**Chapter 14: Minority Groups and U.S. Society: Themes, Patterns, and the Future**

[Norrander, B. & Manzano, S. (2010). Minority Group Opinion in the U.S. States.](http://spa.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/10/4/446?ijkey=/uWHsX8xhHNbM&keytype=ref&siteid=spspa) *[State Politics & Policy Quarterly, 10](http://spa.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/10/4/446?ijkey=/uWHsX8xhHNbM&keytype=ref&siteid=spspa)*[(4), 446-483.](http://spa.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/10/4/446?ijkey=/uWHsX8xhHNbM&keytype=ref&siteid=spspa)

This work looks at opinions regarding politics in the United States. The added perk of this work is that the reader gets to read about what minority groups have to offer regarding U.S. political polarization. This work delves into the common misnomer that all minorities are simply just liberals, therefore lack political will.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some of the common misconceptions about minority groups and political polarization?
2. How did the author address the assumption made by most Americans that minorities think in a vacuum, as a homogenous group?

[Guajardo, S.A. (1996). Minority Employment in U.S. Federal Agencies: Continuity and Change. *Public Personnel Management*, *25*(2), 199-208.](http://ppm.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/25/2/199?ijkey=JZuselMGissNM&keytype=ref&siteid=spppm)

Federal Agencies have not always held a reputation for being melting pots of change. What this work does is present the way that change and continuity of change is taking shape within Federal employment.

Questions to Consider:

1. What federal agencies were included in this study? What types of work positions are discussed in this work?
2. What would Simmel have to say about or contribute to this research? Consider other classical theorists.

[Jalata, A. (2002).Revisiting the Black Struggle: Lesson for the 21st Century. *Journal of Black Studies, 33*(1), 86-111.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/33/1/86?ijkey=HVGJO8n55jWYw&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

This article examines the successes and failures of African Americans in achieving equality in the United States. Specifically, it looks at why the Black movement was able to legally eliminate direct institutional racism, but why it was unable to eliminate indirect institutional racism.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some examples of "direct" and "indirect" institutional racism?
2. What does the author suggest to help aid in the struggle for economic development, self-determination, and multicultural democracy?

[Johnson, K.(2004). Law and Politics in Post-Modern California: Coalition or Conflict between African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latina/os? *Ethnicities, 4*(3), 381-394.](http://etn.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/4/3/381?ijkey=4saZdmoWHGVNA&keytype=ref&siteid=spetn)

In this article, the author explores the relations between several minority groups in the political process, and evaluates the prospects for social change. The study looks at minority groups in California, because that state is often seen as being a "microcosm" of American life, and perhaps reflects the racial diversity that will be the norm for American in the future.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why and how does the author suggest we "redefine" the traditional "civil rights discourse" to reflect changes in the socio-economic landscape?
2. Does the author support a "grassroots" approach to this change, or something else? Would his suggestions be applicable to other parts of the United States right now?
3. Does the author's discussion leave room for later immigrants and possibly new minority groups in the future of American society?

[Germain, F. (2010). ''Presidents of Color,'' Globalization, and Social Inequality. *Journal of Black Studies, 40*(3): 445-461.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/40/3/445?ijkey=JxlHBQZBT.k7A&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs)

This article highlights the persistence of racism and social inequality, despite global trends of racial and/or ethnic diversity in leadership in many nations that contain populations that are racially and ethnically dissimilar. A central feature of the contemporary global racial/ethnic landscape investigated by the author is “the transnational discourses of reverse discrimination that result from the election of ‘presidents of color’” (445). He argues that accomplishing the goals of reducing social inequalities and racism in modern societies, as promised by “presidents of color” such as Barack Obama and other leaders from racially underrepresented groups, involves working counter to the logics of globalization. His central goal is to examine the presidency of Barak Obama from a global perspective as a phenomena produced by the context of the reproduction of racism and social inequality in the United States.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does a global analysis of “presidents of color” demonstrate? What are the two challenges that Germain argues “remain insurmountable”?
2. Summarize the pro-globalization and anti-globalization perspectives presented by the author. Which is more compelling to you? Why?
3. How did globalization limit the successes of both Nelson Mandela and Evo Morales? What does the author mean by reverse discrimination and how did this impact their presidencies?
4. How have accusations of reverse discrimination played out in Barak Obama’s presidency? How have these accusations limited the programmatic successes of his presidency?

[Read, J.G. (2008). Muslims in America. *Contexts, 7*(39), 39-43.](http://ctx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/7/4/39?ijkey=IysLaGZ5GdpdQ&keytype=ref&siteid=spctx)

This article documents changes in the public perception of and expression of anti-Muslim sentiment since September of 2001. The author points to the ungrounded nature of these prejudices and stereotypes, demonstrating that most Americans actually know very little about Islam and have very little interaction, even of a superficial nature, with American Muslims.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of Muslims in America? What do these characteristics tell you about Muslims as a social group?
2. The central difference among Muslims and Christians highlighted in the data presented here is of an ecumenical nature. Summarize the author’s findings and speculate as to why, in a social context of decreasing commitment to church among Christians, religious difference has become so important.
3. Summarize the views on social issues as presented by the author. What could potentially account for the differences between Muslims and “US average” that are documented here?

[Teasley, M. & Ikard, D. (2010). Barack Obama and the Politics of Race: The Myth of Postracism in America. *Journal of Black Studies, 40*(3): 411-425.](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/40/3/411?ijkey=mq1KhLiAnQCmg&keytype=rf&siteid=spjbs)

This article examines the perception that the election of Barack Obama represents the “dawning of a postracial era” in the United States, arguing that despite this historic event, “there seems to be a glaring ideological disconnect between the desire and reality of a race-free society” (411). Using the framework of “hope” as constituted by the Obama electoral campaign, the authors argue that there are many problems with a total investment in postracial thinking. “Chief among the questions that the authors ask is how African Americans can productively address the continuing challenges of race-centric oppression under an Obama administration that is itself an embodiment of this postrace thinking” (411).

Questions to Consider:

1. How does not seeing race, a postracial perspective, act to privilege a White perspective and de-privilege Black experience? How does this demonstrate the central flaw in postracial thinking? (Pay careful attention to the discussion of James Baldwin’s critique of John Kennedy.)
2. Summarize the authors’ discussion of the dynamics of race and politics in America. What should an appropriate analysis of race and social outcomes contain? Why is a postracial society a myth? Why is it critical to challenge this myth?
3. What are “the best- and worst-case scenarios based on what we have witnessed thus far in Obama’s presidency” (418)? How have the media worked to sustain the image of a postracial hopefulness?
4. List and discuss the “three inherent challenges to postracial thinking and discourse and subsequent public policy analysis” (422).

[Piazza, J.A. (2011). Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism. *Journal of Peace Research* 48(3): 339-353.](http://jpr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/48/3/339?ijkey=pl1T.5..qqM/s&keytype=ref&siteid=spjpr)

This study examines the relationship between poverty and terrorism, arguing that a central explanatory factor of domestic terrorism in minority economic discrimination. Thus, the author argues, the economic status of politically, socially, and economically marginalized groups is a crucial potential predictor of terrorist activities.

Questions to Consider:

1. Describe Gurr’s theory of relative deprivation, which the author uses to link minority economic discrimination and domestic terrorist activity. What specific parts of Gurr’s model does Piazza utilize? How does he then establish this link? Do you find this compelling or believable?
2. What are the” three points that lend themselves to empirical evaluation” (342)? How does he structure his analysis, particularly the choice of variables, to test his hypotheses?
3. Summarize the two main conclusions the author found. Do you find these conclusions to be compelling in explaining new root causes for domestic terrorist activity?