%	
	Agree	32%	28%	18%	672
Special consideration	Disagree	41%	43%	43%	
	Agree	59%	57%	57%	673
Welfare increase	Oppose	51%	47%	42%	
	Favor	49%	53%	58%	623
Death penalty	Oppose	47%	41%	47%	
	Favor	53%	59%	53%	623
Welfare limit	Oppose	33%	32%	28%	
	Favor	67%	68%	72%	667
Food stamp	Increase	22%	22%	16%	
	Same	59%	59%	60%	
	Decrease	19%	19%	24%	687
**Minorities equal population	Change	69%	64%	56%	
	Remain	32%	36%	44%	945
***Partisanship	Democratic	84%	72%	69%	
	Republican	2%	3%	8%	
	Independent	14%	25%	23%	943
*Strategy	Democratic	65%	61%	57%	
	Republican	30%	31%	32%	
	Independent	5%	8%	11%	878
**Homosexuals	Favor	72%	72%	61%	
	Oppose	28%	28%	39%	623
Guidance	Some	12%	9%	7%	
	Quite a bit	16%	19%	17%	
	A great deal	72%	72%	76%	916

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

and conservatives. Likewise, there should be differences between black and white conservatives on these issues because black conservatism is different from conservatism among Whites.

This section is divided into four different parts. The first section includes questions with racial framing, which includes questions about progress in ending discrimination, affirmative action, Afrocentric schools, the death penalty, racial profiling, welfare, food stamps, and whether Blacks should work their way up like other minorities without any special favors. The second section deals with social issues like job protection for homosexuals, gay marriage, interracial marriage, and gender equality. The third section deals with a variety of questions on immigration, defense, and education spending. And finally, the last section deals with politics, including questions about partisanship, the best strategy to increase political power, Bush's job performance, and patriotism. Tables 4.5 from the NBES and 4.6 from the NPS provide the results of the issue positions of black liberals and conservatives and Table 4.7 provides the results from the NPS from white respondents.

*Table 4.6* Black Public Opinion and Ideology, 2004 National Politics Study

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
Death penalty	Oppose	53%	57%	44%	627
	Favor	47%	43%	56%	
Gender equality	Women/men equal	96%	94%	100%	624
	Woman's place in home	5%	6%	0%	
**Defense spending	Increase	37%	27%	23%	626
	Stay same	33%	35%	53%	
	Decrease	30%	39%	26%	
***Favor preferences	Favor	56%	41%	73%	625
	Oppose	44%	59%	28%	
***Affirmative action	Good thing	92%	81%	100%	583
	Bad thing	8%	19%	0%	
*Spending on patrol-ling the border	Increase	12%	13%	4%	633
	Stay same	34%	27%	43%	
Patrol spending	Decrease	54%	60%	53%	
**Bush job performance	Disapprove	83%	75%	72%	631
	Approve	17%	25%	28%	
**If 2000 presidential election outcome was fair	No	89%	78%	86%	624
	Yes	11%	22%	15%	
*Immigrants permitted in U.S.	Increase	12%	5%	12%	608
	Decrease	33%	33%	30%	
	Same	56%	62%	58%	

*Continued*

Table 4.6 Continued

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
Approve interracial marriage in family	Disagree	11%	15%	7%	634
	Agree	89%	85%	93%	
**U.S. military in Iraq	Stayed out	88%	79%	82%	611
	Did the right thing	12%	21%	18%	
***Gay marriage	Marry	25%	20%	21%	596
	Civil union	32%	18%	42%	
	Neither	42%	61%	37%	
Education spending	Increase	96%	94%	96%	640
	Decrease	4%	5%	4%	
	Same	6%	1%	0%	
*Seeing the American Flag	Extremely/very good	45%	54%	56%	625
	Somewhat/not very good	55%	46%	44%	
***Blacks should work hard like other minorities	Disagree	47%	32%	70%	621
	Agree	53%	68%	30%	
**Proud to be American	Disagree	92%	97%	96%	641
	Agree	8%	3%	4%	
*America land of opportunity	Disagree	74%	85%	80%	644
	Agree	26%	15%	20%	
***War is necessary	Disagree	27%	42%	31%	630
	Agree	73%	58%	69%	
*Ashamed of America	Disagree	79%	70%	73%	639
	Agree	21%	30%	27%	
Free speech if insulting	Disagree	81%	81%	78%	640
	Agree	19%	19%	22%	
***Government imprison suspected terrorist	Disagree	63%	75%	49%	632
	Agree	37%	25%	51%	
**Racial profiling	Disagree	15%	25%	16%	638
	Agree	85%	75%	84%	
**Immigrants take jobs away	Disagree	52%	56%	35%	636
	Agree	48%	44%	65%	
**Partisanship	Democrat	75%	67%	63%	613
	Republican	24%	26%	31%	
	Independent	2%	7%	6%	
***Party best represents Blacks	Democrat	93%	81%	88%	590
	Republican	3%	17%	4%	
	Independent	5%	2%	8%	

\*\*\*p &lt; .001, \*\*p &lt; .05, \*p &lt; .10.

Table 4.7 White Public Opinion and Ideology, 2004 National Politics Study

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
Death penalty	Oppose	58%	18%	39%	846
	Favor	42%	83%	64%	
Gender equality	Women/men equal	99%	93%	97%	830
	Woman's place in home	1%	7%	4%	
***Defense spending	Increase	42%	7%	25%	840
	Stay same	38%	38%	46%	
	Decrease	20%	54%	29%	
***Favor preferences	Favor	42%	10%	21%	848
	Oppose	58%	90%	80%	
***Affirmative action	Good thing	78%	46%	63%	750
	Bad thing	22%	54%	37%	
***Spending on Patrolling the border Patrol spending	Increase	13%	3%	6%	839
	Stay same	42%	32%	31%	
	Decrease	46%	65%	62%	
***Bush job performance	Disapprove	84%	17%	55%	750
	Approve	16%	83%	45%	
**If 2000 presidential election outcome was fair	No	80%	20%	52%	838
	Yes	20%	80%	48%	
*Immigrants permitted in U.S.	Increase	20%	6%	10%	793
	Decrease	26%	40%	26%	
	Same	54%	52%	65%	
Approve interracial marriage in family	Disagree	13%	26%	17%	847
	Agree	88%	74%	83%	
**U.S. military in Iraq	Stayed out	83%	21%	62%	801
	Did the right thing	17%	79%	39%	
***Gay marriage	Marry	59%	13%	33%	833
	Civil union	32%	44%	52%	
	Neither	9%	44%	15%	
Education spending	Increase	92%	67%	84%	855
	Stay same	8%	27%	15%	
	Decrease	1%	6%	1%	
*Seeing the American Flag	Extremely/very good	57%	91%	78%	842
	Somewhat/not very good	43%	9%	22%	

*Continued*

Table 4.7 Continued

		<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
***Blacks should work hard like other minorities	Disagree	50%	16%	29%	828
	Agree	50%	84%	71%	
**Proud to be American	Agree	88%	99%	96%	846
	Disagree	13%	1%	5%	
**America land of opportunity	Agree	67%	93%	87%	853
	Disagree	33%	7%	14%	
***War is necessary	Agree	24%	59%	34%	832
	Disagree	76%	41%	66%	
**Ashamed of America	Agree	86%	60%	72%	855
	Disagree	14%	40%	28%	
Free speech if insulting	Agree	86%	79%	84%	847
	Disagree	14%	22%	16%	
***Government imprison suspected terrorist	Agree	44%	80%	55%	841
	Disagree	56%	20%	45%	
**Racial profiling	Agree	11%	26%	15%	847
	Disagree	89%	74%	85%	
**Immigrants take jobs away	Agree	24%	37%	26%	842
	Disagree	77%	63%	74%	
**Partisanship	Democrat	65%	12%	34%	815
	Republican	30%	25%	44%	
	Independent	5%	63%	23%	
***Party best represents Blacks	Democrat	91%	42%	72%	755
	Republican	6%	53%	25%	
	Independent	3%	5%	3%	

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \* $p < .10$ .

## Public Policy with Racial Framing

The first question examined concerns whether the respondent believes there has been progress in getting rid of racial discrimination. The survey asks respondents whether a lot of progress had been made in getting rid of discrimination in the past 20 years or if there has not been much real change for Blacks over that same time frame. This question is central to the political thought of black conservatives, particularly the black right, neoconservatives, and individualist conservatives. Instead of viewing America as a racist country that hinders the progress of Blacks, these three camps of black conservatives choose to focus on the opportunities America has to offer. To those who argue that there is more to achieve, black conservatives point to the

many achievements of Blacks. Neoconservatives and individualist conservatives believe that racial discrimination is no longer an obstacle to black progress. They would argue, "We can speak of a racist American past, but not of racist contemporary America" (Toler 1993, 5). Therefore, there should be visible differences between self-identified liberals and conservatives. Similar to the beliefs of black conservatives, self-identified conservatives should be more likely to state that there has been much progress while self-identified liberals would be more likely to say that there has not been progress.

*Table 4.8* Public Opinion and Ideology, 2004 National Politics Study

		Black Conservatives	White Conservatives
Death penalty	Oppose	57%	18%
	Favor	43%	83%
Gender equality	Women/men equal	94%	93%
	Woman's place in home	6%	7%
Defense spending	Increase	27%	7%
	Stay same	35%	39%
	Decrease	39%	54%
Favor preferences	Favor	41%	10%
	Oppose	59%	90%
Affirmative action	Good thing	81%	46%
	Bad thing	19%	54%
Border patrol spending	Increase	13%	3%
	Stay same	27%	32%
	Decrease	60%	65%
Bush job performance	Disapprove	75%	17%
	Approve	25%	83%
If 2000 presidential election outcome was fair	No	78%	20%
	Yes	22%	80%
Immigrants permitted in U.S.	Increase	5%	6%
	Decrease	33%	40%
	Same	62%	53%
Approve interracial marriage in family	Disagree	15%	26%
	Agree	85%	74%
US military in Iraq	Stayed out	79%	21%
	Did the right thing	21%	79%
Gay marriage	Marry	20%	13%
	Civil union	18%	44%
	Neither	61%	44%

*Continued*

Table 4.8 Continued

		Black <u>Conservatives</u>	White <u>Conservatives</u>
Education spending	Increase	94%	67%
	Stay same	5%	27%
	Decrease	1%	6%
Seeing the American Flag	Extremely/very good	54%	91%
	Somewhat/not very good	46%	9%
Blacks should work hard like other minorities	Disagree	32%	16%
	Agree	68%	84%
Proud to be American	Agree	97%	99%
	Disagree	35%	1%
America land of opportunity	Agree	85%	93%
	Disagree	15%	7%
War is necessary	Agree	42%	59%
	Disagree	58%	41%
Ashamed of America	Agree	70%	60%
	Disagree	30%	40%
Free speech if insulting	Agree	81%	79%
	Disagree	19%	22%
Government imprison suspected terrorist	Agree	75%	80%
	Disagree	25%	20%
Racial profiling	Agree	25%	26%
	Disagree	75%	74%
Immigrants take jobs away	Agree	56%	37%
	Disagree	44%	63%
Partisanship	Democrat	67%	12%
	Republican	26%	25%
	Neither	7%	63%
Party best represents Blacks	Democrat	81%	42%
	Republican	17%	53%
	Neither	2%	5%

There are significant differences between self-identified black liberals and conservatives on this issue. Blacks who identify as conservative are more likely than those who identify as liberal to state that there has been a lot of progress. Twenty-eight percent of liberals and moderates state there has been a lot of progress compared to 39 percent of conservatives. Although more Blacks who identify themselves as conservative take the conservative position, nearly 61 percent of the conservatives believe that there has not been much real change while 72 percent of liberals and moderates say there has not been much real change. This finding is clearly contrary to how the cadre

of black conservatives attempts to accentuate the positive aspects of America rather than focusing on race. However, since this question clearly has a racial frame, and since I believe there are differences between the views of the cadre of black conservatives and conservatism in the black community, it is not surprising that fewer self-identified black conservatives indicate that they believe there has been a lot of progress. Recalling the caveat in the Chapter 3, most camps of contemporary black conservatism attenuate feelings of individualism demonstrated by the cadre of black conservatives, thus embracing feelings of group consciousness, especially Afrocentric conservatives. Moreover, Tate’s (2010) work finds that Blacks continue to feel discrimination.

The next question deals with the entrepreneurial aspects of black conservative thought. The cadre of black conservatives posits that Blacks should take advantage of the many opportunities of the U.S. capitalistic system. This view is also echoed in the black conservative tradition from individuals like Washington and Garvey, who both utilized America’s free-market system to build companies and institutions. Afrocentric conservatives would also argue that Blacks should support and shop in black-owned stores. The cadre of black conservatives state, “Blacks need to focus on Black entrepreneurship, building and supporting Black businesses” (Toler 1993, 6); however, they fall short of suggesting that Blacks should only shop in black stores. Although we find this belief among conservatives, liberals also agree with the notion of supporting black businesses.

This question asks respondents if they agree/disagree with the following statement: “Black people should shop in Black owned stores whenever possible.” Again, because this question has a racial frame, there may not

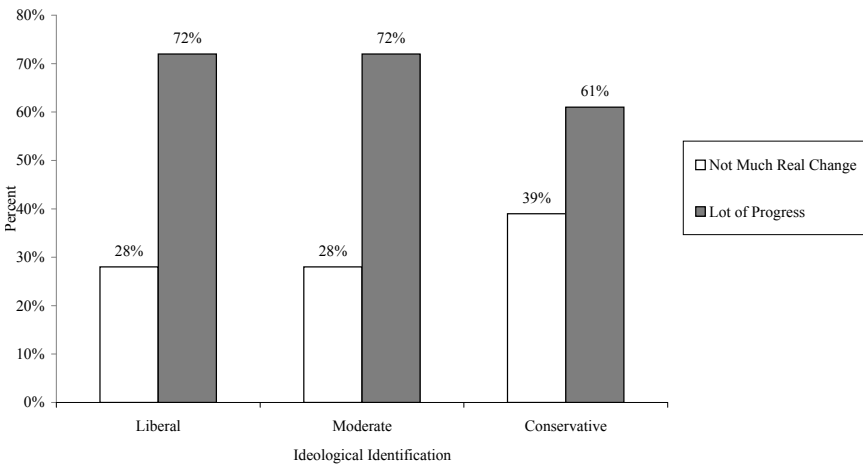


Figure 4.1 Progress made in ending discrimination, 1996 National Black Election Study.

be significant differences between liberals and conservatives. However, because there is an individualist tone to some camps of black conservatism, it is unclear whether they believe Blacks should just shop in black stores. The individualist would argue that there is no special reason to shop in a black store unless that store had a particular product at a cheaper price than other stores. Nonetheless, this question taps into a major belief of black conservatism, entrepreneurialism, and self-reliance.

Figure 4.2 indicates that there are significant differences between these two groups. A larger percentage of liberals (67%) than conservatives (54%) agreed with this statement, and the differences are statistically significant. In fact, more conservatives than liberals disagree with this statement, which according to the literature is an underlying belief of black conservatism. This question may not be the best to analyze differences between self-identified black liberals and conservatives because generally most Blacks agree that they should support black businesses. In addition, black individualist conservatives would oppose only shopping in black stores because they want to minimize group consciousness. These results suggest that the views of Blacks who self-identify as conservative do not align with the views of the cadre. This result may have more to do with the fact that Blacks in general agree that all Blacks should shop in black-owned stores whenever possible.

A similar question is how respondents feel about sending black children to Afrocentric schools. Afrocentric education came largely as a result of Carter G. Woodson's *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933), which argued that the American educational system educates children of African descent away from their own culture. Instead, it places European culture at the forefront, often to the detriment of African heritage. He stressed that for education to

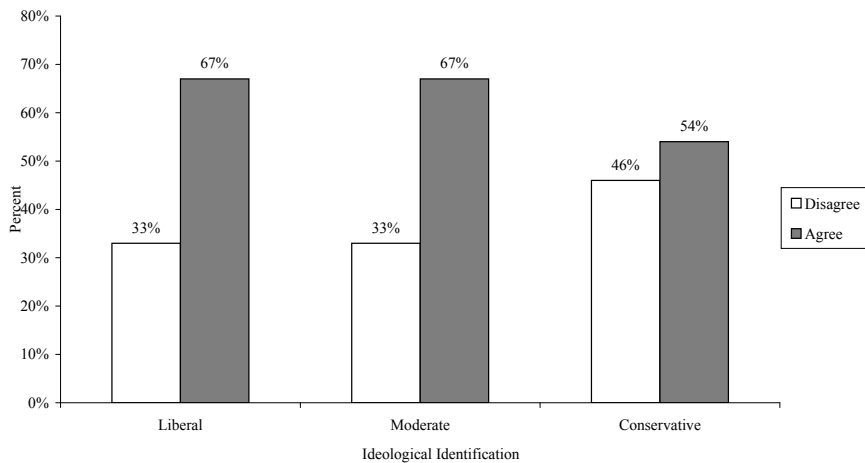


Figure 4.2 Blacks only shop in black stores, 1996 National Black Election Study.

be substantive in America, it must also embrace the historical experiences of people of African descent. Although many critics of the Afrocentric idea in education believe it is racist and anti-American, Asante (1987) argues it is not. It is merely an effort to locate student learning within the context of their own culture so they can relate better socially and psychologically to other cultures. However, because this issue has a racial frame, it is hard to ascertain exactly whether Blacks, whether liberal or conservative, would agree or disagree. Furthermore, Tate (2010) notes that although Blacks had more confidence than Whites, Latinos, and Asian Americans in public schools in 1991, by 1998 black confidence in public schools matched the low levels of other groups. Thus, because black confidence in public schools has declined, Blacks may be unwilling to embrace the idea of an Afrocentric education. However, in some instances, Afrocentric schools are successful, in Toronto and in Detroit (Dawsey 2010 and MacDonald 2010). Afrocentric conservatives would agree with the idea of sending black children to Afrocentric schools because it embraces African culture. However, individualist conservatives would not support it because Afrocentric schools do not focus on the individual; they focus on race. As such, there should be differences on this question between self-identified liberals and conservatives.

Self-identified black conservatives disagree with the statement. However, most Blacks tend to disagree with the notion of sending black children to Afrocentric schools. This could largely be a result of Asante's (1987) argument that both Blacks and Whites are hostile to the idea of an Afrocentric education particularly because its main intellectual sources are African Americans, which challenges the fact that Whites are in control of ideas in the academy.

The next question deals with government assistance to minorities in employment. It asks respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following statement. "Because of past discrimination, minorities should be given

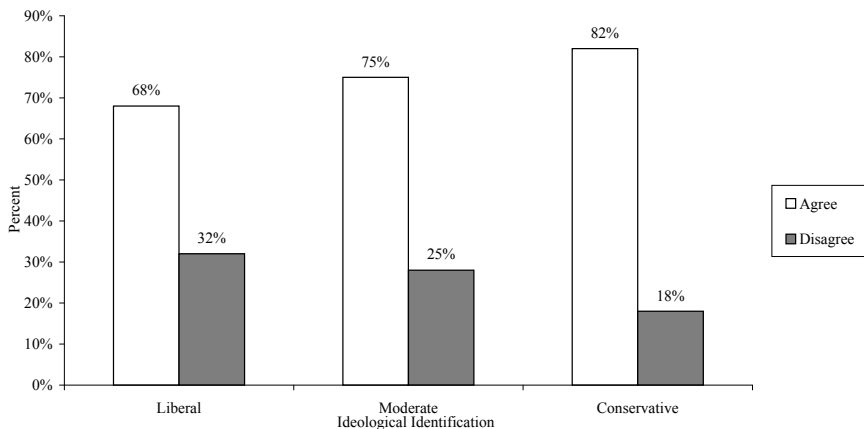


Figure 4.3 Afrocentric schools, 1996 National Black Election Study.

special consideration when decisions are made about hiring applicants for jobs.” This question taps into whether the respondent supports affirmative-action programs. The cadre of black conservatives, neoconservatives, and individualist conservatives are against affirmative action for a variety of reasons. First, they believe it perpetuates discrimination, albeit discrimination against people of non-African descent. They also believe affirmative action fosters a sense of inferiority among Blacks because there is a perception that “affirmative action is synonymous with lower standards” (Smith 1997, 78). As a result, affirmative-action programs attach a stigma to Blacks who are beneficiaries of the program. Some black conservatives fight against affirmative action because they are adamant that their career success stems from their talents and hard work, not affirmative action. Other conservatives, such as Connerly and Thomas, have put forth major efforts to voice black conservatives’ opposition to these programs and to help eliminate them. Therefore, there should be clear differences between black conservatives and liberals.

Data from the NBES in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.4 indicate that Blacks are evenly split on this issue. There are no significant differences between black liberals and conservatives even though we expected self-identified black conservatives to take a strong stance on this issue. In fact, there is general agreement among all respondents for special consideration for minority applicants. However, there is also general disagreement in opposition to affirmative action or special consideration among liberals (41%), conservatives (43%), and moderates (43%). By the 2004 NPS, Figure 4.5 indicates there was a slight shift for more support for special preferences among self-identified moderates and less support among conservatives, which is significant. The NPS asks, “How strongly do you favor or oppose preferential hiring and promotion?” Only 41 percent of conservatives favored preferences and moderate support was 73 percent. The NPS also asks, “Generally speaking, do you think affirmative action is a good thing or a bad thing?” The differences, although, small, are significant. Overwhelming majorities, 92 percent of liberals, 100 percent of moderates, and 81 percent of conservatives believe affirmative action is a good thing. When Whites are asked the same two questions, nearly all white conservatives, 90 percent, oppose preferences. Similarly, a majority of white conservatives also responded that affirmative action was a bad thing, 54 percent.

The cadre believes that affirmative action fosters a sense of inferiority among Blacks. They argue that affirmative action recipients are looked upon as being unqualified to receive admission to prestigious universities or unqualified for the job they received (Greenya 1997). In short, the cadre opposes affirmative action because, although others may not see them as worthy, they are confident that their career and educational success stem from their talents and not from affirmative action. Moreover, they also believe that affirmative action programs cause Blacks to not work as hard because the standards of success will be lowered. In short, black conservatives actively fight to end affirmative action. Self-identified black conservatives in the community, however, support affirmative action. Affirmative

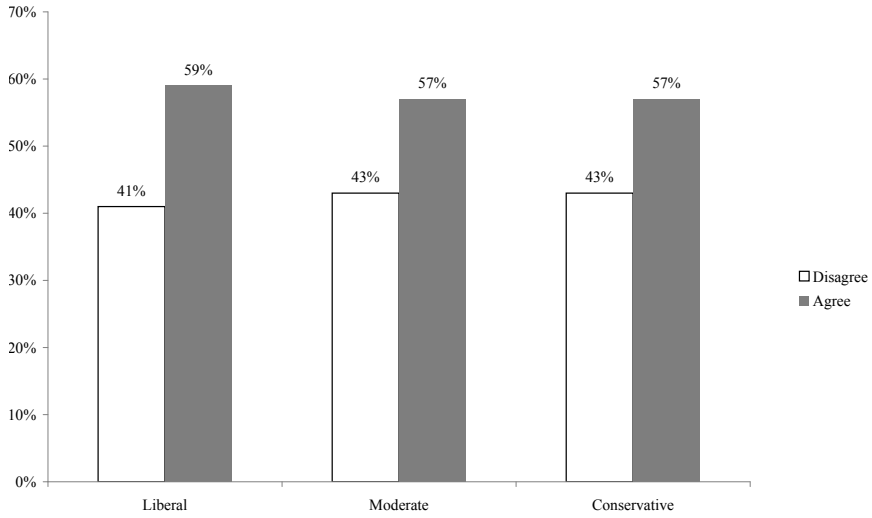


Figure 4.4 Special consideration in hiring, 1996 National Black Election Study.

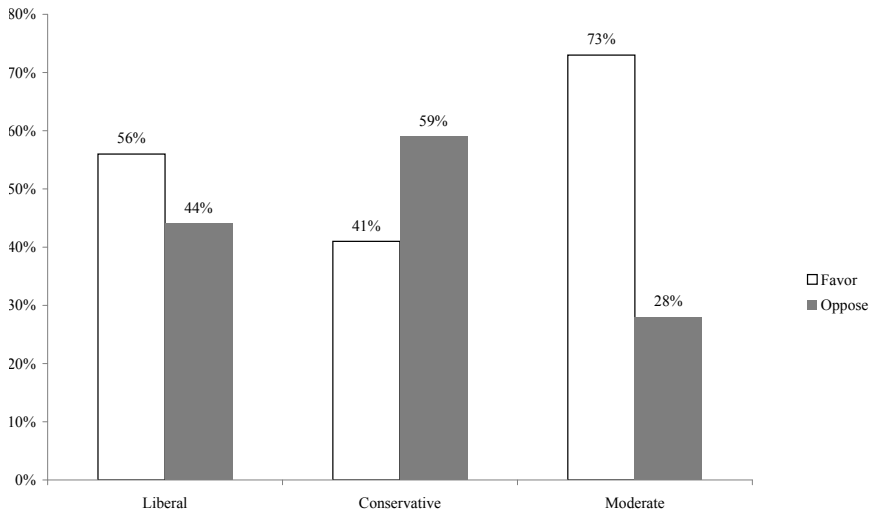


Figure 4.5 Hiring preferences, 2004 National Politics Study.

action continues to be a source of contention in this country. Both Blacks and Whites take strong stances on this public policy issue. More often than not, Blacks are more supportive of affirmative action than Whites. Moreover, there are considerable differences between the responses of black and white conservatives on this issue. Because this is an issue with a racial frame, I expected most Blacks to be supportive of special consideration in hiring and affirmative action. However, as Tate (2010) notes, Black support

for affirmative action is related to the degree to which Blacks believe racial discrimination continues.

Self-reliance is a central component in the black conservative tradition (Eisenstadt 1999). The cadre believes that the government cannot provide solutions to the problems of the black community (Toler 1993; DeVaux 1997). Instead, conservatives argue that Blacks should rely on themselves

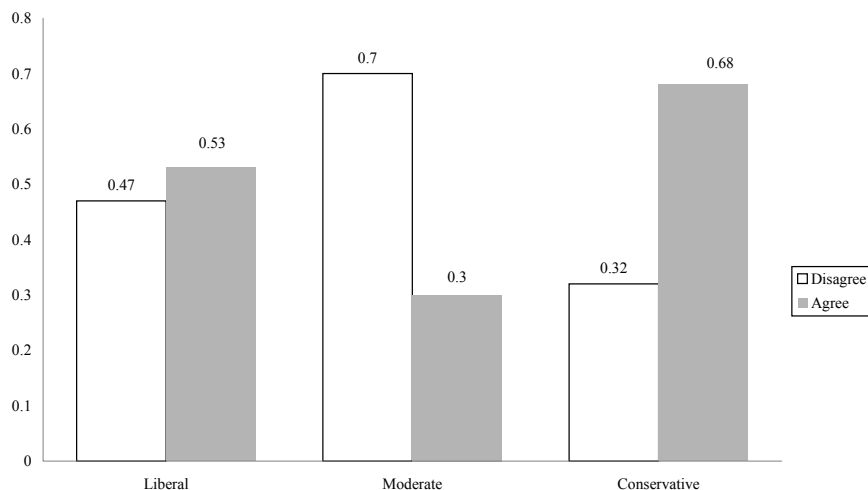


Figure 4.6 Blacks work without special favors, Blacks Only, 2004 National Politics Study.

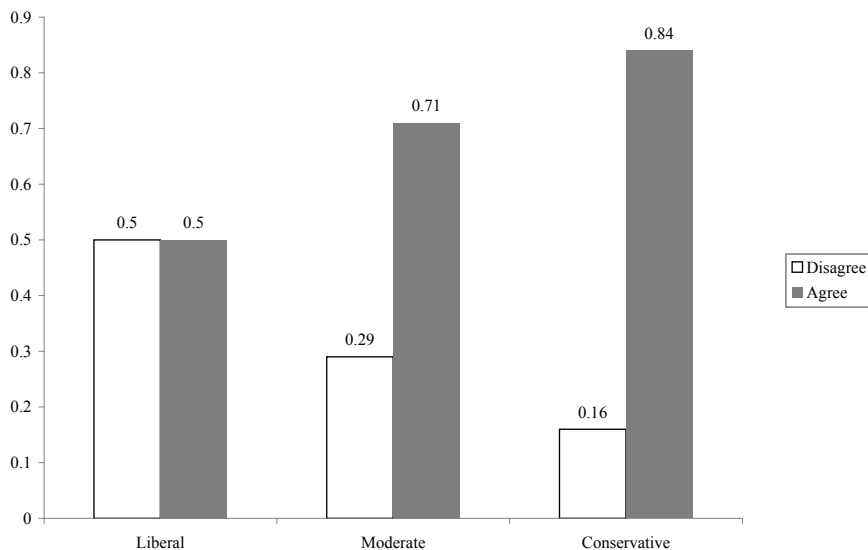


Figure 4.7 Blacks work without special favors, Whites Only, 2004 National Politics Study.

for answers to the problems in the community. This belief can be found among the cadre and all four camps of black conservatism. The NPS asks respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following statement. "Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors." Table 4.6 indicate that there are statistically significant differences between Blacks. A larger percentage of black conservatives (68%) agree with the statement, while a majority of liberals (53%) and fewer moderates (30%) agree with the statement. However, as expected, when comparing the views of black and white conservatives, there is nearly a 20-point difference between the groups.

The next questions concern government assistance to people of color. Black conservatism posits that the government's attempt to solve poverty with the New Deal and Great Society programs handicapped many Blacks because it created a sense of dependency. The cadre believes that the "welfare state has helped destroy many black families by taking wage-earning fathers out of homes and replacing them with a monthly government check" (Lovelace 1997, 47). They argue that before America's "War on Poverty" many black businesses thrived and many black people were financially successful. They give examples of several black banks that stayed in business even when white ones failed during the Great Depression. They also argue that many slaves took advantage of the U.S. free-enterprise system by purchasing their freedom. With this, assumptions could be made that there will be significant differences between black liberals and conservatives on this issue.

The first question concerns food stamp spending. It asks respondents whether they believe that food-stamp spending should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same. Conservatives should be more likely to want a decrease in food stamp spending. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 contain the results from this question. Similar to the responses from previous questions, there are no significant differences between black liberals and conservatives on this issue. In fact, nearly the same percentage (60%) of liberals, moderates, and conservatives believe that spending on food stamps should stay the same. Although there are slightly more conservatives than liberals who support a decrease in food stamp spending, these differences are not significant.

The next question deals with whether the respondent believes the government should provide aid to Blacks to improve their economic and social positions. Again, this question relates to the black conservative belief in self-reliance. The cadre states that the problems of the black community "cannot be remedied by government policy alone" (Toler 1993, 5). A major argument of the cadre is that the creation of government programs helped to destroy two institutions that are vital to Blacks, work and marriage. They note the increase in illegitimacy and crime rates in the black community and attribute these problems to government aid

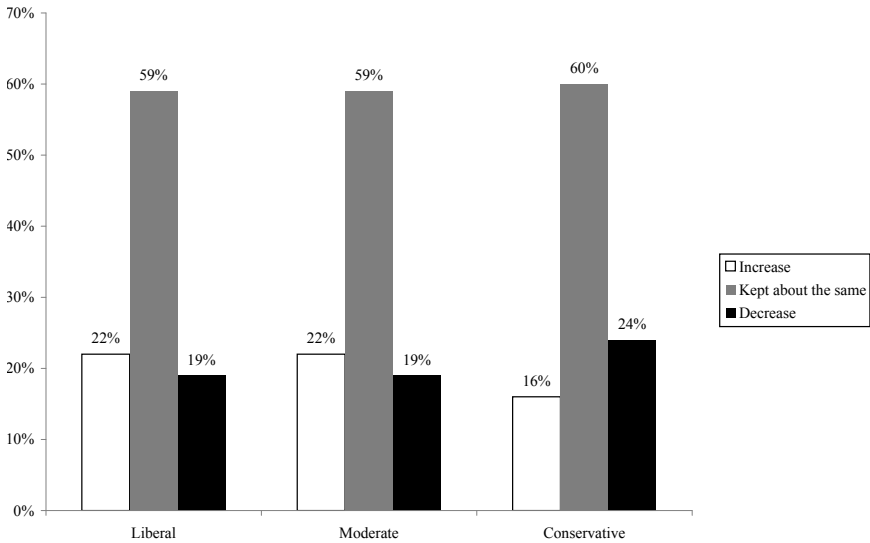


Figure 4.8 Spending on food stamps, 1996 National Black Election Study.

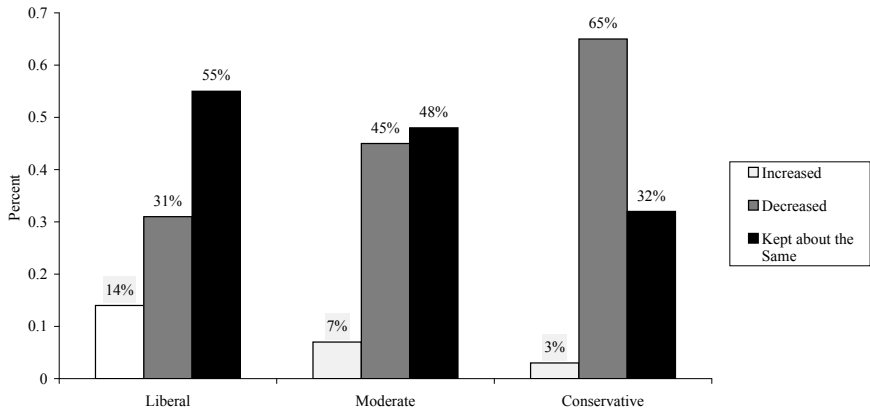


Figure 4.9 Spending on food stamps, 1996 National Election Study.

programs. The cadre believes that it is important that the black community seek solutions to their own problems without assistance from the government. For this question, there should be differences between black liberals and conservatives.

This question provided the respondent with a range from one to seven. One represents that the “government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of Blacks” and seven represents “the government should not make any special effort to help Blacks because they should help themselves.” Similar to the previous question, this question deals with an issue central to black conservative thought, self-help.

Figure 4.10 indicates that there are significant differences between black liberals and conservatives on this issue. The mean for black conservatives is 3.76, which means that black conservatives believe that the government should not make any special effort to aid Blacks. However, the liberal position is close to the conservative position, with a mean of 3.32, also leaning towards the government not making any special efforts to aid Blacks. The mean for the entire sample is 3.46. So generally both black liberals and conservatives lean slightly towards the government not making special efforts, which is less than white liberals and conservatives. The mean for white conservatives is 5.36, whereas the mean for white liberals is 4.15 (refer to Figure 4.11).

Lastly, this section deals with public-policy issues related to the criminal justice system, the death penalty, and racial profiling, both of which

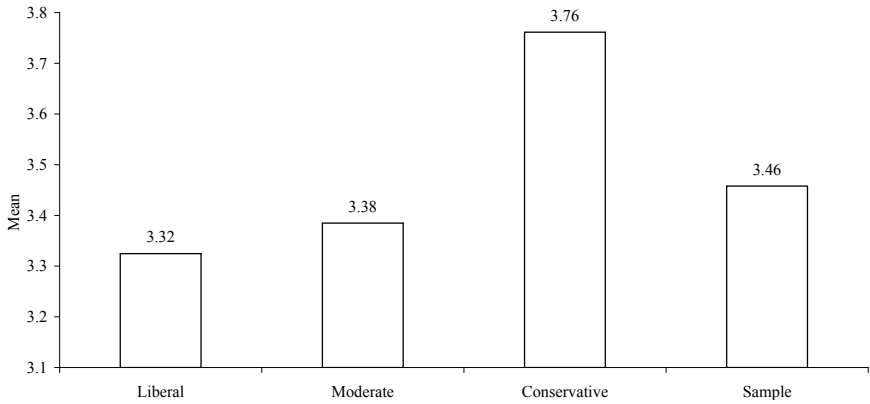


Figure 4.10 Government aid to Blacks, 1996 National Black Election Study.

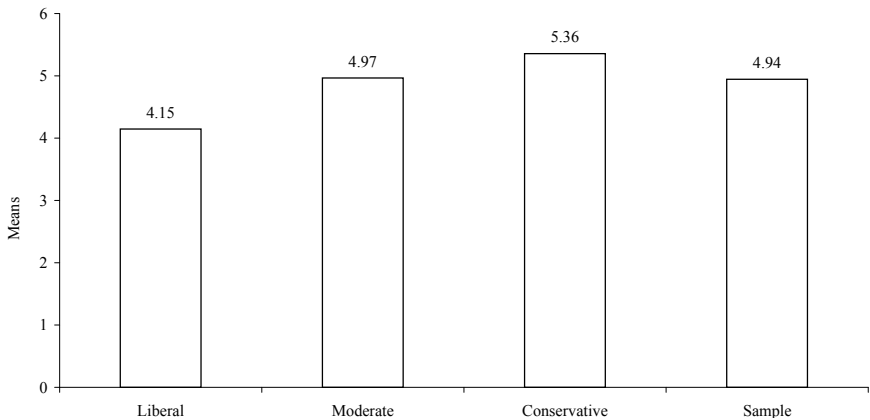


Figure 4.11 Government aid to Blacks, 1996 National Election Study.

have racial frames. Tate (2010) finds that black opinion on the death penalty is influenced by the black church's views on redemption. Thus, over time she finds that black opinion on the death penalty has fluctuated. Although the conservative position would be supportive of the death penalty, black opinion may not be to the right on this issue. Figure 4.12 indicates that Blacks, liberals, moderates, and conservatives are generally supportive of the death penalty. In fact, there are virtually no differences between liberals and conservatives on this issue. About 53 percent of both liberals and conservatives in the NBES favor the death penalty. In the NPS, about 47 percent of liberals and 43 percent of conservatives support the death penalty. Blacks, liberals, conservatives, and moderates agree on the death penalty. In comparing the views of black and white conservatives found in Figure 4.13, there are major differences. While 83 percent of white conservatives favor the death penalty, only 43 percent of black conservatives favor the death penalty.

The NPS also includes a question about racial profiling. It asks respondents how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statement. "Law enforcement should be able to stop or arrest people of certain racial or ethnic backgrounds if they are thought to be more likely to commit crimes." The differences for blacks are statistically significant, although the differences are small. According to Table 4.6, clear majorities of black liberals at 85 percent, black moderates at 84 percent, and black conservatives at 75 percent disagree with the statement; however, fewer conservatives disagree. Surprisingly, Table 4.8 indicates that black and white conservatives' views on racial profiling are nearly identical.

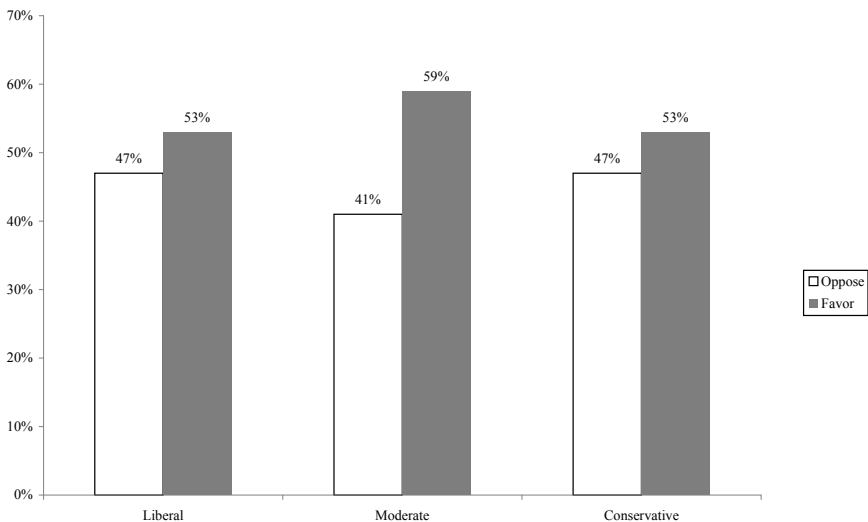


Figure 4.12 Death penalty, 1996 National Black Election Study.

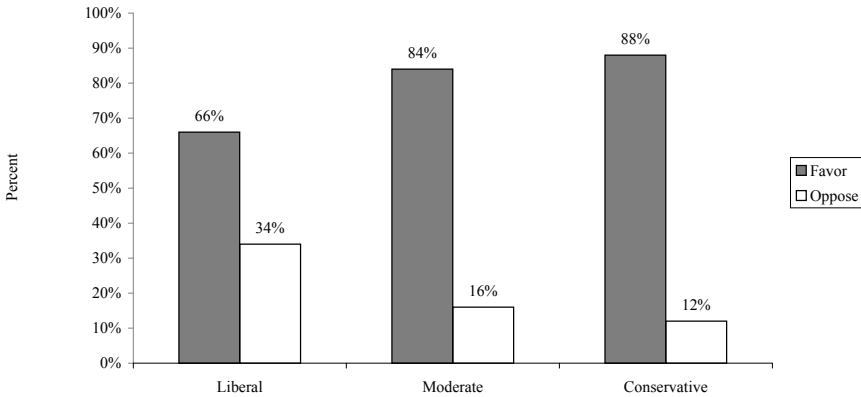


Figure 4.13 Death penalty, 1996 National Election Study.

## Social Issues

This section deals with social issues. The first question concerns laws protecting homosexuals. The question asks respondents if they favor or oppose laws protecting homosexuals against job discrimination. Generally, the black community is opposed to gay marriage but many who fight for equal rights for the homosexual community draw on the civil rights movement to further their cause. Lewis (2003) finds that Blacks have more negative views of homosexuality than Whites but they are more against antigay legislation. Even though Blacks do not support the lifestyle choices of homosexuals, they are against any type of legislation that limits their civil rights. Conservatives, however, are generally opposed to homosexuality; thus self-identified black conservatives should oppose laws protecting homosexuals from job discrimination. They may see it as the state sanctioning their lifestyle, much like they want a constitutional amendment to ban same sex marriage.

Figure 4.14 indicates that Blacks who identify themselves as conservative are more likely than liberals to oppose laws protecting homosexuals. Slightly less than half, (about 39%) of Blacks who identify themselves as conservative oppose laws protecting homosexuals, while only 28 percent of liberals oppose these laws. Contrary to expectations, however, nearly two-thirds (about 61%) of black conservatives favor these laws, compared to 73 percent of liberals. A large percentage of moderate Blacks also favor these laws, about 72 percent. This is clearly contradictory to the conservative position. There is indeed some conflict among self-identified black conservatives when it comes to their positions on laws protecting homosexuals. Nonetheless, a small percentage of Blacks who say they are conservative do appear to adopt the conservative position on this issue.

Are there differences between black and white conservatives? Upon comparing these two groups, there is a 13-percentage-point difference between black and white conservatives. The data indicate that 53 percent of white conservatives oppose these laws while only 40 percent of black

conservatives do. In fact, black conservatives are more likely to *favor* laws protecting homosexuals, rather than laws opposing them. The black conservative position is not as strong as the white conservative's position to oppose these laws.

Table 4.6 shows how respondents feel about same sex couples and marriage. The 2004 NPS asks respondents if they support same sex couples legally marrying, legally forming civil unions but not marrying, or neither. On this particular issue, Table 4.6 indicates that 61 percent of black conservatives, 42 percent of liberals, and 37 percent of moderates responded neither. Nearly a majority of Blacks in all ideological groups oppose any type of legal recognition of same sex marriage. Furthermore, black conservatives are to the political right of white conservatives on this issue. Table 4.8 finds that more black conservatives than white conservatives stated

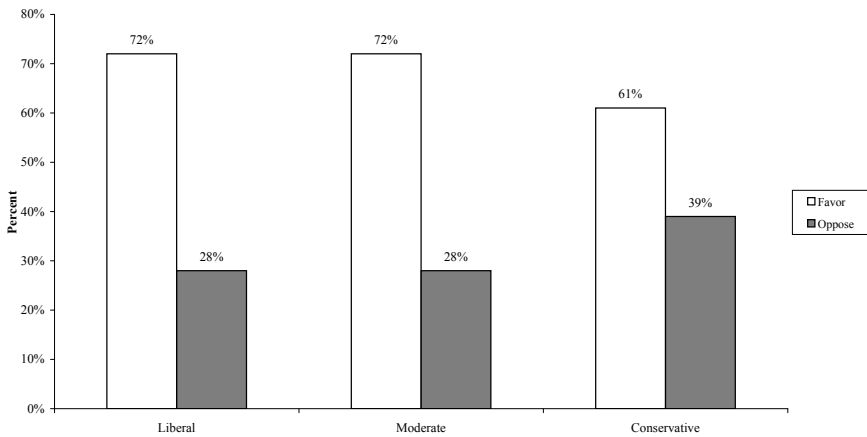


Figure 4.14 Laws protecting homosexuals, 1996 National Black Election Study.

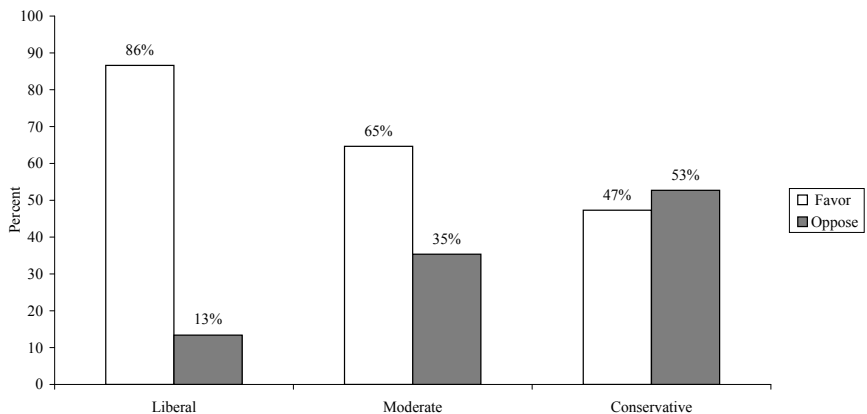


Figure 4.15 Laws protecting homosexuals, 1996 National Election Study.

that they supported neither. This finding confirms the earlier work of Tate (2010), who finds that Blacks are to the political right on gay marriage, although this political stance may change with President Barack Obama's announcement in support of gay marriage in the summer of 2012.

The NPS also asks respondents about women's rights, specifically whether men and women should have equal roles or rather a woman's place is in the home. There are no significant differences between the positions of liberals, moderates, and conservatives. Generally speaking, all groups support equal rights for women and the views of black conservatives are similar to white conservatives. Likewise, there are no statistically significant differences between groups on whether respondents agree or disagree with the following statement. "I would approve if someone in my family married a person of a different racial or ethnic background than mine." More black conservatives than white conservatives, however, agree with this statement. Nonetheless, what is interesting about this question is that although some camps of black conservatism stress the individual over the group, more black conservatives than black liberals disagreed with the statement.

### **Immigration and Foreign Policy**

The NPS (Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8) asks several questions related to the respondents' views on immigration. The first question asks whether government spending on patrolling the border against illegal immigration should increase, stay the same, or decrease. A majority of Blacks, liberals, moderates, and conservatives agreed that border patrol spending should decrease. However, considerably fewer black moderates, 4 percent, indicated that it should increase, and a larger share of moderates indicated that it should stay the same 43 percent. If the conservative response to the question is for border patrol spending to increase, black conservatives are clearly to the right of white conservatives on this issue. Thirteen percent of black conservatives stated spending should increase, and only 3 percent of white conservatives stated that spending should increase. When asked if the number of immigrants permitted to come into the United States should increase, decrease, or stay the same, large majorities of Blacks indicated that it should stay the same; however, fewer conservatives, only 5 percent, stated that it should increase. Black and white conservatives seem fairly similar in this question. And lastly, when asked if they believe that immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in America, there was general agreement among liberals and conservatives, each at 52 percent and 56 percent, respectively, stating that they agreed. However, 65 percent of black moderates disagreed with the statement, while only 48 percent and 44 percent of liberals and conservatives disagreed. Black conservatives are more likely than white conservatives to believe that immigrants take jobs away. On two of the previous questions, moderates seemed to be more split than liberals and conservatives. In the end,

if immigration measures are bipartisan, as Tate (2010) suggests, Blacks seem to be more supportive.

In the area of national defense, similar to other questions, close to the same levels of black liberals, conservatives, and moderates believe defense spending should decrease. However, a larger percentage of moderates believe it should stay the same, nearly a 20-percentage-point difference. The differences between these groups are statistically significant. On this question, more black conservatives than white conservatives believe that defense spending should increase. In regards to the U.S. military in Iraq, there are statistically significant differences between liberals, moderates, and conservatives. Similar to Tate's (2010) findings, Blacks generally believed the United States should have stayed out of Iraq; however, fewer black conservatives take this view. So, although more black conservatives than white liberals support more defense spending, black conservatives clearly disagree with the war in Iraq. The data reveal that while more than three-quarters of white conservatives believed the U.S. military incursion in Iraq was the right thing to do, the same percentage of black conservatives believed the U.S. military should have stayed out. The next question deals with whether respondents agree with whether "Sometimes war is necessary to put other nations in their place." More conservatives agree with the statement, and the differences between the groups are statistically significant. However, nearly a third of both moderates and liberals also agree with the statement, further supporting Tate's (2010) finding that Blacks have become less isolationist and more supportive of using the military. But similar to the question on the U.S. military in Iraq, far fewer black than white conservatives agree with war being necessary. In regards to the war on terror, substantially more black conservatives agreed with the government being able to imprison noncitizens indefinitely if they are suspected of belonging to a terrorist organization, which is consistent with white conservatives. And lastly, in whether respondents were ashamed of America, although there was general agreement among Blacks, liberals, conservatives, and moderates on this question, where 79 percent of liberals, 70 percent of conservatives, and 73 percent of moderates were ashamed of America, more conservatives and moderates disagreed with the statement, which is similar to how white conservatives responded to this question. In short, although generally Blacks are more supportive of increased defense spending, they are less supportive of utilizing the military or engaging in war than Whites.

## **Politics**

This last section analyzes a variety of issues. It includes questions about congressional election rules, the best strategy to obtain political power for Blacks, partisan preferences, how respondents feel about the outcome of the 2000 election, Bush's job performance, and levels of patriotism. The first question concerns how the respondent feels about congressional

election rules. The survey asks respondents if they believe election rules should change so that the number of Blacks and Hispanics in Congress should equal numbers in the population. Certain camps of black conservatives, particularly neoconservatives, and individualist conservatives would oppose changing rules because they believe that racism is no longer an obstacle and that America has made a lot of progress. However, Afrocentric conservatives and liberals would want election rules to change.

The data from the NBES in Figure 4.16 indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the groups on this question. A significant number of self-identified conservatives believe that election rules should remain the same. Nearly half the conservatives, 44 percent, support election rules remaining the same, while less than a third of liberals support this view, 32 percent. Generally, more than half of all respondents support changing election rules, although fewer conservatives support this option. More than two-thirds of liberals, 69 percent, support change and only 56 percent of conservatives support change.

Because earlier data reveal large proportions of Blacks support the Democratic Party, this section analyzes ideological identification and partisanship. Conservatism should manifest itself through the Republican Party and liberalism in the Democratic Party. Thus, a natural assumption is for black conservatives to identify with the Republican Party and liberals with the Democratic Party. In fact, Bravo (1997) states that "As more Blacks reach middle and upper-middle-class status, we will continue to see a similar increase in the number of those people who espouse the conservative policies of the Republican Party" (21). Blacks and Republicans agree on a variety of issues where they embrace traditional family values and entrepreneurship. They disagree with many policies advanced by Democrats, which enlarge the welfare state and have failed the black community (Randolph 1995; DeVaux 1997; Jones 1997; Lovelace 1997). Therefore, we expect to see a large number of black conservatives who are also Republicans or at least support the notion of Blacks giving support to the Republican Party.

Both the NBES and the NPS asks questions related to which party best represents Blacks. The data indicate (refer to Tables 4.5, Table 4.6, and Figure 4.17) that there are statistically significant differences between self-identified liberals, moderates, and conservatives on this issue. Interestingly, in the NBES, self-identified conservatives do not suggest much stronger support for the Republican Party as a strategy than liberals suggest; rather, they support the idea of forming an independent black political party. Eleven percent of conservatives, 8 percent of moderates, and 5 percent of liberals suggest Blacks support an independent political party. However, a smaller percentage of conservatives than liberals stated that Blacks should continue strong support for the Democratic Party. A variation in the wording of the question in the NPS (see Table 4.6) yields different results. The NPS asks which party does a better job representing the interests of Blacks, whereas the NBES asks which strategy was best at increasing black political power. Higher percentages of

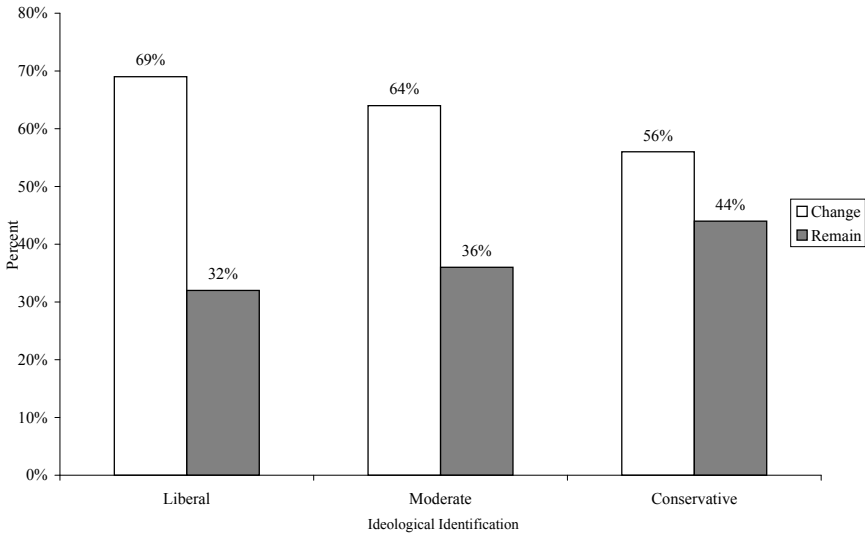


Figure 4.16 Congressional election rules, 1996 National Black Election Study.

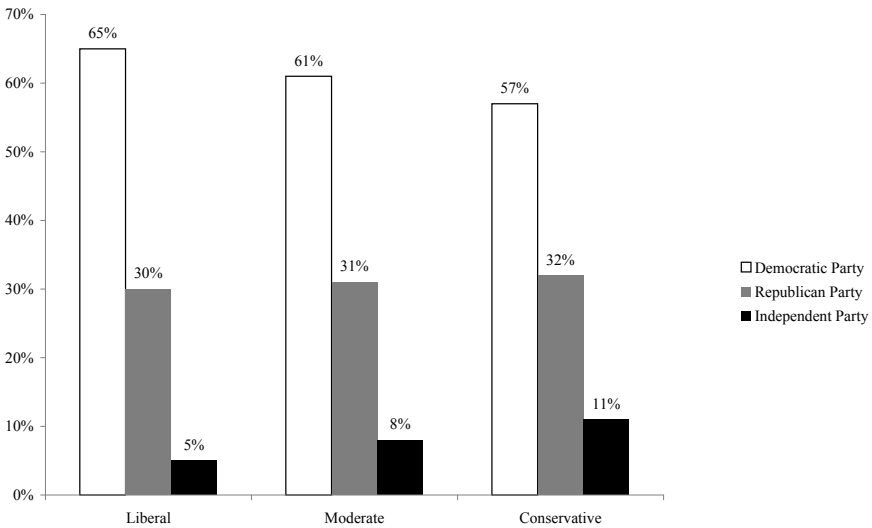


Figure 4.17 Best strategy to increase black political power, 1996 National Black Election Study.

respondents in all categories in the NPS suggest that Democrats do a better job representing Blacks. However, a significantly higher percentage of black conservatives suggest that Republicans do a better job representing Blacks. But white conservatives, as found in Table 4.7, answer this question

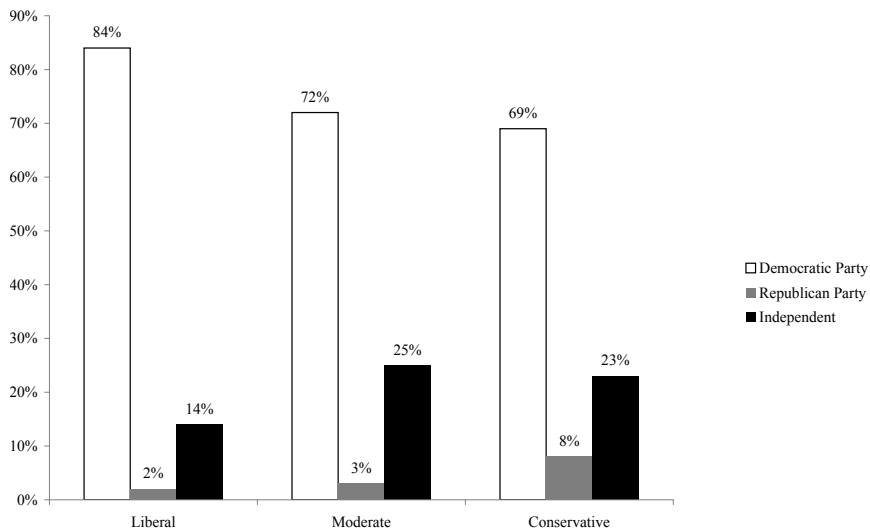


Figure 4.18 Partisan preferences, 1996 National Black Election Study.

differently with substantially more of them stating that the Republican Party does a better job representing Blacks. Fifty-three percent of white conservatives believe the Republican Party does a better job compared to only 17 percent of black conservatives believing the same.

Similar to the best political strategy to increase black political power, there are slight differences between the partisan preferences of black liberals and conservatives in the NBES (see Table 4.5 and Figure 4.18). The evidence suggests that fewer conservatives are Democrats (69%). More than three-quarters of liberals are Democrat (84%). However, only a very small percentage of conservatives identify with Republicans (8%). Despite the fact that many conservatives do not identify with the Republican Party, we do find that a substantial portion of black conservatives (23%) identify as independent. The NPS (refer to Table 4.6) does not show very much change among self-identified black conservatives. Roughly the same proportions of conservatives are Democrat (67%), Republican (25%), and independent (7%). The NPS also indicates a large shift towards Blacks becoming Independent. As expected, there are major differences between black and white conservative's partisan preferences. A much larger percentage of white conservatives, 63 percent, are Republican, while only 7 percent of black conservatives are Republican.

Black partisanship presents an interesting discussion. Blacks have been faithful and loyal supporters of the Democratic Party since the 1930s and 1940s. Recent research indicates that Blacks remain a loyal constituency of the Democratic Party. In recent presidential elections, an overwhelming majority of Blacks voted Democrat, 95 percent in 2008, 88 percent

in 2004, 90 percent in 2000, 84 percent in 1996, and 83 percent in 1992 (Pomper 2001; Dervarics 2004; Bositis 2008). Black political commentators say that the lack of Republican Party support among Blacks results from various factors, including the party's lack of outreach to black constituencies, implicit racial priming during elections, the lack of policies which Blacks support, and finally the reluctance of some Blacks to admit that they are Republican (Philpot 2007; Fauntroy 2007). Many black conservatives believe that the Republican Party does not see the black community as a group worth pursuing (Thomas 1997). They ignore black constituents and make many of them feel unwelcome in the party. However, the lack of black support for the Republican Party may change because conservative support for the Democrats is less than support from liberals. While 84 percent of liberals support Democrats, only 69 percent of conservatives support the Democratic Party. Further, in 1996, more black conservatives voted for the Republican candidate, and that number increased in 2000 and 2004. Scholars also document a growing number of black Republicans (Ponnuru 1996). In short, although Blacks who identify themselves as conservatives do not choose the Republican Party, it is possible for this group to realign with the Republican Party. However, the election of President Barack Obama as America's first black president will delay possibilities of realignment between Blacks and the Republican Party.

The 2000 presidential election was a controversial moment in American history. The election hinged on Florida with its 25 Electoral College votes. Based on exit polls, some media outlets declared Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, the winner. However, later in the evening, several media outlets recanted and placed Florida in the undecided column. And even later in the evening, media outlets then declared George W. Bush, the Republican candidate, the winner. However, all the votes were not counted, and most uncounted ballots were located in heavily Democratic districts. When it was all over, Bush's victory was small enough to mandate a recount. Although the Florida Supreme Court ruled that a recount must take place, the U.S. Supreme Court halted the recount, ultimately making the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, the victor. The NPS asks respondents whether they believed the outcome was fair. Because the Republican, George H. Bush, was declared the winner, self-identified conservatives may be more likely to say the results were fair. The data indicate that more conservatives, 22 percent, stated that the outcome was fair, whereas only 11 percent of liberals and 15 percent of moderates stated it was fair. However, generally most Blacks believed the outcome was not fair. And there are major differences between black and white conservatives on this issue. While 80 percent of white conservatives believed the outcome was fair, only 22 percent of black conservatives believed the same. Similarly, in judging Bush's job performance, more black conservatives and moderates approved of his performance and the differences between the groups were significant. But like the previous question, there are substantial differences between black

and white conservatives on this issue. Only 25 percent of black conservatives approve of Bush's job performance, compared to 84 percent of white conservatives.

The patriotism questions show significant differences between the positions of black liberals, conservatives, and moderates. A majority of both moderates and conservatives feel extremely good or very good when seeing the American flag, are proud to be American, and believe that America is the land of opportunity. The only difference between black and white conservatives is on the question about seeing the American flag. While 91 percent of white conservatives stated that seeing the American flag makes them feel good, only 54 percent of black conservatives stated the same.

## A DIVIDE: CONSERVATISM IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

### A Summary

This work provides an analysis of conservatism among Blacks. Using the self-identification scale, first at least a third of Blacks in the survey professed a conservative political philosophy. Self-identified black conservatives are mostly from the South, attend church regularly, are female, married, and have less than a college education. After looking at the demographics of self-identified conservatives, the analysis then shifted to compare the opinions of black conservatives, black liberals, and white conservatives. Scholars agree liberalism holds to the belief that the government should play an active role in domestic policy and it demonstrates tolerance for social change and diversity. Conversely, conservatism demonstrates a strong resistance to government involvement in domestic affairs, strong support for traditional social values, economic individualism, and order (Knight 1999).

Utilizing these definitions of liberalism and conservatism, this research sought to examine three things. First, this section sought to find if black conservatives conformed to the views espoused by the cadre of black conservatives, particularly those views that are firmly within the black conservative tradition. Second, it examined if there were differences between the views of self-identified black conservatives and self-identified black liberals. And lastly, this section sought to find if black conservatives had any similar views to white conservatives. All of the issues examined tap into some aspect of what conservatism means. For example, questions with racial framing deal with issues central to black conservative thought, self-help, self-reliance, individualism versus group consciousness, morality, and whether racism continues to be a problem. The social-policy section deals with social values, morals, and traditional family values. The political section deal with individualist conservative's demonstration of patriotism, individualism, and support for Republicans.

Using data from the NBES and the NPS, this research finds that Blacks who self-identify as conservative largely agree with some elements of the political thought of the cadre of black conservatives that fit within the black conservative tradition. On many questions, there were significant differences between black conservatives and liberals. Unsurprising, however, on questions with racial framing, there were little to no differences between black liberals, conservatives, and moderates.

There were, however, some interesting findings in the comparisons. On several questions analyzed we see that a minority of self-identified conservatives in the community agree with the cadre but a majority also agreed with liberals. For example, the question regarding progress in ending discrimination is central to the political thought of the cadre of black conservatives. There are two diametrically opposed options in this question, either that much progress has been made or not a lot has changed. Central to the thought of the cadre of black conservatives is to not focus on the past. Instead, the cadre chooses to focus on the opportunities America has to offer instead of viewing America as a racist country that has worked to hinder the progress of Blacks. To those who argue that there is more to achieve, the cadre points to the many achievements of Blacks. The cadre also believes that racial discrimination is no longer an obstacle to black progress. They argue, "We can speak of a racist American past, but not of racist contemporary America" (Toler 1993, 5). This question yielded results that indicate less than half of self-identified conservatives in the community agree with the cadre, but a clear majority believe that not much has changed. The results are similar with affirmative action and on black views on homosexuality. In the NBES, there are no distinct differences among conservatives. However, the NPS does find a majority of conservatives opposing preferences, but less than a quarter believe that affirmative action is a bad thing. In the NBES, while more conservatives oppose laws protecting homosexuals, it is less than a majority. In the NPS, although a majority of conservatives are opposed to legal recognition of same sex marriage, 38 percent support legal recognition.

This section also confirmed that while on some issues black and white conservatives had similar beliefs, on racial profiling, gender equality, immigration, and patriotism, on several issues black conservatives were far to the left of white conservatives, and on other issues, they were far to the right. For example, on the death penalty, affirmative action, black conservatives were to the left of white conservatives. On the outcome of the 2000 presidential election, Bush's job performance, and the U.S. military in Iraq, black conservatives were far left of white conservatives. On gay marriage, defense, and border patrol spending, black conservatives were to the right of white conservatives.

Also surprising are the results from the last section on politics dealing with the best strategy to increase black political power and black partisan preferences. A natural assumption is for black conservatives to identify

with the Republican Party and liberals with the Democratic Party as white conservatives and liberals do. However, despite ideological leanings measured through self-identification, Blacks continue to support the Democratic Party. However, there may be an opening for Republicans to garner more support among Blacks as the results indicate. The NBES finds that nearly one-third of liberals, moderates, and conservatives believe the best strategy to increase black political power is through the Republican Party. The NPS also finds that about one-fifth of conservatives believe the Republican Party best represents Blacks. The data also indicate that close to a quarter of black moderates and conservatives state they are independent, suggesting, as Simpson (1998) finds, that although respondents labeled themselves as liberal, their views were conservative and some voted Republican. In short, "The terms *conservative* and *Republican* are not always interchangeable" (Richardson and Richardson 1997, 43).

This opening for the Republican Party came to fruition in the 2004 presidential election. Then incumbent president George Bush increased his share of the black vote by two percentage points (Nedra Pickler, Associated Press, January 25, 2005). Although a small percentage nationwide, the black vote proved disastrous for John Kerry in Ohio, where Bush increased his support among Blacks by seven percentage points. David Bositis from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies calculated that if Kerry received the same level of black support in Ohio as Al Gore, he would have gained 110,000 votes (Bositis 2005). The same report also stated that Bush made similar gains among black voters in the battleground state of Florida. In short, although self-identified black conservatives do not choose the Republican Party, it is quite possible for this group to support Republicans or some other party in the near future.

In sum, these findings present several interesting points of information. First, these findings indicate that conservatism in the black community is quite nuanced and distinct from the American conservative tradition. For example, while self-identified black conservatives are correctly situated to the right on a variety of public-policy issues such as border patrol spending, gay marriage, and imprisoning terrorist suspects, on issues with clear racial framing such as the death penalty and affirmative action, black conservatives are clearly to the left. Furthermore, although black conservatives were more likely to view the Republican Party as the party that best represents Blacks and were more likely to identify with the Republican Party, they were less so inclined than white conservatives. Moreover, black moderates were sometimes very close behind black conservatives in their right leanings and sometimes further to the right than black conservatives. As such, this work confirms that Blacks are conservative, albeit a different kind of conservative. In addition, this work posits that black conservatism is extremely complex and misunderstood because many attempt to situate it within the American conservative tradition. Furthermore, I find that those who profess a conservative political

philosophy may be operational liberals, but conservatives and those who state they are moderate may also be conservatives—but conservative in the black tradition of conservatism. These conservatives accept capitalism, the fact that Blacks should be self-sufficient, but also firmly embrace group consciousness while also recognizing that in some ways America is responsible for some of the circumstances in the black community. I also find that despite the conservative underpinnings of the black community, in some ways contemporary black conservatism is still to the left of the American conservative tradition. Thus, this work suggests that black conservatism deals more with social and moral concerns than with political and economic issues. Furthermore, I agree with the assessment of Fauntroy (2007) and Smith (2010), who argue that there is a distinct racial undertone to conservatism among Whites, a racial conservatism, which is “an ideological philosophy held by whites that seeks to shape the racial status quo to their benefit and resist any changes in the social, political, and economic status quo that benefit minorities. Racial conservatives oppose policy changes that would result in an enhanced position for African Americans or a perceived diminution of status for whites, or both” (Fauntroy 2007, 49).

Very different from the racial conservatism of Whites, and often misunderstood because it is incorrectly situated within the American conservative tradition, black conservative political thought has always emphasized self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and morals. In fact, early black political leaders sometimes sacrificed participation in the political system for the accomplishment of these goals (Eisenstadt 1999). For example, Booker T. Washington sought civil and humane treatment of newly freed slaves instead of enfranchisement. No element of mainstream conservatism sacrifices political participation. In the American conservative tradition we find individuals and groups avidly involved in the political process. They would say their religious beliefs drive them to be politically active. The religious right even mobilizes other citizens to vote. Moreover, some elements of contemporary black conservatism emphasize religion more than politics; like the NOI, and this is very different from the American conservative tradition. Black conservatives see conservatism as a model to teach individuals about self-restraint, sacrifice for others, and self-help (Goode 1997). Walker (1997) describes being a black conservative as “a state of mind and type of character, a way of looking at the social order” about the centrality of character (29). Nothing in this definition advances political participation. This does not suggest that black conservatives are apolitical, but rather their focus is on something more than mere politics. To some elements of black conservatives, their focus is on improving the black condition whether that is through political participation or economic empowerment. In short, the black conservative tradition is different from the white conservative tradition. As such, this research seeks to find out what conservatism in the black community means. This is especially important considering that there are

few differences between black liberals and conservatives and that black conservative views closely mirror the views of the cadre.

## CAMPS OF BLACK CONSERVATISM

Analyzing self-identification, vote choice, and partisanship are ways to measure conservatism among Blacks, but they are insufficient in attempting to capture the diversity of opinion in black political attitudes, mainly conservatism. Furthermore, since the previous section found that black conservatives were to the right, but sometimes had similar positions as liberals and that moderates were sometimes more to the political right than conservatives, this work seeks to investigate all possible facets of conservatism among Blacks. As such, it will draw on the different camps of conservatism to evaluate the classification of Blacks as conservative beyond traditional measures. Similar to the work of Free and Cantril (1967) and Peterson (2005), this work puts forward the argument that traditional measures of ideology are insufficient for analyzing political attitudes, especially conservatism. Free and Cantril (1967) find that while Americans profess a conservative political philosophy, they tend to support social welfare programs, and are classified as “operational liberals.” Harris-Lacewell (2004) argues that the political thought of Blacks “defy neat categorization” (xx). As such, I find that traditional measures of defining, categorizing, and explaining conservatism among Blacks are insufficient. Furthermore, Dawson (2001) suggests that black ideologies do not remain fixed throughout time; they are constructed and reconstructed. Peterson (2005) also suggests that traditional measures of ideology cannot capture the full complexities of black political philosophy, especially black conservatism. For example, the discussion of mainstream conservatism finds at least four different camps of contemporary conservatism: neoconservatism, the old right, the religious right, and Southern conservatism. Similar to the different camps of conservatism found in the general electorate, this work posits four distinct camps of black conservative thought: the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, neoconservatives, and individualist conservatives.

The black right believes religion is central to the plight of Blacks. Religion will restore the black community and it will also resolve the social, moral, or political issues faced by Blacks. The black right stresses traditional family values and high moral standards and they do not necessarily see racism as a problem, but they see the moral values of Blacks as a problem for the black community. Afrocentric conservatives believe in black pride, self-determination, and autonomy. They also share the focus on morality with the black right. However, Afrocentric conservatives view racism as the cause of problems in the black community. Individualists oppose government intervention into social welfare issues and they support the notion of the individual over the group. As such, they favor individualism. Any attempt to focus

on group or racial consciousness is a barrier to full assimilation for Blacks. They also subscribe to the ideas of universal equality instead of equality for one group. Neoconservatives are primarily ex-liberals who dislike liberal policies of the New Deal and the civil rights movement. Neoconservatives are opposed to liberals and government expansion of the welfare state, but they are closer to the left than other camps of conservatives. They also stress individual responsibility and merit.

I utilize several questions from the NBES and NPS to identify members of each camp. Although both surveys specifically asks respondents whether they are liberal or conservative, because Harris-Lacewell (2004) concludes that Blacks have conservative leanings but will not admit they are conservative, nontraditional measures are used to categorize respondents into the different camps of conservatism. Also, because national surveys do not directly ask black respondents questions about the different camps of black conservatives, I utilize a series of questions that could place these respondents in the different camps. Therefore, this work classifies the black right as those individuals who attend church on a regular basis and who receive guidance from their religion. Afrocentric conservatives are supportive of Afrocentrism, black autonomy, and self-help. Neoconservatives are individuals who identify and vote Republican but also support less government intervention. Lastly, individualists are respondents who do not see themselves as a part of a collective group that is part of the black community.

A caveat here is worth mentioning. It is nearly impossible for an individual to subscribe to all the beliefs of any of these camps of conservatives. Rather, this discussion merely serves as a catalyst to help identify and explain different elements of conservatism among Blacks. Furthermore, this research also recognizes that these are indirect measures of conservatism; however, the fact that we can identify segments of the black population that may have conservative leanings through evaluating these questions gives us some idea as to why and how some Blacks are conservative and why this conservatism does not manifest into Republican partisanship.

Analyzing data from the 1996 NBES in Table 4.9, there is a large group of Blacks in the survey who could be categorized as the black right, because nearly three-quarters of the sample stated that religion provides them with a great deal of guidance. Their primary focus is on morality, and they argue that racism does not cause the problems of the black community. Instead, a lack of religious guidance causes problems in the black community. Utilizing church attendance as a proxy measure of the black right, Table 4.9 reveals that church attendance is important to Blacks. Three-quarters of the respondents stated they attended church somewhat often or often. Table 4.10 from the NPS also indicates that roughly the same percentages of Blacks attend church somewhat often or often. A large percentage of respondents also stated that they received a great deal of guidance from their religion. More specifically, when asked whether religion provides guidance in day-to-day living, approximately 73 percent of the

Table 4.9 Camps of Black Conservatism,<sup>1</sup> 1996 National Black Election Study

Church attendance	Not often	25%	
<i>The black right</i>	Somewhat often	23%	
	Often	52%	1211
Guidance	Some	10%	
<i>The black right</i>	Quite a bit	17%	
	Great deal	73%	1111
Importance of religion	Not important	8%	
<i>The black right</i>	Important	92%	1212
<u>The Black Right Scale</u>	Yes	29%	
	No	70%	1107
Afrocentric schools	Not important	76%	
<i>Afrocentric conservatives</i>	Important	24%	814
Black stores	Agree	62%	
<i>Afrocentric conservatives</i>	Disagree	38%	832
Black candidate	Agree	88%	
<i>Afrocentric conservatives</i>	Disagree	12%	848
<u>Afrocentric Conservative Scale</u>	Yes	67%	
	No	33%	785
Special consideration	Agree	58%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Disagree	42%	817
Government involvement	Job good living	61%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Get ahead own	39%	772
Government effort	Government effort	59%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Blacks help themselves	41%	788
Food stamp funding	Increased	21%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Same	60%	
	Decreased	19%	838
Welfare limit	Favor	68%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Oppose	32%	807
No welfare increase	Favor	52%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Oppose	48%	779
<u>Neoconservative Scale</u>	Yes	23%	
	No	77%	489
Group Consciousness	Low	13%	
<i>Individualist</i>	Medium	27%	
	High	60%	1107
<u>Individualist Conservative Scale</u>	Yes	13%	
	No	87%	1107

1. In order to further the analysis, the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, neoconservative, and individualist conservative were created into scales. The individualist scale includes questions labeled as neoconservative because individualist conservatives are vocal in their belief that Blacks should think of themselves as Americans and they should be individualist and not collectivist. The Cronbach alpha for each scale suggests that all scales have a relatively strong internal reliability. The black right (n = 781 or 71%); Cronbach alpha = .350; Afrocentric conservatives (n = 526 or 67%); Cronbach alpha = .413; neoconservatives (n = 489 or 40%); Cronbach alpha = .470; individualist conservatives (n = 310 or 67%); Cronbach alpha = .329.

Table 4.10 Camps of Black Conservatism,<sup>1</sup> 2004 National Politics Study

Church attendance	Not often	27%	
<i>The black right</i>	Somewhat often	19%	
	Often	54%	695
Religiosity	Not religious at all	2%	
<i>The black right</i>	Not too religious	8%	
	Fairly religious	47%	
	Very religious	43%	688
<u>The Black Right Scale</u>	Yes	24%	
	No	76%	685
Blacks best represented by Blacks	Agree	51%	
<i>Afrocentric conservatives</i>	Disagree	49%	737
Affirmative action	Good thing	89%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Bad thing	11%	674
Hiring preferences	Favor	51%	
<i>Neoconservatives</i>	Oppose	49%	728
Happens to Blacks	Yes	70%	
<i>Individualist</i>	No	30%	740
More important	Being Black	11%	
<i>Individualist</i>	Being American	15%	
	Both equally	74%	744
Closeness to Blacks	Very close	52%	
<i>Individualist</i>	Fairly close	39%	
	Not too close	7%	
	Not close at all	3%	742
Cultures	Maintain distinct culture	40%	
<i>Individualist</i>	Blend into larger society	60%	654
<u>Group Consciousness Scale</u>	Low	4%	
<i>Individualist</i>	Medium	41%	
	High	55%	635
<u>Individualist</u>	Yes	18%	
	No	82%	635

1. For further analysis, the Black right and individualist conservatives are scales. The Cronbach alpha for each scale with results suggests that both scales have a relatively strong internal reliability. The black right (n = 685 or 91%); Cronbach alpha = .561; individualist (n = 635 or 84%); Cronbach alpha = .338. Due to low internal reliability, there is no scale for Afrocentric conservatives and neoconservatives.

respondents stated that religion provided a great deal of guidance. An overwhelming percentage of respondents, 92 percent, stated that religion was very important in their lives. The NPS asks respondents how religious they are. A large percentage of blacks (90%) stated they were fairly religious or very religious. Table 4.10 also provides results of the scale created for the black right, which includes questions concerning church attendance and

religiosity. The scales created find that about a quarter of Blacks who are conservative could be considered part of the black right.

While extrapolating conservatism from the importance of religion is unorthodox, both Calhoun-Brown (2001) and Harris (1999) conclude how important the black church is in explaining black political participation and behavior. Calhoun-Brown (2001) concludes that church attendance is a strong predictor of conservative political attitudes among Blacks. Moreover, religion and morals played a vital role in the 2004 presidential election (Lewis 2005). Large numbers of voters left the polls in the 2004 presidential election stating that morals were the primary issues on which they voted. Thus, it would not be strange to see how the responses to this question could lead one to believe that a voter would have a conservative political philosophy and vote for the more conservative candidate. Gay marriage and abortion were very important issues in the 2004 race. Since nearly a fourth of Blacks stated that they received a great deal of guidance from religion, it should not be hard to expect that Blacks could possibly and eventually lean towards a more conservative candidate. In fact, this did occur in the 2004 presidential election, as George W. Bush was the more conservative candidate who aligned himself with morality and traditional family values. However, his share of black support was abysmally low; less than 10 percent of Blacks supported him in the election. Briefly, though, this work contends that the Republican Party has not and does not appear to be willing to court black voters effectively.

Afrocentric conservatives are those who stress the importance of self-reliance and black autonomy. Similar to the conservative philosophy of self-help, Afrocentric conservatives support self-reliance. The 1996 NBES contains a question regarding whether black children should attend Afrocentric schools and whether Blacks should support black candidates for political office, both of which I utilize to categorize respondents as Afrocentric conservatives. The data in Table 4.9 reveal strong support for Afrocentric conservatism. More than 76 percent support the idea of black children attending Afrocentric schools; however, in the political realm, there is minimal support for the Afrocentric conservative with only 12 percent agreeing that Blacks should only vote for Black candidates. The NPS asks respondents if people are best represented in office by leaders from their own racial and ethnic background. Respondents were nearly split equally, with 51 percent agreeing with the idea that people are best represented in office by leaders of their own racial background. This means that 51 percent of black respondents believe that Blacks are best represented by Blacks, while 49 percent disagreed that Blacks are best represented by Blacks.

Despite this finding, there is strong support for the economic dimension of Afrocentric conservative thought, which is similar to Black Nationalists, who encourage Blacks to develop and support black business (Brown and Shaw 2002). The NBES asks respondents how they feel about shopping in black stores. More than a majority of Blacks, 62 percent, of respondents

support the idea of Blacks shopping in only black stores when possible; 38 percent do not support shopping in black stores when possible. These two questions provide some indication that there is support for the Afrocentric conservative. However, despite support for Afrocentric conservative ideas, the high level of race consciousness that Afrocentric conservatives express does not fit well with most ideas of conservatism, particularly its focus on the individual. The scale created for the Afrocentric conservative finds that approximately 67 percent of Blacks could be considered Afrocentric conservatives.

Neoconservatives dislike liberal policy programs. Similar to Afrocentric conservatives, they are supportive of self-help programs. However, neoconservatives are against affirmative action, set-aside programs, and any liberal policy. Respondents who take these positions would be classified as neoconservatives. Individualist conservatives are also weary of big government. Thus, the next section addresses both neoconservatives and individualists. Tables 4.9 and 4.10 displays the results of the analysis for how respondents feel about liberal policies. The first question is whether the respondents agree with minorities receiving special consideration in hiring. Individualists and neoconservatives are more likely to disagree with any use of affirmative-action programs. More than half of the respondents in the NBES (58%) agree with minorities receiving special consideration in hiring, leaving only 42 percent support for individualists and neoconservatives. The NPS alters the questions wording, which also changes the respondent's views on affirmative action. When provided information about affirmative action in reference to it being a policy to give qualified individuals equal access, 89 percent of Blacks responded that it was a good thing. However, when the question was posed in such a way where certain groups were given preferences in hiring and promotion because of past discrimination, similar to the NBES, only 51 percent favored preferences.

The next question, which taps into individualist and neoconservative thought, indicates minimal support for these two groups of conservatives. When respondents are asked whether they believe the government should guarantee that each individual has a good job and a decent standard of living or if they believe that the government should just let each person get ahead on their own, 39 percent of the respondents in the NBES support the notion that the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents stated that the government should guarantee that each individual has a good job and a decent standard of living (61%).

A more specific question about Blacks asks respondents whether the government should make efforts to improve the condition of Blacks or that Blacks should help themselves. Less than half of the respondents said Blacks should help themselves, the clearly conservative position representing all camps, while 59 percent answered that the government should make every effort to help Blacks.

The next question concerns how respondents feel about federal funding for food stamps. Black neoconservatives and individualists would be more likely to support a decrease in federal spending for food stamps. Merely 19 percent of Blacks fall into this category but 60 percent support federal funding staying at the same level and 21 percent support increasing federal spending on food stamps.

The next question concerns welfare. The first question is whether the respondent supports a five-year limit on welfare. The individualist and neoconservative response would be to support the limit. Approximately 68 percent of respondents support a limit on welfare. The next question is whether the respondent supports or opposes a proposal for no increase in welfare for additional children. More than half of the respondents (52%) support the proposal not to increase welfare if a woman has additional children. The NPS did not ask these questions. The neoconservative scale created finds that approximately 23 percent of blacks who are conservative could be classified as neoconservatives.

The results of support for neoconservatives and individualists are mixed when respondents' views on social-welfare programs are considered. There appears to be great support for neoconservatives and their lack of zeal for liberal welfare policies but there is little support for the neoconservative stance against affirmative action. These results are interesting considering how black scholars view welfare reform, arguing that it disproportionately affects Blacks. For example, Williams (2003) finds that states with larger black populations had stricter sanctions than other states. She also argues that in some areas, Whites are leaving the welfare rolls faster than Blacks and they have better higher paying jobs despite their level of education. In short, welfare reform places disproportionate burdens on Blacks. Moreover, Smith and Seltzer (1992) conclude that Blacks are economically liberal, particularly on social welfare programs.

Attempting to identify black individualists in the survey proves to be difficult. Nonetheless, we identify black individualists as those who have low levels of group consciousness. We find that less than 15 percent of respondents in the NBES have low levels of group consciousness. Utilizing a different set of questions in the NPS, less than a fifth of the respondents would be classified as individualist conservatives—only 18 percent. In the NPS, 30 percent of respondents did not believe what happens to Blacks will have something to do with what happens in their life. Likewise, only 11 percent believed that being black was more important than being American.

### **Differences among the Camps of Black Conservatives: The Party and the Vote Choice**

A continuous theme in this research is that there are different facets of black conservatism and that these facets are not easily identifiable through traditional measures like the self-identification scale. Thus, using proxy variables

for conservatism, this research identified, through various survey questions, how Blacks may possess a conservative political philosophy based on church attendance, guidance from religion, group consciousness, and their positions on social and economic issues. Overall, using these proxy measures, we find that there are subsets of Blacks who could fall into some of the major categories of conservatism and thus find that these particular areas are major avenues by which we can conclude that Blacks are conservative. Additional measurement tools to dissect these avenues of conservatism are derived by examining the partisan preferences and vote choices of these groups.

Using the proxy measures of black conservatism, the analysis shifts to examine which of the two parties the conservative camps affiliate with, their ideological self-identification, and ultimately, their vote choice. The data from the NBES reveal interesting information about the political philosophy, partisanship, and vote choice of the different camps of black conservatives. In reference to Table 4.11, similar to other respondents in the survey, roughly the same proportions of those within the camps self-identify as conservative. Nearly half of the respondents in each camp are moderates and more than half of the neoconservatives identify as conservative. The NPS reveals different information. Table 4.12 finds that higher percentages of individuals in all the different camps state that they are

Table 4.11 Camps of Black Conservatism and Ideology, 1996 National Black Election Study

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
The black right	31%	42%	28%	913
**Afrocentric conservatives	34%	42%	24%	650
**Neoconservatives	42%	38%	54%	430
**Individualist	34%	40%	26%	824

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

Table 4.12 Camps of Black Conservatism and Ideology, 2004 National Politics Study

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>n</u>
The black right	52%	8%	40%	445
Afrocentric conservatives	54%	8%	39%	320
Neoconservatives				
***Against preferences	48%	5%	57%	304
***Against affirmative action	39%	0%	61%	67
Individualist	45%	6%	49%	94

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

**Table 4.13** Camps of Black Conservatism and Partisanship, 1996 National Black Election Study

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>n</u>
**The black right	6%	15%	79%	734
**Afrocentric conservatives	4%	20%	76%	734
Neoconservatives	6%	23%	72%	470
Individualist	4%	18%	78%	630

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

**Table 4.14** Camps of Black Conservatism and Partisanship, 2004 National Politics Study

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>n</u>
***The black right	4%	22%	75%	489
Afrocentric conservatives	3%	28%	69%	353
Neoconservatives				
Against preferences	5%	25%	70%	335
***Against affirmative action	12%	40%	48%	73
Individualist	5%	27%	68%	103

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

**Table 4.15** Camps of Black Conservatism and Best Party to Represent Blacks, 2004 National Politics Study

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>n</u>
The black right	7%	5%	89%	468
Afrocentric conservatives	7%	6%	88%	338
Neoconservatives				
Against preferences	9%	4%	87%	317
**Against affirmative action	17%	8%	75%	72
**Individualist	12%	27%	87%	101

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

**Table 4.16** Camps of Black Conservatism and Presidential Vote Choice, 1996 National Black Election Study

	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Dole</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>n</u>
The black right	97%	5%	89%	468
Afrocentric conservatives	97%	6%	88%	338
**Neoconservatives	95%	4%	1%	349
***Individualist	98%	1%	87%	101

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .10.

Table 4.17 Camps of Black Conservatism and Presidential Vote Choice, 2004  
National Politics Study

	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Nader</u>	<u>n</u>
The black right	91%	9%	.3%	363
Afrocentric conservatives	93%	6%	.4%	259
Neoconservatives	87%	12%	.4%	235
** Against preferences	67%	28%	4.3%	46
*** Against affirmative action				
Individualist	87%	130%	87%	70

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \* $p < .10$ .

conservative, in the black right, 40 percent, Afrocentric conservatives, 39 percent, and lastly, individualist, 49 percent. Considerably fewer respondents are moderate.

In both the NBES and the NPS, between one-fourth and one-third of the respondents within the different camps of conservatives are independents, suggesting a loss of support for the Democratic Party. But despite the increase in the percentage of independents, an overwhelming percentage of those identified with the conservative camps believe the Democratic Party best represents Blacks and still vote for the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. So, although black conservatives do not affiliate with the Democratic Party, they vote for the Democratic presidential candidate.

This section sought to find if there was support for the different camps of black conservatism using alternative indirect measures. Because Smith and Seltzer (1992) and Harris-Lacewell (2004) concluded that Blacks were less willing to profess a conservative political philosophy, this research used proxy measures of conservatism. Using these measures, we find that there are substantial numbers of Blacks who would provide support for the different camps of conservatism. Despite this finding, however, ultimately more than 90 percent of those in the camps cast their ballots for the liberal candidate for president.

## THE MEANING OF CONSERVATISM AMONG BLACKS IN THE COMMUNITY

The results of the analysis indicate that contemporary conservatism in the black community means something different from the American conservative tradition. Equally, it also means something different from the conservatism espoused by the cadre. Consequently, further analysis is necessary. More specifically, in several focus-group sessions conducted in three major metropolitan areas, participants are asked to define political conservatism, to identify the issue positions of conservatism, and to identify the socioeconomic characteristics of conservatives. Participant responses from Atlanta

are noted as A, from Birmingham as B, and Chicago as C. It is evident from the preceding discussion that traditional definitions of conservatism do not align well with the issue positions of self-identified black conservatives. So what does conservatism mean to Blacks?

Participants completed a survey before the session began to provide background information. The survey asked if they considered themselves liberal or conservative. On average, nearly half of the groups' participants responded that they were moderates or liberals and about 15 percent were conservative.

This part of the analysis is divided into several sections. The first section provides information regarding participant views on public-policy issues like same sex marriage, the criminal justice system, abortion, and welfare. The next section delves into some of the writings of those firmly within the black conservative tradition and the views of the cadre of black conservatives. This section deals with how the participants view black self-help and some norms of behavior within the black community. The next section departs from some views of the cadre. It discusses how focus-group participants see race, racism, discrimination, and white privilege in America. And lastly, this section addresses what groups participants believe are conservative, which public policy issue positions are conservative, and whether participants themselves are conservative.

## Public Policy

The dialogue in the groups reveals that the participants are conservative on a number of issues. Similar to previous research, and the data analysis discussed earlier in this chapter, on most issues, participants were to the right on gay marriage, abortion, and welfare. Results from the NPS indicated that generally, Blacks are against legal recognition of same sex marriage and more to the right than Whites on this issue. In a discussion about gay marriage, participants' responses were to the right. One stated, *I think a man and a man shouldn't get married. I don't think two men should get married because it's not appropriate. It doesn't look right. . . . It's in the Bible that two men shouldn't get married* (B). Another respondent from a different group stated, *How can you populate the earth with two gay people? And you want to let them adopt a child? They should not be able to adopt children. You should not bring a child into mess like this* (C).

The views evident in these groups against homosexuality in the black community may have helped Bush win in Ohio, the decisive state in the 2004 election. One political analyst contributes his victory in Ohio to the gay marriage initiative, which brought more voters to the polls. Dervarics (2004) argues that black voters are more likely to be against gay marriage than white voters. Thus, in Ohio Bush was able to increase his support among Blacks from 9 percent to 16 percent in the 2004 election. In nationwide polls, Bush increased his share of the black vote by 5 percent.

Participants' views on abortion were similar to the cadre's views and to the right of Whites. Well-known conservative Alan Keyes is quite vocal in his opposition to abortion. For Keyes, a politician's view on abortion is more important than any other issue. In an article entitled "Keyes likens abortion to terrorism," published in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Natasha Korecki and Scott Fornek report that Keyes drew similarities between the September 11 terrorists, women, and doctors who are involved in abortions. Keyes reportedly stated that those involved in abortions are the same as terrorists because "the evil is the same." Another lesser known conservative, Kirsanow (1997), likens the debate over abortion to that of slavery. He compares the dehumanization of an unborn child to that of slaves. Kirsanow goes on to argue that abortion negatively affects Blacks and concludes that liberals and conservatives who support abortion do so out of a racist motivation to limit the numbers of Blacks. Participants in the focus groups were not as extreme as Keyes and Kirsanow, but they were clear in their dislike for abortion. When a participant was queried about abortion, they stated, *I don't like abortion, unless a person is very sick and has high blood pressure and it would be a big risk on their life, or something like that. If they are normal and healthy, I figure they should go ahead and have the baby and give it up for adoption* (B).

Survey results explained earlier in the chapter indicated that Blacks are equally split on the death penalty but they were supportive of racial profiling. The sentiment of those supporting racial profiling from the survey analysis was also evident in the focus groups. When discussing the criminal justice system and the death penalty, respondents were tough on criminals, disliked the system for feeding and clothing prisoners, for being lenient and for allowing those imprisoned to take college courses. They were also supportive of the death penalty. More specifically, a female participant stated: *This country has more prisons. We are feeding them, clothing them, go to jail and get an education. Are you serious, what are they going to do with a degree, put them to work, make license plates* (C). Another respondent from a different group stated, *I think you should be responsible for your actions. I don't think we should feed someone 100 years who has been a menace to society* (B). Although the black church preaches redemption and black opinion on the death penalty is equally split, respondents seemed surprised at how much freedom a convicted murderer had while in prison. One participant stated, *I know someone who committed murder point blank, they worked in the governor's mansion, went home every other weekend, got out, got a job, something is going on, never heard of that, going to jail and going home every other weekend. It is that easy; no wonder they are killing people* (C). Despite split opinions in the black community on the death penalty, in regards to a convicted murderer, a respondent stated, *They need to just give them the death penalty* (B).

### Government Assistance

Similar to the views of cadre and survey results discussed earlier in the chapter, participants were also conservative on government-assistance programs, such as welfare and Section 8. In the previous section, survey results indicated that Blacks were moderate on government-assistance programs. However, these discussions indicate that focus-group participants were further to the right. There was general agreement among the participants that welfare causes people to be dependent on the government. Generally, focus group participants were also supportive of welfare reform. They stated, much like neoconservatives, that welfare created a sense of dependency in the black community. Ultimately, welfare lowered individuals' desire to improve their situations. In one of the groups, participants were particularly vocal in how individuals scheme the welfare system. One respondent stated, *You have these folks having these babies and sitting up waiting on welfare. They need to go to work* (B). This is the same kind of rhetoric used by Star Parker, who wrote in *Pimps, Whores, and Welfare Brats* how she took advantage of the welfare system as a young person. Another participant also talked about people misusing the assistance. They stated, *People getting food stamps, not going for the stuff they need* (C). And yet another respondent stated,

*People taking advantage of the system, people who need help, give it to them, as long as they are not milking the system. Try to see who is milking the system. Investigate. The downfall of people, they buy rims with the money for school. The downfall of the social programs is that people use it to their advantage. Back in the day, public aid, people used to get cash, now they only get food stamps on a card so they cannot milk the system* (C).

Some of the participants believed that despite programs to help single mothers provide for themselves, they will not get a job. They stated, *They do have situations where they can have jobs. They have it set up where they make jobs for some of those girls and have places for them to go to school, but some of them don't want to do nothing but have babies, take care of their old man, feed them with food stamps, sell to the crack folks* (B). Participants were also generally leery of government programs like Section 8 because they believed it damaged their neighborhoods because they believed some people on Section 8 do not take care of the property. They stated, *It's like in my neighborhood. Every time, it doesn't matter how nice the neighborhood is, all you need is one Section 8 house and there goes the neighborhood* (B). Another respondents stated, *They don't care. The government is paying the rent. You have paper flying every day* (B). In short, the views presented at the groups indicated that participants did not like welfare, particularly because, as the cadre would suggest, it creates a sense

of dependency that is passed on to their children. One participant states, *Sometimes welfare is good, and sometimes it hurts people, because it keeps them in the same environment. The children that live in that type of environment, when they grow up, their children only have learned of this little handout. So, they want to be little handouts* (B). By 1996, welfare reform passed, and black opinion was supportive of welfare reform as advanced by the Clinton administration. Participants stated, *They have limitations now. I think that is good for us* (C) and they would be more supportive of a temporary assistance program. *I would be more comfortable by saying we help you get on your feet; you have five months of assistance* (C). In short, the opinions of the focus-group participants were similar to the cadre of black conservatives and within the black conservative tradition.

### Self-Help, Morals, Behavior

Respondents also hinted at the notion of self-help and individualism when they discussed overcoming racism and job discrimination. For example, one respondent stressed how important it is for the individual to make a good impression on a hiring manager, regardless of discrimination and how making a good impression personally helped them obtain employment. They stated:

*It's not like that anymore. I can remember when people of color would not be able to get a job in places that people without color could get one. A person with his color would get a job quicker than he could. If you got a job, I would get one too. That's the way I've always felt. Because, when I went to the Board of Education, they weren't hiring black secretaries and this man looked at me and shook his head, but when I finished talking to him, he hired me. It all depends on you. Then, when they decided to hire black people, Loveman's was the first ones to put a black person on the elevator. It's different now than it was, and it goes on. It all depends on you. You can't put it on being Black. You should put it on what you have in your head* (B).

Largely evident in all camps of conservatism is the idea of self-reliance and self-help. This is also evident among Blacks who would say they are liberal. Moreover, also posited by black conservatives is the idea that Blacks should have appropriate values and practice appropriate behavior. These values were echoed at the focus group sessions by several participants. Similar to comedian Bill Cosby's attack on poor urban Blacks for lacking values which is evident in high dropout rates, high levels of imprisonment, high numbers of unwed pregnancies despite the doors opened by the civil rights movement, in his remarks delivered at the fiftieth anniversary of the *Brown* decision in 2004, these participants had their own things to say about the lack of values and morals within the black community. For example, one

stated, *In the African American community today, black parents do not push their children the way they used to. See more foreign kids in the library than black children. We are in a period where they could give their children everything, but education is not a big part of it, we are falling back* (C). Also similar to Cosby's remarks about those who are incarcerated and being shot by the police for theft, this participant stated, *It starts at home, if you do not discipline your kids at home, do not blame it on the system* (C). And yet another respondent, who is also a teacher, stated, *It's just not the schools, it is the breakdown of our families, it is our parents not getting involved, it is a lot of parents not caring. It is a lot of parents defending these kids who do not need to be defended* (A).

### **Group Consciousness and Race in America**

The analysis in this work supports the notion of Blacks being conservative. However, at least one camp of conservatism evident in the black community, particularly Afrocentric conservatism, is far different from mainstream conservatism or the conservatism found among the cadre of black conservatives. First, none of the participants in the focus groups suggested that race was no longer a problem in America. In fact, much of the discussion dealt with how racism influences the life chances of Blacks.

During the same discussion, where participants indicated that they thought some black women continued to have babies to get more welfare, they also reviled the system for not giving people who are on welfare enough money. They stated that poor Whites received welfare benefits that poor Blacks could not receive and that white people control everything. *It really isn't different. It just has changed a little bit . . . We are still in the same situation we have been in ever since there has been a world, that white man is still running things. Wherever we go, he's running things* (B).

Second, recognizing white privilege and being linked to other Blacks is a major point of departure from the cadre of black conservatives who fail to recognize and address the significance of racism and white privilege. The group's discussion about racism, white supremacy, and white privilege was similar to Afrocentric conservatives who are often misunderstood because they support collectivism, but yet also exhibit social conservatism. Although group participants were conservative on their views on social issues and some economic issues, they often discussed the impact of white privilege. A female participant stated, *For whites college is a birthright. The black community has to work harder and be rougher on kids. Two strikes are against us, black and poor* (C). This is the point of departure between the cadre of black conservatives and the black community. The conservatism that exists among Blacks in the community firmly rejects the idea that racism no longer exist. Too many in the black community experience racism, discrimination, and prejudice on a daily basis not to recognize the privileges of white skin. It is too apparent for them to ignore. For

example, a female participants stated, *As black people we know we have to struggle no matter what we are going through, there will always be obstacles* (C). The cadre of black conservatives, however, choose to look forward, not at the past. For instance, after Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action passed in California, Ward Connerly states, “We cannot forever look through the rear view mirror at America’s mistakes. We must look through the windshield at its opportunities” (Locke 1996). But focus group participants were very clear about their view of race in America. They were also clear about the sense of connectedness they had with other Blacks. A male participant stated, *Color precedes us no matter where we go. Whatever door we walk in, they see our color* (C). Thus, Afrocentric conservatism is evident in these focus groups. A respondent summed it up by stating how they thought a black conservative was different from a white conservative. They stated, *A black conservative knows where we came from, it is embedded in your mind if you get to that place, they understand that someone paved the way for them to get where they are* (C).

### On Republicans, Conservatives, and Being Conservative

Although participants expressed conservatism on their views on welfare, Section 8, abortion, and the death penalty, participants also noted that racism was still a problem in America and that Blacks have a linked fate to other Blacks. Because of these views, they stated that they were Democrats because that is the political party that helps black people. Moreover, there seemed to be a general dislike among the participants for Republicans and conservatives. One participant said this about Republicans, *I think a person who is a political conservative would be always in your corner whether he is or not. That’s what they said about the Republicans. They said they will always do for you, but they don’t* (B). They also noted that they believed that the Republican Party placed Herman Cain in the 2012 presidential election to divide the black vote, *Republicans put Herman Cain there to divide our vote, Cain, he must know something, kind of look like a fool in some instances* (C).

Although some participants were not adept at discussing politics, others had a variety of thing to say about conservatism. They defined it as wanting to maintain the status quo and not making drastic changes. One participant stated that conservatives believed in *limited government, more personal responsibility, having a strong religious infinity* (A). They stated that conservatives do not want the government involved in the market, and want to get rid of programs that attempt to level the playing field for Blacks like affirmative action. Conservatism also meant that people supported states’ rights and limited federal government intervention. But yet, a participant also asks, *How can you say you are for smaller government, yet you can tell a woman what to do with her body* (A)? Other participants also indicated the apparent contradiction between conservative’s beliefs.

One female participant stated, *On one hand conservatives preach against abortion, but they take school lunches out of the school. It is alright for them to be born but it is not alright to feed them once they get here. . . . That really turns me off* (A). Another participant talked about conservatives being against abortion but supportive of the death penalty.

Parts of the discussion centered on people who were conservative being rich. They stated, *I think a conservative is lifestyle of rich kids. You cannot afford to be conservative and poor* (B). Respondents suggest that the rich wanted things to stay as they were so they would not lose power. They do not want to help poor people; they believe people should work hard because they worked hard and succeeded. Participants also defined a conservative person as being older, white, and Republican. Participants described conservatives as having rather strong religious beliefs and that conservatism was *what America was built on, strict fundamental values* (C). An noteworthy part of the discussion in one of the focus groups was brought up by a male participant who stated that it was interesting to see how people equate being religious with being conservative. He goes on to state that conservatives have dominated the term “religious” because they see themselves as more religious than anyone else. Participants also identified individuals in the South who are Republican and conservative because they have traditional ways of thinking; their parents influenced them and thus they continued to have those same views. They also stated that there were few black conservatives, but one participant stated, *I do not believe that all conservatives are racist. I don't believe all of them are white* (B).

Despite the view of this participant, some participants had negative views of conservatives. A general sentiment expressed at all of the focus-group sessions was the fact that conservatives are hypocrites. Similar to their dislike for Republicans, participants described conservatives, particularly Tea Party conservatives, as hypocrites. One participant stated, *Conservatives include the Tea Party. A lot of their images are negative images of conservatism when it comes to religion and family values. I have seen it in recent years perpetuated. They present a person one way and something leaks, and they look hypocritical* (C). They also talked about the fact that Tea Party supporters received government assistance but when they received it they refer to it as a subsidy, but when Blacks receive government assistance, they call it a handout.

Participants correctly identified some black conservatives like Clarence Thomas, Herman Cain, and Condoleezza Rice. However, despite their recognition of individuals in the cadre, some participants believed black conservatives are confused and they also did not believe it was advantageous for Blacks to be politically conservative, stating, *It troubles me when I see blacks as conservative now, I cannot figure it out* (C). Although a participant in another session stated, *Black people are conservative liberals* (A). And yet another participant echoed the same question raised by scholars like Ondaatje (2010) and Smith (2011): *What does a black man have to*

conserve, a false sense of security? What is he conserving, a few dollars in the bank (C)? Other respondents stated they did not think they could be conservative. *The conservative platform does not meet our needs, the Democratic liberal platform speaks to us more, so much inequality* (A). A particularly perplexing dilemma in these groups is that their views are to the right, but yet they are puzzled that a black person could be a conservative. This misunderstanding is worsened by the fact that they believe some Blacks are conservative and will not admit it because of the fear of backlash or being labeled an Uncle Tom, a general consensus expressed by many participants. One stated, *There are more black people that are politically conservative than they are willing to admit* (A).

And yet, despite this bewilderment, when specifically asked if they were conservatives or if black people are conservative, some respondents stated they were. For example, one stated, *On some issues. The reason why is religion. I was raised a certain way and with certain beliefs and I'm sticking to it. That's why I consider myself a conservative on issues such as abortion, same sex marriage* (B). And others admitted to being a conservative because they wanted lower taxes, they believed in self-help, or they believed that the government could not solve the problems of the black community. They stated, *Part of me believes that we have a responsibility to pull ourselves up but also give back to others in the inner city, those less fortunate* (C). And *I am not totally convinced that the government can solve the problems, it starts at home* (A).

A recurring theme in every focus group was linked fate, the idea that Blacks share a common bond and that Blacks have a responsibility to give back to others in the community. So despite the fact that participants had conservative views on public-policy issues or the fact that they believed people should have high morals, they also believed in linked fate, as one participant stated, *I am my brother's keeper* (A). Similar to the survey results, they also talked about how Blacks should support black businesses. While the cadre of black conservatives would say that a black conservative is the same as a white conservative, participants disagreed. A male participant stated, *They are similar but as a black person they always think about their people . . . when it comes to things that affect your race. African American conservatives are different, they believe in giving back, being involved, they believe they should make a difference* (C).

Very different from the previous focus group participants' suggestion that Blacks have a responsibility to help others and give back, there were very few survey respondents who could be classified as individualist conservatives, only 18 percent. Furthermore, noted black individualist conservatives like Wortham are not as visible as others in the cadre. Thus, while giving back to the community was important to some focus group participants, it was surprising to hear several participants express the sentiment of individualist conservatives. A Chicago participant disliked the idea of being labeled as part of a group. The female participant stated, *I do not want*

to be labeled into a whole group thing, I want to be seen as individual. I am a black person but that is not who I am as a person (C). Another participant in the same group went on to talk about race in America. The person stated, *If we want them to look at us without any color, why do we keep putting it into their face, stop making differences because of race* (C). So although some participants in the groups spoke of closeness to other Blacks and notions of collectivism, these participants did not think in these terms.

Although the views of the participants were similar to the views of Blacks in the surveys, Blacks in the focus-group sessions expressed uncertainty and uneasiness with being labeled conservative. A female respondent from one focus group stated,

*I am not politically conservative. I try to weigh things out between the two. I am moderate, middle leaning mostly toward being liberal. Now, I am not conservative on abortion. I believe it is up to the woman. Although I prefer a woman not to have an abortion. I am not politically conservative because I believe people especially African Americans may need a helping hand because we are passed over on certain things. . . . Based on some people who are conservative, they want to cut programs out. I believe people need help. I work a full time job and I still struggle. But someone working the same job as me, but a different color, they would make more money, get a promotion faster and I am equally skilled. In the end, I believe we need those programs that conservatives want to cut, especially for Africans Americans. Because I lean more towards the bleeding heart social services needs of the community. So I cannot be conservative. I think I am more liberal I have a little conservative belief on social programs. I believe there are different ways to help. Sometimes we handicap people by extending too much help. This is where I may be a little bit more conservative, not that I do not believe in programs . . . I have seen it where it handicaps people taking away motivation to achieve and be more responsible. It really hurts our people* (C).

And another participant stated,

*No, somewhat not totally politically conservative. I am moderate . . . my political views are not totally democrat or republican. It is dependent upon the topic or issue. Sometimes I am not one way or the other. But just understanding the history African Americans used to be Republican was a flip flop. I am not one particular breed. I have a lot of conflict. I cannot side with one side or another. I am trying to find my way. I am finding a happy medium. Some things I lean to the left. Sometimes I lean to the right. What is most important is to do right by your people* (C).

## BLACK CONSERVATIVE AND REPUBLICAN

Although the focus of this book is on black conservatism, the ultimate question becomes, why do Blacks who identify as conservative and espouse conservative views which are sometimes to the right of Whites and Republicans continue to vote Democrat? Although attempting to adequately address this question is beyond the scope of this book and it is not the main thesis of the book, I will very briefly provide several explanations for this failure for black conservatives in the community to also be Republican. Philpot (2007) and Fauntroy (2007) do, however, focus exclusively on the relationship between Blacks and Republicans.

Focus group participants expressed that there is a disconnection between their conscience and how they vote. For example, one participant expressed that she was against abortion but would vote for a candidate that was pro-choice because she wanted women to have a choice. She went on to state that she believes in marriage and tradition, but when it comes to the political realm, she has to vote differently. In the same group, another woman stated that she was a moderate libertarian but when she voted, she chose the lesser of the two evils. She states, *I'm not esteeming the Democratic party is the savior of the black race, or the savior of mankind, or whatever, but as I said before, I believe politically, that we're very flawed as a people, and to espouse one thing, knowing good and well you can't live up to it, is just wrong, and if you espouse it, just be real with it. And the Republican Party has not been genuine in how they ran the country, whereas, the Democratic Party hasn't been genuine either, but I find less of a contradiction with Democrats and I vote Democrat (A).*

Black political thought and black political behavior are extremely complex. Furthermore, the relationship between Blacks and the Democratic and Republican parties is tenuous and strained. For example, historically when Blacks first began to support the Republican Party during Reconstruction, there was not overwhelming support for the party initially. Neither party has had authentic support from Blacks then or now. Instead, a large portion of Blacks would say that their support of either party during a certain time is because one party did more to assist Blacks, not that it was much more, just more. As such, as the participants suggest, party choice is the lesser of the two evils. Therefore, there is not a mandate for black support for the Democratic Party. Instead, what it states is that if the Democratic Party is not careful, there is a possibility for Blacks to opt out of the party in support of other candidates, Republicans or independents. In fact, Walton (1985) argues that black Democratic attachment is overstated. Smith and Seltzer (1992) also note that Blacks were extremely dissatisfied with how the Democratic Party treated Jesse Jackson in his bid for the nomination in 1984 and 1988. They also speculated about a black shift away from the Democratic Party and possibly to the Republicans or a third party. Even after overwhelming support for the 1992 Democratic

presidential candidate, Bill Clinton, both Clinton and the Democratic Party muted the race issue in the 1990s. Clinton did so by distancing himself from Jesse Jackson, by abandoning Lani Guinier's nomination, by adopting a tough anticrime platform that also reminded voters in advertisements that the former Governor Bill Clinton was supportive of the death penalty, despite its disparate impact on Blacks. Nevertheless, black support for the Democratic Party is not monolithic and Blacks do support other parties besides Democrats. More recently, Bositis (2004) concludes that black public opinion is not as uniform as political observers thought.

Up until 1964, nearly 25 percent of Blacks continued to identify with the Republican Party (Bositis 2004). However, the Goldwater candidacy during the civil rights movement severely weakened the Republican Party's credibility with Blacks, as did the flyers sent out by Republican supporters to split the black vote for the Democratic Party. Flyers sent in the form of a telegram urged black voters to choose Dr. King as a write-in candidate for president. Similar schemes occurred during the Jimmy Carter candidacy and the George H. W. Bush presidency when Republicans schemed against Carter by sending a telegram that described an incident where Blacks attempted to integrate Carter's church. It allegedly exposed the inconsistencies in Carter's views on civil rights and it accused him of not being able to handle the affairs of his church. This scheme failed to divert the black vote away from the Democratic Party. The Republican scheme during the 2004 election did work by making homosexual marriage an election issue.

The Democratic Party has done its share to lose the black vote, however. The decrease in the number of black convention delegates from 1972 to 1976 caused great alarm among Blacks. This decrease of approximately 15 percent occurred at the same time there was a 4.2 percent increase in black convention delegates at the Republican convention (Walton 1985). In an attempt to adopt a Southern strategy, the Democratic Party opened itself up to a black revolt with the Jesse Jackson candidacy in 1984 and 1988. A party revolt among Blacks during the 1980s represented a new strategy that did not occur during Reconstruction, when Blacks supported the Republican Party. More recently, the failure of Democratic candidates to take aggressive stances on civil rights issues renders them vulnerable to a loss of black support. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies reported an erosion of black support for the Democratic Party, particularly among those aged 18 to 25. While in aggregate, 80 percent of Blacks identify as Democrats in 2002, only 54 percent of respondents aged 18 to 25 support the party. Of the 80 percent of Democratic supporters, only 65 percent clearly identified with the Democrats; 15 percent were independents who leaned toward the Democrats (Bositis 2004).

Blacks who identified with the Republican Party remained stable ranging between 5 and 10 percent since 1992. There were also a record number of Blacks at the 2004 Republican National Convention (Bositis 2004). Further evidence of black support for Republicans is that nearly 20 percent of

Blacks aged 18 to 25 self-identified as Republicans in 2002, but they were weak identifiers who changed when the Republican Party adopted a policy or made a statement that alienated them.

The larger question is: Why do so few black conservatives identify as Republican and/or vote for Republicans? Put differently, if Blacks are not monolithic ideologically, why do they vote monolithically? There are several responses to these questions. Primarily, this work finds that black conservatism is not necessarily political. In fact, although black conservatism has existed for quite some time, historically those black conservatives were more interested in economic development and empowerment for Blacks rather than political power. A prime example would be Booker T. Washington. A prominent black conservative, Washington believed and supported incremental change in race relations in America. He also believed that Blacks should concentrate on learning a trade or a skill to ensure economic security. Furthermore, if one examines the speech made by Minister Louis Farrakhan at the Million Man March in 1995, of the entire 20-page transcript, although references are made to politics and voting, it is done less than 10 times. There is no inertia on the part of black conservatives politically, however, especially the black right. Small portions of Blacks do vote Republican, which may be the black right.

Second, the lack of Republican support by Blacks is a result of the Republican Party's image among Blacks (Philpot 2007). Blacks view Republicans as the party of racial conservatism who run racialized campaigns. For example, Hancock (2004) reviews the racial and sexual nature of welfare reform debate in 1996. She concludes that the framing of the issue was around the "black welfare queen" who did not want to get a job. When Blacks see images such as these emanating from the Republican Party, the lack of support from Blacks is aptly understood. Blacks' views of the Republican Party are fixed and rooted in the party's lack of support for affirmative action. Philpot (2007) finds that when discussing partisanship, race is more salient to Blacks while class is more salient to Whites. In short, she concludes that although the party attempted to change its image in the 2000 election by parading large numbers of Blacks at the convention, their positions did not change; thus, their image among black voters did not change. As such, as long as Blacks view the party through the lens of being racially conservative, their support will remain minimal.

Third, the portrait of the black conservative revealed that a large proportion of them were from the working class. With that in mind, it is difficult to imagine working-class Blacks supporting a party that is not only conservative on race issues, but is also perceived as the party of the rich. It would not only be antithetical to their racial interests to vote Republican but also to their class interests.

Fourth, Walters (1988) and Smith and Seltzer (1992) discuss that, although Blacks could shift away from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, they could also shift towards a third party. This analysis would

suggest the same result. When asked the best strategy to gain political power, a large percentage of self-professed conservatives suggested a third black independent political party. It seems that until the Republican Party seriously changes its stance on race issues, the only alternative for Blacks is to continue to vote Democrat or to form an independent political party.

Lastly, and most importantly, as Dawson (1994) suggests and others confirm, black identity is a strong factor in black political behavior (Simpson 1998; Price 2009). The extent to which Blacks view themselves collectively has a strong impact on their behavior at the ballot box. As Smith and Seltzer (1992) conclude, and I would say this extends to voting behavior, "Liberalism in the black community, we argue is a function of race group interests" (148). Who Blacks vote for is an extension of racial group interests. Although middle-class Blacks or even working-class Blacks who live in suburbs and send their children to private schools are, as some would suggest, "living well," too many of them still have family members and close friends who are not. They continue to be a part of the underclass, the forgotten America. In short, middle-class Blacks do not mirror the policy positions of middle-class Whites because of the importance of race in America.

## 5 Permanent Interest

### Politics of the 21st Century

Black people have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interest.

—William L. Clay (1992)

I believe this quote aptly points out where Blacks are situated within the American political system. There are many similarities between Blacks, conservatives, and Republicans. Blacks are socially conservative. Blacks are religious. Blacks have faith. Blacks believe in the Protestant work ethic. Blacks believe in traditional family values. Similar to conservatives and Republicans, Blacks are against abortion and gay marriage. They are supportive of the death penalty, although less supportive considering the disparities in sentencing. Blacks attend church regularly and receive guidance from their religion. Blacks believe in hard work and self-reliance. However, this work concludes that the similarities between these three groups stop there. These similarities do not result in Blacks supporting any variant of the American conservative tradition or the Republican Party. As such, Blacks are not Republican and do not identify with the cadre of black conservatives and some even fail to self-identify as conservative. Blacks, however, are supportive of individuals in the community who fight against racism, discrimination, and white-skin privilege. Blacks are also supportive of individuals who promote self-help and show black pride. And, most importantly, Blacks support individuals who reach back into the community to help others. Blacks identify with these individuals whether they are conservative or Republican.

Religion, morality, and traditional family values are not exclusive to white conservatives or Republicans. Neither does black support for the Democratic Party negate the fact that Blacks are just as moral and religious as conservatives and Republicans. Black loyalty to Democrats simply means and indicates that race matters in America; it always matters. It also means that when it comes to partisan politics in America, particularly for black conservatives, they choose the lesser of the two evils, which often ends up being the Democratic Party. It is not possible for Blacks to put aside their links to other Blacks to identify with a party or a group that fundamentally accepts the notion of white privilege albeit through the lens of religion, morals, tradition, or states' rights. Until the American political system systematically rejects white supremacy, racism, and white privilege, Blacks will continue to support a party that in some ways supports equality

of opportunity. Alternatively, Blacks may very well form an independent party to deal with black issues on the local level. However, this option would only be appealing to Afrocentric conservatives, and not individualists or neoconservatives. No matter how conservatives spin the issue or seek to change their image; most in the black community will never support a political philosophy that is race neutral.

The intention of this work was to reveal the diversity of opinion among Blacks, which includes some level of agreement with those conservatives and Republicans who recognize the importance of race in America. Race is what contributes to the large differences this work finds between black and white conservatives. Data repeatedly reveal that race continues to play a significant role in the life chances of Blacks. As such, there continues to be large disparities between Blacks and Whites on every measure of economic well-being. Therefore, Blacks and race-neutral conservatives cannot and will not see eye to eye. Instead, what happens is that Blacks withdraw from the system by continuing to support a party that may or may not be in their best interest or by not voting at all. Nunnally (2012) suggests that in order for democracy to work, trust is necessary. In her analysis, she finds that Blacks are less trusting in white political actors regardless of political affiliation. Although her analysis does not include levels of trust among liberals and conservatives, based on my analysis, I would say that because of the racist undertones of the American conservative tradition, this would lead to low levels of trust among African Americans, thereby contributing to some Blacks withdrawing from the political system, particularly if they have some conservative beliefs.

In this book, I have offered a detailed account of black conservatism in the community. In chapter 1, I provide an introduction to the topic by explaining the controversy surrounding conservatism in the black community. I introduced the cadre of black conservatives, defined by scholars as a small group of political intellectuals and elites who are fairly successful in being displayed by the media. Members of this cadre have gained prestigious positions in think tanks, on university faculty, and in the media. Their high level of visibility in the media makes it appear that they speak for the black community. Despite the cadre, I also demonstrated how scholars find that conservatism is firmly rooted in the black intellectual tradition. This chapter also indicates that scholars speculated that as Blacks moved up the socioeconomic ladder, they would adopt the same conservative views of Whites, and survey data confirmed this early expectation of conservatism in the black community.

Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the conservative tradition in America, identifying two movements, the early conservative movement, which occurred before the 1960s, and the contemporary conservative movement, occurring after the 1960s. I also identified the basic tenets of conservatism, which included a resistance to change, respect for tradition, and an emphasis on the protection of private property. The early conservative movement

included two camps of conservatives, antistatist/individualist and classic/social conservatives. While the basic tenets of conservatism are the same within both camps, there are a few differences between the two. Antistatist conservatives place greater emphasis on the individual, whereas classic/social conservatives place the interests of the community above the individual. This chapter also discussed more contemporary versions of conservatism, neoconservatives, and the religious right. Present within all camps of conservatism is a Southern conservatism that is linked to racism and white supremacy. The chapter ends with a discussion of the growth of conservatism in America during the Reagan administration which is revealed through an analysis of public-opinion research which provides evidence of the growing support for conservatism in America. The chapter also includes a brief discussion of the new Tea Party movement.

### **Black and Conservative**

The remaining chapters provide the reader with an understanding of the black conservative tradition in America, including the common features of black conservatism and a definition of black conservatism. Chapter 3, titled "Black Conservatism," finds three common features of black conservatism which are evident among the cadre and the community irrespective of time. Black conservatism provides a critique of the black community, is supportive of self-help and black empowerment, and believes there should be economic empowerment alongside racial progress. This chapter also introduces the idea that contemporary black conservatism can be divided into camps based on how they critique the black community and to what extent they think Whites are responsible for the black condition. These four camps include the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, individualist conservatives, and neoconservatives. The chapter goes on to indicate that there are some basic tenets of black conservatism as defined by the cadre of black conservatives which may or may not be evident in more contemporary versions of black conservatism. The basic tenets are a respect for Western civilization, support for individualism and the Protestant work ethic, and an appreciation for capitalism. The importance of discussing black conservatism lies with the fact that public opinion research finds that more Blacks are identifying as conservative and voting for Republican candidates, as the chapter indicates. The chapter then proceeds to provide a history of conservatism within the black community dating back to before the Civil War with a discussion of Jupiter Hammon, the first African American to publish poetry, working up to a discussion of contemporary black conservatives, including those within the cadre like Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. It is in this chapter that the so-called resurgence of black conservatism, which occurred alongside the advent of the Reagan administration, is discussed. This section discusses how the Reagan administration strategically placed a cadre of black conservatives in key government positions to provide an

alternative voice to black liberalism. Members of this cadre are discussed in the next section. This section provides a brief overview of some members of the cadre including Walter Williams, Thomas Sowell, Anne Wortham, and Condoleezza Rice, including their family backgrounds, views, and positions on a variety of public-policy issues. It is important to note that although this cadre of black conservatives was propelled to visibility during the Reagan administration, various universities and organizations which gave them a platform continue to exist. Similar to how the Reagan administration propped up black conservatives, these universities and organizations continue to provide a podium for black conservatives, particularly the Tea Party. Black support for the Tea Party is minimal and it seems to have the same purpose as the Reagan administration, to propel black conservative onto a national platform. For example, Deneen Borelli is the new director of minority outreach for FreedomWorks, an organization that backs the Tea Party, and Lloyd Marcus is a black conservative who penned the Tea Party's anthem. Their claim to fame could be directly attributed to the Tea Party movement. Finally, this chapter provides a more detailed discussion of the contemporary camps of black conservatism

### **Camps of Black Conservatism**

This work posits that there are four distinct camps of black conservatives within the black community, the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, neoconservatives, and individualist conservatives. In some ways, these contemporary camps are similar to the American conservative tradition. But at the same time, the addition of Afrocentric conservatives does not situate nicely within this tradition because of their feelings of closeness to other Blacks. These four camps of black conservatism are similar, yet they are also distinct from each other. They all share the common features previously discussed, yet they are different in how they approach their critique of the black community and whom they blame for the black condition. The black right includes black evangelical Christians who attend church regularly and are guided by their faith. The religious right emphasizes religion, high moral standards, and traditional family values. They believe that righteous living will help solve some of the problems within the black community. Afrocentric conservatives present a dilemma to contemporary understandings of conservatism because some of their views run counter to the cadre of black conservatives, mainly their high level of black consciousness and their belief in a collective fate. Despite this, they are supportive of traditional family values, self-help, self-reliance, and hard work, similar to other camps of black conservatives. On the other end of the spectrum are individualist conservatives, who also pose a dilemma for scholars. These conservatives in the black community are individualistic and dislike being linked to the black community but they share some of the same views as neoconservatives who are former liberals. They dislike Great Society

programs and are against affirmative action. They are similar to other conservatives; they support self-help, traditional family values, capitalism, and a minimal welfare state.

## TO THE RIGHT AND MISUNDERSTOOD

The next chapter which deals with community support for conservatism finds that according to survey data, at least one-third of individuals in the black community identify as conservative and they are mostly female, from the South, attend church regularly, are married, and have less than a college education. I also find that there are differences between the policy positions of self-identified black liberals and conservatives. However, on public-policy issues where race is salient, there were little to no differences between black liberals and conservatives. Likewise, on questions where I found differences between black liberals and black conservatives, a majority of black conservatives still took the liberal position. The section comparing black and white conservatives also yielded conflicting results. On some issues, racial profiling, general equality, immigration, and patriotism, black conservatives had similar beliefs to white conservatives. Yet on other issues, the death penalty, the outcome of the 2000 presidential election, Bush's job performance, and the U.S. military in Iraq, black conservatives took more extreme liberal positions than white conservatives. Black conservatives, however, were more conservative on gay marriage, defense, and border patrol spending.

Regarding political behavior, most Blacks, regardless of ideological identification, continue to support the Democratic Party. Nonetheless, nearly a third of black conservatives believe the best strategy to increase black political power is through the Republican Party. But nearly 60 percent believe the best strategy is through the Democratic Party. Similarly, about 20 percent of black conservatives believe that the Republican Party best represents Blacks; however, 81 percent stated that the Democratic Party best represents Blacks. And lastly, about 25 percent of black conservatives state they are independent, but 67 percent are Democrats, and only 7 percent are Republican.

Previous scholars posit several important points about black conservatives. First, they have stated that blacks who are conservative fail to admit that they are (Harris-Lacewell 2004). Second, they find that some in the black community state that they are liberal, but are actually conservative and vote Republican (Simpson 1998). And lastly, Blacks are socially conservative but economic liberals (Smith and Seltzer 1992; Dawson 1994). Some of this is evident in the findings in this work because there were differences in the issue positions of black conservatives when compared to white conservatives and the cadre of black conservatives. Taken together, this work confirms that blacks are conservative and have some conservative

positions on public-policy issues. However, this work also confirms that black conservatives' positions are different from both the cadre of black conservatives and white conservatives.

In order to deal with what I perceive as inappropriately attempting to assess and situate black conservatism within the American conservative tradition, I expanded discussions on conservatism by examining contemporary camps of conservatism within the black community, the black right, Afrocentric conservatives, neoconservatives, and individualist conservatives. This examination has an obvious limitation because the use of secondary data does not allow me to directly ask respondents if they would describe themselves as part of these camps. However, utilizing the best questions in the surveys, I created scales to identify individuals in the community who could be classified as part of these contemporary camps of black conservatives.

Despite these limitations, this analysis finds that a substantial portion of Blacks who are conservative, more than half, could be classified as Afrocentric conservatives. Fewer could be classified as part of the black right, less than one-third, and even fewer as neoconservatives and individualist conservatives. In comparing the ideological identification, partisan preferences, and vote choices of those in the camps, I find similar results to those in the black community. In the NBES, roughly the same proportions of those within each camp identify as conservative, nearly a third, with the exception of neoconservatives, where over half of neoconservatives identified as conservative. In the NPS, less than half, in all camps identified as conservative, but more than in the NBES. Similarly, in both surveys, with the exception of neoconservatives, three-fourths of those in each camp stated they were Democrat and less than 10 percent stated they were Republican. I find similar results in presidential vote choice. In the NBES, over 90 percent in each camp voted for the Democrat Party. Results from the NPS are similar with the exception of neoconservatives and individualist conservatives, although both of their percentages are more than a majority voting for the Democrat Party. I also find that black conservatives within the different campus continue to support the Democratic Party and to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate in overwhelming majorities.

The results from the analysis of self-identified conservatives as well as from the contemporary camps of conservatives indicate that black conservatism does not fit within the American conservative tradition in America. As such, this work sought to find what conservatism means among Blacks by conducting focus groups in three major metropolitan areas. The focus group discussions revealed several points. First, they confirm that Blacks do have conservative views, which sometimes come across similar to the rhetoric of white conservatives and at other times to the far right of white conservatives. Second, despite these conservative views, it is interesting and perplexing that conservative Blacks also have an intense recognition of white privilege, a sense of linked fate to other Blacks, and a belief that they have a responsibility to reach back to help other Blacks. The group

discussions also noted the hypocrisy that some Blacks see in Republicans and conservatives. And lastly, it noted that there is an uneasiness and discomfort that some Blacks have about their conservative positions on public policy or even being referred to as conservative.

Taken together, I conclude that black conservatives are different from white conservatives. For example, the most fundamental element of mainstream white conservatism is limited government. Mainstream conservatism believes the government should not entangle itself with the affairs of the marketplace nor should the government hinder an individual's ability to accumulate property. In short, they believe that the government should seek to protect private property. In addition, they believe that the government should not legislate in matters of social equity because doing so would violate individual property rights. Although the cadre tends to focus on these issues, black conservatives in the community do not concentrate on these issues. Black conservatives in the community are not overly critical of an active government. In fact, in most of the sessions, participants with conservative leanings failed to mention the same rhetoric of white conservatives or even the cadre. Black conservatism deals more with social and moral issues. White conservatism is inherently political, manifesting itself through Republican partisanship. Black conservatives are strong advocates of black autonomy, self-restraint, and economic self-help. For example, on most issues integral to the thought of the cadre, there were minimal differences between black liberals and black conservatives. Furthermore, when NBES respondents were queried as to the best political strategy for Blacks, self-identified black conservatives did not state to give support to Republicans; they instead suggested forming an independent black political party. Moreover, on almost every issue analyzed, there were differences in the issue positions of black conservatives and white conservatives. As such, this research concludes that the black conservative tradition is often misunderstood because it is situated within the white conservative tradition. Blacks have a different understanding of conservatism. The main point is that there are certain similarities between black conservatives in the community and the cadre of black conservatives yet fundamental differences between what conservatism means for Blacks and the cadre. The same is true for black and white conservatives. In short, conservatism does not have the same policy specific meaning for Blacks that it has for the cadre or for Whites.

This book extends and agrees with the discussion by Dawson (2001), who recognizes the political philosophy of black conservatism, and Harris-Lacewell (2004), who identifies conservatism among Blacks as individualistic and not political. Participants in this research never directly bring up an issue position and rarely if ever do they mention political activity. Instead, respondents talked about how they were raised and their beliefs, particularly their beliefs on social issues, self-help, and giving back to other Blacks. When prompted to talk about issues, they do correctly identify the conservative position, many accepting that position.

Blacks who have conservative positions on issues are in a difficult position. They see the inequality in government policy and in the history of Blacks in America so much so that they are distrustful (Nunnally 2012). Similar to the focus group participants, they see how the government does not do enough to help those who really need help. Conversely, similar to what the focus group participants stated, they also see those who take advantage of the system. They support the idea of self-help in the black community. Nevertheless, they also see that the black community continues to be subjected to the legacy of white-skin privilege. They are liberal because they see people need help. However, they are conservative because they see some people take advantage of the system.

The cadre of black conservatives and their avoidance of race problems are too far away from the everyday realities of the black community. However, there are portions of their views that Blacks in the community accept: the idea of avoiding the race problem, particularly neoconservatives and individualist conservatives. Maybe they do not see the impact of racism and discrimination, but daily life in America continuously bombards black people with negative stereotypes that white people have about Blacks. Nonetheless, some black liberals are also far away from the black community because, as comedian Chris Rock, whom no one would consider a black conservative, would suggest, "It's like our own personal civil war." Without utilizing Rock's language in his 1997 HBO special *Bring the Pain*, what he is referring to here is a struggle between urban Blacks, or those whom he states have cultural practices that are outside standard norm of behaviors, and other Blacks. Rock goes on to make a distinction between urban and non-urban Blacks and how he dislikes Blacks who steal, want to be rewarded for doing ordinary things like taking care of their children, and those who are afraid of losing welfare benefits (Bracey 2008). This class war has been going on since slavery and it continues today. This war between Blacks also occurred publicly years later after Cosby's speech in 2004 where he offered a similar critique of some parts of the black community. Similar to some black conservatives, he castigated Blacks for making bad choices leading to high imprisonment, unwed pregnancies, and a lack of education. Soon afterwards, Professor Michael Eric Dyson, who would be described as a liberal, wrote *Was Cosby Right, or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?* criticizing Cosby for attacking portions of the black community that Dyson would describe as being ill-equipped to deal with their own problems. What Rock commented on in his show years earlier, Dyson identifies a class war between Blacks, the Afristocracy, upper-middle class Blacks and the Black elite and poor Blacks, the Ghettoocracy, which also included the married poor, those trapped in underground economies, and some athletes and hip-hop stars. This work provides an analysis of how black liberals and conservatives, including the different camps of conservatism, view the black condition. It also shows the dilemma of Afrocentric conservatives. Dyson provides a moving critique of the inadequacies of Cosby's view by arguing that the problems of poor Blacks cannot

and should not be placed on them alone. Instead, there are various structural and institutional systems in place which have an impact on the plight of poor Blacks. Yet, at the same time, Dyson, similar to Afrocentric conservatives, recognizes that personal responsibility plays a role in the black condition.

How can both camps be right and wrong at the same time? This is not an easy question to answer because of the status of Blacks in America. For instance, when opponents of welfare wanted reform, they pointed to Star Parker's analysis of the black welfare queen in her firsthand account of how she took advantage the system. However, supporters of welfare point out how conservatives made race and gender central to their efforts to reform welfare and how they framed welfare reform around the "black welfare queen" (Hancock 2004). Supporters also point to the many problems Blacks continue to suffer, especially the current economic recession. The 2011 unemployment rate for Blacks is 15.8 percent while the unemployment rate for Whites is 7.8 percent. The rates are worse for black men—17.8 percent, compared to only 8.3 percent for white men. For black male youth ages 16 to 19, their unemployment rate is 41.3 percent compared to a rate of only 24.5 percent for white men the same age.

Conservatives are right to some extent because there are those who take advantage of the system, but considering the economic situation this country now faces, and the structural inequalities which exist in America, people still need help. There is a forgotten underclass in America. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina revealed that there are many individuals in America who live at or below the poverty line. Some people in New Orleans had no money and no transportation that would enable them to evacuate. Those who were able to evacuate were lucky to have transportation or a family member in a nearby area. It finally became apparent that some people in America are in need. Scenes from New Orleans were similar to scenes from a third world country. Everyone was able to see the disaster of conservative policies and the gap between the rich and the poor. This gap is even more evident today with the fight between those who support President Obama's plan to tax wealthy people at a higher rate, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and others who are in opposition to higher taxation for the wealthy, mainly the Tea Party movement.

This dilemma is also evident politically where Blacks who have conservative views are in a difficult place. Neither party adequately addresses their views, which could be why many Blacks are more likely to identify as independents rather than Democrats or Republicans. However, as the first black president won a second term in office, President Barack Obama, Blacks continue to hold out some hope that he will finally directly address concerns of the black community. However, not all are hopeful of his promise for the black community because the black condition is similar in the third year of his term as it was in the first year. Black unemployment has actually increased since his first year in office. In 2008, it was 10.1 percent and in 2011 it was 15.8 percent.

Democrats work around election time going to black churches to remind black voters to support them on Election Day. They count on the black vote to push them to victory. The Democratic Party also places Blacks in strategic leadership positions so the black community will know there is a home for them in the Democratic Party. They encourage black ministers to preach partisanship from the pulpit to maintain their 80 plus percent of the black vote.

On the other hand, Republicans only need a fourth of the black vote is to establish dominance. Republican strategists argue that the loss of the black vote is a critical weakness. They state that the only way the GOP will be a majority party is if it reaches out to Blacks (Ashbee 1999). And based on the 2012 presidential election, they must also reach out to Hispanics and younger voters. During the late 1970s, the GOP even implemented a "Twenty Percent" solution program. This program was set up to assist the party in its recruitment of African Americans. The argument is that if the Republican Party increased its share of the black vote by 20 percent, it could establish dominance (Bolce et al. 1992). In addition, even more recently, the current chair of the Republican Party, Ken Mehlman, seems genuine in his attempts to garner more black support. However, without the help of black conservatives, Republicans successfully gained the White House in 2000 and established dominance in the 2010 midterm elections. In addition, according to Fauntroy (2007), it is unclear whether there will be a realignment of Blacks back to the Republican Party. While the rhetoric from the Republican Party appears to be more friendly and inviting to Blacks, their policies have not followed suit. Furthermore, Philpot (2007) finds that it is and will be difficult for the Republican Party to change the image it has with Blacks, one that is negative. In short, the relationship between Blacks and Republicans has promise, but it will take years to undo what has been done.

In the end, Blacks have some opinions that are similar to conservatives and Republicans but, as suggested in this research, the Democratic Party is the lesser of two evils. Conservatism in the American tradition is grossly inadequate in explaining conservatism in the black community. Scholars and pundits alike should not label the views of black conservatives in the same vein as white conservatism. Instead, these views are nationalist conservative or, as Austin (2006) stated, Afrocentric because despite the views of Blacks who are conservative, they all had one thing in common, a linked fate to other Blacks. Thus, I would agree with the work of Jennings (2002), who suggested that the black community develop a new agenda. However, this new agenda should address both structural and systematic barriers to equality but at the same time personal responsibility. And the black political strategy would be to support candidates, whether black, white, conservative, liberal, Democrat, or Republican, who will address these items as permanent interests of the black community.

# Appendix A

## FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were conducted in three major metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Georgia, in 2012; Birmingham, Alabama, in 2004; and Chicago, Illinois, in 2011. Due to a variety of circumstances beyond the author's control, it took several years to gain additional funding to complete this project which explains the gap between the years the focus groups were conducted which explains the gap between the years the focus groups were conducted.

It is generally understood that scholars should conduct a minimum of three focus groups (see Brians et al. 2011 and Krueger and Casey 2000). This study goes beyond this suggestion by conducting four focus groups in each of the metropolitan areas, a total of 12 groups. These three metropolitan areas were chosen because more than half of the black population resides in the Midwest and the South. The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that approximately 17.7 percent of Blacks live in the Midwest and 55.6 percent in the South.<sup>1</sup>

One set of focus groups was conducted in Chicago, Illinois. Because of limitations in resources and time, random samples of subjects were drawn from a database of local residents, also known as a sample of convenience. This method has several flaws. First, the subjects were not drawn from a random sample, which makes it difficult to know if the results are generalizable or typical of what we would find in another sample. Second, selection bias could play a role in the nature of those who participated. However, I attempted to overcome these limitations by ensuring that the participants were representative of the population. For example, the 2010 census indicates that approximately 80 percent of Blacks over age 25 have an educational level less than a bachelor's degree, while approximately 20 percent have a bachelor's degree or more. The educational levels of participants in these groups, although they included participants less than age 25, are relatively similar to the census. Seventy-one percent of the participants report that they had less than a bachelor's degree and 29 percent report having a bachelor's degree.<sup>2</sup> The 2010 census also indicates that approximately 67 percent of Blacks have an income under \$50,000 and 33 percent have an income under \$50,000.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 54 percent of respondents reported

having an income less than \$50,000 and 46 percent reported having an income above \$50,000. Despite my best efforts to have a representative sample, I did seek to overcome this shortcoming by conducting additional focus groups in two other cities with subjects drawn from random samples, thus addressing generalizability concerns.

Focus groups in Birmingham were conducted in the spring of 2004. Focus groups in Atlanta were conducted in the spring of 2012. For both the Atlanta and Birmingham groups, random samples of subjects were chosen from census tracts with high-density African American populations. Subjects in Birmingham were sent recruitment letters and those in Atlanta were called. If subjects were interested in participating, follow-up calls were made to confirm participation and letters with information about the groups were mailed out to participants. Thirty-two individuals participated in the focus groups in Atlanta, 32 participants participated in the groups in Birmingham, and 44 participants in Chicago. In all there were 108 individuals in the focus groups.

Each participant filled out a brief written survey. Afterwards, a series of questions (see Focus-Group Questions) were asked of each group and each participant was given an opportunity to answer. In most sessions, discussions evolved so the session leader could not ask all the questions. Participants were provided a small honorarium for their time. Each session lasted for approximately two hours.

## FOCUS-GROUP QUESTIONS

- I. When you hear the term “politically conservative,” what does that mean to you?
  - a. If you met a person who claimed to be a political conservative, what would you expect from that person?
  - b. What would it tell you about the person’s values, attitudes, and perspective on life?
  - c. What would it tell you about their opinions on different issues?
    - i. Social Policy—abortion, death penalty, affirmative action, gay marriage.
    - ii. Economic Policy—government involvement in the economy, job creation, training programs, welfare programs.
  - d. Would you describe yourself as politically conservative? Why or why not?

- i. For those who identified themselves as conservative, what kinds of things influence your description of yourself as politically conservative? What makes you a conservative?
- II. How does race affect your view of what it means to be “politically conservative”?
- a. Is a black conservative similar to a white conservative? Why or why not?
  - b. If a black person describes another black person as a conservative, does that mean the same thing as when a black person describes a white person as a conservative? Why or why not?
  - c. What groups in society would you perceive as conservative?
    - i. What makes them conservative?
- III. Does your answer depend on the characteristics of who the person is? Why or why not?
- a. What if it were a woman, what would you expect? Anything different than if it were a man?
  - b. Would the age of the person affect your expectations?
  - c. What about social or economic status?
  - d. What about income or education?
  - e. What about family background?
  - f. What about religious beliefs?

	Atlanta	Birmingham	Chicago
Liberal	26%	23%	40%
Moderate	61%	46%	54%
Conservative	13%	31%	6%

Focus-group responses to questions in written survey.

	Atlanta	Birmingham	Chicago
Republican		17%	
Independent	18%	7%	15%
Democrat	82%	76%	85%

	Atlanta	Birmingham	Chicago
Agree	83%	84%	90%
Disagree	17%	16%	10%

Ideology:

	Atlanta	Birmingham	Chicago
Agree	87%	85%	79%
Disagree	13%	15%	21%

Partisanship:

	Atlanta	Birmingham	Chicago
Agree	50%	60%	51%
Disagree	50%	40%	49%

What happens to Blacks:

Being black determines treatment:

	Atlanta	Birmingham	Chicago
Agree	37%	39%	38%
Disagree	63%	61%	62%

Opportunities aren't affected by how Blacks are treated:

People judged more on content of character than race:

# Appendix B

## NES, NBES, AND NPS SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey data utilized in this book come from the 1984, 1988, and 1996 National Black Election Study (NBES). Data also come from the American National Election Study Cumulative File 1948–2004 and the American National Election Study (ANES), 2008 Pre- and Post-Election Survey. Analysis from the 2008 data was calculated utilizing the ICPSR online data analysis tools. I also utilize data from the 2004 National Politics Study (NPS).

The NBES includes 1,216 respondents from a sample of voting-eligible Blacks. It is representative of the black population when compared to the demographics from the U.S. census. Data for the NBES were collected between July and November 1996 by telephone at Ohio State University with a total response rate of 65 percent. The last National Black Election Study was in 1996. In addition to utilizing surveys targeting Blacks, I also utilize the National Politics Study (NPS), which was conducted from September 2004 to February 2005. The NPS has a total of 3,339 respondents with an overall response rate of 30.63 percent. ICPSR conducted the data collection through random telephone surveys throughout the United States. Although this dataset did not directly target Blacks, the sample consisted of 756 African Americans, 919 non-Hispanic Whites, 404 Caribbean Blacks, 757 Hispanic Americans, and 503 Asian Americans. The response rate was 29.61 percent.

## VARIABLES USED IN THE STUDY

### NES Cumulative File 1948–2004

- Variable CF0105 Respondent's Race
- Variable CF0301 Partisan Identification
- Variable CF0704 Presidential Vote Choice
- Variable CF0803 Ideological Identification
- Variable CF0804 Categorized Self-Placement

## 1984 NBES

Variable 2100 Liberal/Conservative Identification

Variable 2103 Summary: Respondent's Liberal-Conservative Placement

## 1996 NES

Variable 960368 Summary of Self-Placement on Liberal/Conservative Scale

Variable 960417 Party Identification

Variable 960487 Self-Placement on Government Aid to Blacks Scale

Variable 960496 Self-Placement on Spending on Food Stamps

Variable 961193 Laws Protecting Homosexuals

Variable 961197 Favor/Oppose the Death Penalty

## 1996 NBES

QG1 Liberal/conservative scale

QG2 Partisan identification

QK1 Should Blacks form own party

Q7SA Self-Placement on government aid to Blacks

QR3 Number of minorities in Congress should equal population

QS7A Scale—opinion on government involvement

QS8A Scale—opinion on government effort

QU1 Religion important in your life

QU1A What happens to Blacks

QU2 Guidance from religion

QU3 Church attendance

QV2 Think about being Black

QV4 Strategy to increase political power

QW1 Happens to Blacks has a lot to do with me

QW2 Being Black determines how you are treated

QW3 Opportunities aren't affected by treatment of Blacks

QW4 Judged on character more than race

QY1C Age

QY2A Marital status

QY3 Education

QZ2 Sex of respondent

C4 Presidential vote choice

E2A Blacks should attend Afrocentric schools

E2B Blacks vote for black candidates

E2C Blacks only shop in Black stores

E5 Progress made in ending discrimination

E9B Minorities given special consideration in hiring

F1 Party affiliation

H1 Laws protecting homosexuals

H2 Death penalty  
M1B Food stamp spending  
L1A Change welfare—no increase for another child  
L2 Five-year lifetime limit on welfare benefits

## 2004 NATIONAL POLITICS STUDY

RACE5CAT Race in 5 categories  
Age  
QA2 Gender  
EDUC5CAT Education in 5 categories  
QA22 Marital status  
QB4\_B Party best help Blacks  
QB5 Liberal or conservative  
QB6 Republican or Democrat  
QB8A Presidential vote choice  
QB10 Approval of President Bush's job  
QB12 Fairness of '00 presidential election  
QC6 Respondent's race fate will affect respondent's fate  
QC7\_B Closeness to Blacks  
QC8 Maintain culture or melting pot  
QC10\_B Approve interracial marriage in family  
QC10\_E Blacks should work hard like Irish/Italian/Jew w/o favors  
QD1\_B Proud to be American  
QD1\_C America land of opportunity—work hard to succeed  
QD1\_F War necessary to put other nations in their place  
QD1\_H Things about America today make me ashamed  
QD2 How American flag flying makes respondent feel  
QD4\_A Free speech for all groups, even if insulting  
QD4\_D Imprison noncitizen indefinitely if terrorist suspect  
QD4\_E Stop/arrest r/e minority if more likely to commit crime  
QD5 How strongly favor preferences in hiring and promotion  
QD6 How strongly favor death penalty for murder conviction  
QD7 Men/women equal roles or woman place in home  
QD8\_E Immigrants take jobs away from American born  
QD9 Increase immigration?  
QD10 U.S. military in Iraq—right/wrong?  
QD11 Should same-sex couples legally marry?  
QD12\_A Government spending—public education  
QD12\_C Government spending—defense spending  
QD12\_G Government spending—patrol border  
QD13 Affirmative action—good/bad?  
QE2 Religiosity  
QE3 How often attend religious services

QR3 Congressional election rules

Variables used to create scales for the camps of black conservatives

**NBES**

V081102 Respondent race

V083069 Liberal/conservative self-placement

V083098X Respondents party identification

V085195 Presidential candidate for whom respondent voted

**Black Right Scale**

QU1 Religion important in your life

QU2 Guidance from religion

QU3 Church attendance

**Afrocentric Conservative Scale**

E2A Blacks should attend Afrocentric schools

E2B Blacks vote for black candidates

E2C Blacks only shop in Black stores

**Neoconservative Scale**

E9B Minorities given special consideration in hiring

M1B Food stamp spending

L2 Five-year lifetime limit on welfare benefits

L1A Change welfare—no increase for another child

QS7A Scale—opinion on government involvement

QS8A Scale—opinion on government effort

**Individualist Scale**

QW1 Happens to Blacks has a lot to do with me

QW2 Being Black determines how you are treated

QW3 Opportunities aren't affected by treatment of Blacks

QW4 Judged on character more than race

**NPS**

**Black Right Scale**

QE2 Religiosity

QE2 Religiosity

**Individualist Scale**

QC6 Respondent's race fate will affect respondent's fate

QC7\_B Closeness to Blacks

QC8 Maintain culture or melting pot

# Notes

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Both authors address how both classes of Blacks, the middle and lower class, draw on the government. The black middle class relies on the expansion of the government and affirmative action programs for economic opportunities and the lower class because of social-welfare spending.

## NOTES TO APPENDIX A

1. See U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010. Regional Distribution of the Population by Sex, for Black Alone and White Alone, Not Hispanic: 2010.
2. See U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010. Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over by Sex, for Black Alone and White Alone, Not Hispanic: 2010.
3. See U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010. Total Money Income of Households by Type.

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