

The New Deal Coalition inscribes racial inequality at heart of America's welfare state:

- White ethnics (Catholic; unions; urban political machines) in Northeast/Midwest
- Dixiecrats (Southerners seeking to preserve Jim Crow, empowered by seniority)
- Blacks desert Republicans (see Nancy Weiss's *Farwell to the Party of Lincoln*), but a "new deal" for blacks doesn't come until 1960s, three decades later.
- Anti-New-Deal Republicans disingenuously 'play race card,' pushing civil rights
- Note: These fissures in Democratic coalition appear throughout late 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Liberals compromise, again and again, on basic shape of nascent welfare state:
  - Occupational exemption: farm workers/domestics left out of wage- hours- unemployment insurance coverage.
  - Administration of programs left to state/local authorities
  - Non-discrimination provisions in statutes were excised or not enforced.
  - Labor laws were changed to impede Southern (black) organizing
  - Given segregation in military recruitment, war mobilization and post-War assistance serve to inadvertently foster racial inequality

Other areas where government policies help to shape (racial) inequality, then and now:

- Tax policy; income transfers; health care; education; home ownership; subsidized credit to farmers/small businesses; anti-discrimination laws; anti-crime policy; voting rights/rules; census (under) count; fostering decentralization; immigration policy; local patronage/public employment; last/least = racial affirmative action.
- Racial attitudes can distort public discussion of non-racial issues (crime/welfare)
- Some e.g.s of tacit "discrimination" in incidence of benefits from public policies:
  - Elite universities with restrictive admissions financed with public funds?
  - Old age benefits based on age, given a large racial gap in life expectancy
  - Punitive anti-drug-selling law enforcement when sellers are racially concentrated but buyers racially diverse.
  - Felon disenfranchisement given racial disparity in imprisonment.
  - Differential 'deservingness' when those in need are deemed 'like us'

So, what is to be done now?

- Deep philosophical question: Why should we care about racial inequality, *per se*?
- Deep political question: Can/should we try to talk about racial inequality, *per se*?
- What accounts for the deep appeal of the 'color-blind' and 'post-racial' narrative?
- Is a 'color-blind' society possible; desirable; imminent?
- What about blacks and immigrants: natural allies or competitors or both?
- Katznelson's call for newly grounded affirmative action: is it thrust realistic?
- *Obama's Dilemma*: being black, he can't be seen to be 'favoring' black issues:
  - Are black leaders (Sharpton, Jackson) now obsolete in Obama's America?
  - What role, e.g., for the Congressional Black Caucus? (See last w/e NYT)
  - The 'Skip Gates' fiasco last summer, and the realities of 'racial profiling'
  - Did Obama, in effect, renegotiate America's 'racial contract' (elect me, and you can achieve expiation for your racial sins of the past.)