"Two Warring Ideals": Double Consciousness, Dialogue, and African American Patriotism Post-9/11

Todd C. Shaw

This article explores how African American expressions of patriotism in post-9/11 America vary according to whether they are stated in a conversational context that is All-Black, Biracial, or Multiracial. With a sample of 87 students from a large, Midwestern, public university, a quasi-experimental focus group design was employed in April of 2002. All-Black groups voiced a wide range of sentiments about patriotism and double consciousness. Biracial groups were often polarized.

"One ever feels his two-ness,—An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts ... two warring ideals in one dark body..."

—W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

As explained by Du Bois in the above quote, a feeling of double consciousness has resulted from African Americans attempting to situate themselves within American society. Even after emancipation from slavery, Blacks[1] were still denied meaningful citizenship rights by the "veil" of race and racism though they contributed what Du Bois calls the "gifts" of their souls. Thus, American racism imposed an identity dilemma upon African Americans and affected their expressions of patriotism. On the one hand, moments of crisis and racial opportunity have led leaders such as Frederick Douglass during the Civil War, Du Bois before World War I, and Al Sharpton after 9/11 to embrace a faith that the Black gifts of labor, loyalty, and culture might one day be rewarded with full racial equality (Levine, 1997; Lewis, 1993; Sharpton, 2003). This is called *invested patriotism.* On the other hand, moments of racial retrenchment have led leaders such as Paul Robeson and Du Bois during the 1950s and Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Vietnam War to believe that Blacks must reject traditional forms of patriotism and instead display devotion by fundamentally challenging American racism (Marable, 1990). This is

Todd C. Shaw is an assistant professor of Political Science and African American Studies at the University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Journal of African American Studies, Summer-Fall 2004, Vol. 8, No. 1 & 2, pp. 20-37.

called *iconoclastic patriotism*. These two poles mirror the "American" vs. "Black" duality of double consciousness, though both depart from the assumptions of traditional symbolic patriotism.

Therefore, this article explores how the Black expression of the above forms of patriotism depends not only upon the larger racial climate of the times, but more specifically, upon whether the conversational context for their expression is All-Black, Biracial, or Multiracial. As detailed later in this article, America after 9/11 represented a unique opportunity for American solidarity across racial and cultural lines. The *de jure* barriers of racial segregation Du Bois lamented at the turn of century no longer existed and the terrorist attacks prompted Americans to symbolically unite. While African Americans seemed as eager as other Americans to display traditional signs of loyalty and patriotic attachment, the next section of this article will discuss why considering the racial dynamics of dialogue is necessary to any exploration of how African Americans express concepts as controversial as patriotism.

RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG?

Moments after the terrible realization that the second tower of the World Trade Center had been deliberately struck by a hijacked airplane on the morning of September 11, 2001, millions of Americans picked up a telephone, engaged in the very human process of conversation, and attempted to locate meaning. Thus dialogue, especially talk about political crises, matters (Gamson, 1992). More often than not it is how one searches for useful interpretations from complex events (Harris, 1999).

Prior to September 11th, African Americans took a sanguine view toward expressions of American patriotism and large numbers were quite critical of President George Bush's leadership (Dawson & Bobo, 2001; National Election Study). However, on the surface, September 11th appeared to have changed everything. According to one fall 2002 poll, roughly 56% of African Americans reported displaying the American flag daily, and 50% of them stated this was prompted by the terrorist attacks. By other accounts, there has also been a dramatic turn around in Black sentiments toward Bush. While some national polls stated that 70% of African Americans favorably rated Bush, others, like the 2002 National Opinion poll of the Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies, found that a slim majority or 51% of African Americans rated Bush favorably (Bositis, 2002).

NAACP President Kweisi Mfume suggested that these attacks caused, "people to rally around things we have together" and thus has "united all of our country." One young African American—a self-described hip hop journalist—explained why the attacks caused him to look beyond his normal ambivalence toward America and instead see himself as a "full-fledged American": "Being an African American and dealing with racism from the age of nine, I never considered myself an authentic American.... But I realized that on the day of the bombing, had I been on the plane, my Blackness and Islamicness were negated and I would have been just as dead as everyone else" (Hubbard, 2002). So what has become of W.E.B. Du Bois's metaphor of double con-

sciousness in which the "the veil" of race and racism persistently divides Black America from White America? To put it in Du Boisian terms, did these attacks induce such a level of political trauma that African Americans decided, at least for a while, to fully identify as Americans and thus trump the salient group identity of Black?

Using debates about the contemporary relevance of W.E.B. Du Bois's double consciousness claim as a point of departure, this article examines two key forms of African American patriotism as expressed after the terrorist attacks of September 11th. As aforementioned, they are *invested patriotism* versus *iconoclastic patriotism.* This article will first theorize the relevance of the perennial double consciousness debate, the differing forms of patriotism emanating out of this debate, and then the construction of contemporary Black conversational contexts, especially within this post-segregationist era.

DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS AND BLACK INVESTMENTS IN AMERICA

In *The Souls of Black Folk,* Du Bois made an eloquent plea for understanding the plight of a newly emancipated but wholly racialized people. As a product of Western civilization and education, Du Bois believed African Americans were at the heart of the American liberal tradition (Lewis, 1993). He argues that the American freedom envisioned by the founders can only be realized if we understand Black American contributions: "[T]here are today no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes..." (Du Bois, 1997, p. 43).

Germane to our discussions of double consciousness and contemporary American patriotism is that Du Bois implored an understanding of the Black investments in the American Republic, not the least of which was centuries of enslaved labor. These investments have rooted Black people in the promise of America and should root America in the promise of Black people. As he writes, "the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that some day on American soil two world-races may give to each other those characteristics both so sadly lack" (Du Bois, 1997).

Thus, he lamented that Blacks were not considered full Americans citizens as were Whites and thus were segregated behind the "veil of race" away from the central life, polity, and economy of America—a squandering of Black America's vast potential (Du Bois, 1997, p. 40). Although Du Bois clearly concluded at this point in history that it was not only possible but desirable to be Black, American, and patriotic, further consideration of how Black patriotism maps upon the duality of double consciousness is merited.

INVESTED VS. ICONOCLASTIC BLACK PATRIOTISM

Patriotism or the act of loving and defending one's country is far from an absolute concept, but like other political terms, it is subject to the motives and

needs of the speaker (Bodnar, 1996; Baker & O'Neal, 2001; Figueiredo & Elkins n.d.; Sullivan, Fried, & Dietz, 1992). No less has been true for African American expressions of patriotism. In his book *Jefferson's Pillow*, Roger Wilkins articulates that even in the wake of post 9/11 patriotism that America's racist legacy made him "truly in awe of the conundrum ... the 'twoness' as W.E.B. Du Bois called it. Because I am Black, I can't avoid it, and because I am American, I must confront it" (2001, p. 5). Wilkin's posture represents Black invested patriotism or the African American faith that generations of toil, racial struggle, and societal contributions might one day secure a full shareholder status in a clearly deferred American dream of racial equality. Despite similarities, Black invested patriotism differs from traditional, "symbolic patriotism" or "a strong, emotional view of country" and a "positive resonance toward traditional patriotic symbols..." (Berns, 2001; Sullivan, Friend, & Dietz, 1992, p. 212). Rather, invested patriotism is contingent upon group racial consciousness or Black linked fate and implies that Blacks love America but America also still owes Blacks a debt because of their unrewarded sacrifices.

Because of the faith that one day Black contributions would be rewarded, ardent civil rights leader Frederick Douglass exhorted African American men to fight for the Union during the Civil War of the 1860s. A similar faith convinced W.E.B. Du Bois to initially encourage African Americans to vote for the Democratic presidential ticket of Woodrow Wilson as well as enlist in the United States Army during World War I in segregated units. Likewise, African Americans bought record numbers of war bonds during World War II along with again serving in segregated units (Levine, 1997; Lewis, 1979; Samuel, 1996). All of these outpourings of Black patriotism came at powerful and paradoxical moments of instability and optimism that, like the aftershock of 9/11, compelled America to recruit African Americans to defend the union in return for the tacit promise of equality. Therefore, invested patriotism is rooted in the Black experience and leans toward the American pole of the double consciousness dilemma. It shares some of the assumptions of Black liberalism or what Michael Dawson (2001) calls radical egalitarianism in which America's liberal creed is also embraced but challenged to live up to its racial promise.

Yet, when invariably the pendulum of American racial possibility has swung away from a promised Black equality toward the ends of racial retrenchment, frustrated African Americans have at times reinterpreted the purpose of Black patriotism. What emerges is Black iconoclastic patriotism or the assertion that Blacks display devotion to America by fundamentally challenging and transforming its traditional interpretations, identities, and practices; otherwise America will remain irredeemably flawed by racism. In general, this form of patriotism in the attitudinal literature maintains that "patriots who love their country must work toward economic and political change and must be engaged in a broad range of civic and political activities" (Sullivan, Fried, & Dietz, 1992, p. 212). What distinguishes Black iconoclasm from a complete rejection of America or anti-patriotism—though it may be in close proximity—is that its proponents strongly believe African Americans should at least maintain limited ties with American society.

For example, it was during the most draconian period of American slavery in the 1840s and 1850s that Frederick Douglass implored audiences to tell him "What country have I? ... in such a country as this, I can have no patriotism" (Foner & Taylor, 1999, p. 77). This was similar to his 1852 Corinthian Hall address where he asked "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July?" (Foner & Taylor, 1999, p. 196). During the 1950s, W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and other Black leftists promoted the cherished American values of liberty and free speech despite the red-baiting of the McCarthy-led House Un-American Activities Committee. During the late 1960s, Martin Luther King, Jr. aligned his opposition to the Vietnam conflict by re-interpreting the American Creed to include economic redistribution, anti-militarism, and anti-racism (Marable, 1990). At the same time, Hannah Nelson as persuaded by Black Nationalism berated racist America and its Star Spangled Banner—a "warmed over drinking song"—while claiming to "love the ground I buried my mother in" absent of Whites (Gwaltney, 1993, p. 5).

So with regard to the double consciousness dilemma, iconoclastic patriotism leans toward an explicit embrace of African American group interests or the interests of politically marginalized Americans and is less concerned with its uniquely American identity. What Dawson (2001) calls disillusioned liberalism—a more pessimistic and critical form of Black liberalism—or community Black Nationalism—a belief in Black autonomy within the United States—are schools of thought that seem to parallel this form of Black patriotism. Overall, the racial context and climate, as much as the specific ideological commitments of a speaker, determine the strategic use of the two aforementioned forms of Black patriotism.

BLACK DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE CURRENT RACIAL CONTEXT

Despite the enduring popularity of Du Bois' double consciousness metaphor, Adolph Reed (1997) states that it is an anachronism rooted in Du Bois's Jim Crow segregationist period and thus is not applicable to post-segregation Black America. Critical of the class presumptions underlying its current use, Reed (1997) forcefully admonishes that "the imagery of double consciousness connects particularly with the [Black] middle-class stratum" because it describes the precarious, racially integrated work and career settings this class must negotiate. With this examination of post 9/11 patriotism among Black Americans, especially Black college students, Reed would caution that any expressed racial and political sentiments of these young middle class Blacks are powerfully mediated by their class locations and ideologies.

To an extent, Reed is correct that class matters in dialogues about concepts as difficult as Black group status and patriotism. Yet, the "veil of race" is still a meaningful social construction (Omi & Winant, 1994). Not only does race still objectively suppress African American life chances, but most African Americans still instrumentally use it to build ethnic communities of purpose, meaning, solidarity, and group aims (Gregory, 1998; Gwaltney, 1993). Beyond questions of class and other intragroup differences, it is also important

to consider how Black double consciousness is still salient and being shaped by the context of race relations. While there has been indications that the patriotic unity emanating out of 9/11 has improved aspects of race relations in the United States (ABC News/Washington Post, 2003), there is also the argument that the level of "racial profiling" the Bush administration has practiced in its anti-terrorism campaign has helped swing the pendulum back to the "normal" state of things; not to mention that on questions of the persistence of racial discrimination there exists a Black and White attitudinal chasm (Heuman, 2003; Saad, 2003).

Roughly sixty-two years after Du Bois first wrote about double consciousness and "the veil," his demands of Black political, economic, and social equality were fulfilled by the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act. Now almost forty years after those reforms, we have witnessed a fundamental change in the specific manifestations that race and racism have assumed since the days of strict Jim Crow segregation. Bonilla-Silva (1999) argues that a "new racism" and accompanying "racial structure" has emerged. To be sure, appreciable vestiges of the social and institutional racism that confronted Du Bois's era still linger even post-9/11. In the *Souls* essay "Of the Sons of Master and Man," Du Bois lamented how the color line drew a bar with regard to "physical proximity of homes and dwelling places"(Du Bois, 1997, p. 134). One hundred years later, *de jure* residential discrimination and housing discrimination have been abated in some communities. But predominantly Black, economically depressed cities such as Detroit actually witnessed significant increases in their segregation indexes by the late 1990s(Farley, et al., 2000). Du Bois, too, was chiefly concerned with the unequal "economic relations" between Blacks and Whites. Today's post-segregation era employment and educational reforms have ushered in a burgeoning Black middle and a larger fraction of a Black upper class. Still when young African Americans in the inner city have the exact same employment credentials as their White counterparts, "statistical discrimination" stigmatizes them as employment risks (Dawson, 1994; Wilson, 1996).

Today we speak most accurately about the racial divisions between Black and White lives when we refer to the segregation and stigmatization of specific Black communities. Black suburbanization has more often produced predominantly Black suburbs such as Baldwin Hills, Los Angeles or Prince Georges County, Maryland. Yet, there is at least a small minority of middle class Black children attending mostly White academies or culturally diverse and well-funded public schools (Graham, 1999; Patillo, 1999; Wiese, 1993).

The post-1965 liberalization of immigration laws and the increasing ethnic diversification of urban neighborhoods and schools in Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Chicago has brought African American communities—as racially segregated as most remain—more in residential contact with Puerto Rican, Dominican, Chicano, Korean, Filipino and other ethnic communities of color (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, pp. 28-56). In fact the 'boundaries of Blackness' have expanded to include persons from the African Diaspora (Waters, 1999). It follows then that the Du Boisian veil of race is not simply a monochrome, omnipresent Black and White curtain but, in very complex ways,

a screen differentially separating various communities of color from White America. One small testimony to the subtle vagaries of the "new racism" is that one national poll indicated how most Americans were much more suspicious of Muslims and Arab Americans in the immediate wake of 9/11 than they were of African Americans (Traugott, Brader, Coral, et al., 2002).

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND RACIAL DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE

One way we can understand how people politically interpret the world and those in it is to listen as they talk about politics (Gamson, 1992). Sociologists, linguists, and other social scientists have long suspected that given the ways in which each of us is shaped by communities of norms, customs, and beliefs—not to mention language patterns and dialects—there are discernible routines to and outcomes of conversation (Goffman, 1983; Kellerman & Hee, 2001). Talking with others can reinforce, challenge, or hold in abeyance preexisting expectations, interpretations, and memories. It can help to create community were none existed or further alienate persons already occupying divergent social locations. So how do the dynamics of a political dialogue about the War on Terrorism and American patriotism change based upon whether a group is All-Black, Biracial, or Multiracial?

Research has already uncovered how All-Black dialogic spaces help to reinforce an affirmative racial identity (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003; Jackson, 2004; May, 2000). However, the work of Melissa Harris-Lacewell (2004) goes a step further. Beginning with a proposition she calls "Black common sense" or the nebulous but important sentiment that being Black mutually matters to speakers, Harris-Lacewell concludes dialogic interaction serves to hash out the particular ideological conclusions participants will reach. With some awareness that class (and to a degree gender) create varying opportunity structures for dialogue among different strata, her argument that the dialogic process is fundamental to African American political interpretation is intriguing. To be sure, notions of group collectivity have been defined in widely divergent ways. Discursive historical gatherings, ranging from the 19th-century Negro Conventions or Reconstruction Constitutional Conventions to Black political assemblies in the late 20th century, provide evidence that collectivity or solidarity have been valued if contested concepts for many who have claimed a "Black" racial self-identity (Barkley-Brown, 1989; Allen & Bagozzi, 2001; Smith, 1996).

So, what can be said about Biracial or Black and White dialogues? Inspired by Du Bois's proposition that the lack of Black-White social interactions most reinforced the racial dividing line, Anne Rawls (2000) examined the greeting and introductory talk styles of Black and White students and concludes that students self-identifying with each category had opposing expectations about candor and consensus. Although her conclusions suffer from some cultural determinism, it is interesting that the African American, dialogic norm of candor was considered problematic by Whites in her study. Contrary to the survey literature on race-of-interviewer effect, and social desirability (Davis,

1997a; Davis, 1997b), it is possible that at least in face-to-face peer settings—very different from hierarchical, expert settings—it is not Black but rather White participants who will mask some of their sentiments. If Bonilla-Silva's (1999) assertions about the race-neutral and covert terminology of "new racism" are valid, then White apprehension about not being considered as racist may strongly inhibit their revealing candid sentiments during political discussions with Blacks. Such conversations are then likely to be polarized or very subdued.

Lastly, what will occur within Multiracial peer settings? For all the attention various students of Du Bois's *Souls* treatise have paid to the "double consciousness" passage about the distinct separateness and "two-ness" of the American who is a Negro, it is interesting that his Hegelian reference to the Negro as a "seventh son" initially situated the status of African Americans along a multiracial continuum. Keep in mind the often invoked second passage in *Souls* where Du Bois likewise laments about the global and colonial expanse of the divisions by race: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (Du Bois, 1997, p. 45). It is telling that at the onset Du Bois suggests the "veil" of race is a fluid curtain that engenders many forms of unequal double-ness. Quite possibly this multiplicity means others present who also see themselves through the lens of a "racial" or "ethnic" self as linked to broader communities will lessen the stresses upon the Black-White polarity. Thus, candor without necessarily arriving at consensus is possible (Jandt, 2004).

Based upon the literature, one might expect All-Black focus groups to display the most varied and nuanced expressions of double consciousness and invested versus iconoclastic patriotism. Biracial focus groups, in comparison to All-Black groups, might display more one-sided expressions of either iconoclastic or invested sentiments of patriotism. And Multiracial focus groups might display varied expressions of iconoclastic and invested patriotism as well double consciousness among Black participants, although less group consensus than witnessed in All-Black groups.

SAMPLE

To examine the interaction between the above forms of patriotism in post-9/11 America, this article analyzes data from a study of Black and students from other racial backgrounds at a large, public university in the Midwest. The research team conducted a series of thirteen focus groups in April of 2002. It was publicized as the "War on Terrorism Student Dialogue Study." College sophomores and juniors who self-identified as Black, White, Arab, Asian, or Latino/a were recruited. Students were told the focus group would last for 90 minutes and that their total compensation would be $20.00. Among other background information, each prospective participant was asked her or his self-identified racial or ethnic identity and then was contacted based upon the racial/ethnic and gender parity needed in the study. The sample ultimately included 87 participants—42 men, 45 women; 46 Black/African American,

26 White, nine South Asian/Pacific Islander, five Latinos, and one Arab/Middle Eastern student. The typical respondent was a 20-year-old junior majoring in political science. Seventy percent of the 46 Black participants reported attending high schools and growing up in communities that were predominantly Black or predominantly minority, only a third went to mostly White schools and only about 22% said they grew up in mostly White communities. Yet, even despite these tepid signs of formal integration, the continuing social divisions of race are evident in that 61% of Black participants and 64% of White participants said their four closest friends were of their same race.

This sample permits for limited generalization partly because of the diversity of the Black experiences these students represented—e.g., affluent, working class, most born in the United States, and moderate to liberal—and that they attended school in a bellwether state very representative of both urban and rural America. The focus group method is employed to examine the conversational interactions of Black students within differing peer environments. As advised by Fern (2001), the purpose of this research design is to understand how in varying "experiential contexts" participants would freely react to a common set of discussion points about a designated topic—i.e., the War on Terrorism. To be able to control for some of the variance that arises for the inherent heterogeneity of social situations, the research approximated the conditions of a quasi-experimental framework. Yet, the ultimate goal was to build theory, as opposed to test theory, by considering how conversational settings construct shared meanings (Gamson, 1992; Morgan, 1988).

The format for each focus group was that the research team: (1) administered a pre-test survey; (2) asked focus group members to read two articles about the War on Terrorism—one pro-war article presumably written by a White male moderate named Jonathan who lived in Scarsdale, New York, and the other was an anti-war article presumably written by a Black female liberal named Shelia who lived in Washington, DC (both articles were actually authored by the lead researcher); (3) asked each group to have an unfacilitated, open-ended group discussion for 30 minutes ("suggested questions" were provided) in which only a student monitor was present to video record; and then (4) administered a post-test survey.

FINDINGS

Symbolic Patriotism: A Quantitative Analysis

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in the analysis. Questions from the pre-test survey instrument measured symbolic patriotism as an additive scale of dichotomous variables and were rescaled to range between 0 and 1. The variables include: expressed pride in America; hung an American flag/banner; wore a patriotic item of clothing, button, or pin; and placed your hand over your heart or removed your hat when the *Star Spangled Banner* was played (all were coded such that yes = 1, no = 0). Overall this scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .69.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Symbolic Patriotism Items, Race, Gender, and Racial vs. American Identity

(N= 87)

	M	SD	Range
Symbolic Patriotism [a]	.42	.35	0-1
Black [b]	.55	.50	0-1
Gender [c]	.51	.50	0-1
Racial identity more important American	.47	.31	0-1

[a] Cronbach's alpha for 4 items = .69

[b] Black: 0=non-Black, 1=Black

[c] Gender: 0=male, 1=female

On average, the Black students in this study reported engaging in almost one or about .96 out of the 4 aforementioned patriotic behaviors, whereas the average they reported for their families and close friends was a slightly higher 1.62. The respective rates for White students were 2.61 and 3.17 and for Asians and Latinos they were 2.83 and 3.00. The independent variable of double consciousness was measured by asking each respondent whether her/his racial and/or ethnic identity (or identities) was much more important, somewhat more important, just as important, or not as important as being American (rescaled 0 to 1). Gender was a dummy variable coded 1 for female and 0 for male; Black identity was similarly coded—1 for Black and 0 for non-Black. Race was measured as distinct from a second open-ended question on ethnicity/nationality—e.g., Puerto Rican, Nigerian, Jamaican, etc. For race, the researchers asked each respondent to check at least one of the following Census categories: Black, White, Middle Eastern, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, or none.

Table 2 reports results from the multivariate analyses. The model tests what effect a measure of double consciousness, race, and gender identity have on exhibiting symbolic patriotism. As it reveals, there was a significantly negative relationship between racial identity and symbolic patriotism. In other words, respondents who considered their racial and ethnic identities as more important than their American identities were less likely to report having engaged in symbolic acts of patriotism. Likewise, African American respondents, as compared to other racial groups, were less likely to report engaging in symbolic patriotism. Gender does not appear to have a significant effect. Given these findings, arguably, political attitudes and behavior are not formed in a vacuum but are in part shaped and expressed according to group dynamics such as political dialogue. To further explore this, qualitative data is employed.

Table 2

OLS Regression of Symbolic Patriotism (N=76)

	β	SE
Race/ethnicity more important than being American	-.398***	.109
Black (Black=1)	-.297***	.068
Gender (Female=1)	.052	.059
Constant	.746***	.062
R^2		.465

* p<.05; ** p <.01; *** p < .001

Note: The researcher included an interaction term between Blackness and Racial vs. American identity as an independent variable; however, its coefficient was not significant.

Discussions of Patriotism across Racial Groups

Employing the conventions of conversational analysis (Psathas, 1995), whether and how African Americans differently express sentiments of double consciousness and patriotism based upon the group setting is examined. Each focus group participant is assigned a pseudonym and her/his background is sufficiently masked to ensure confidentiality. But for the readers' benefit, the following designations are used to demarcate the race/ethnicity and gender of the participants: (BW) for Black Woman; (BM) for Black Man; (WW) for White Woman; (WM) for White Man; (LW) for Latina Woman; (LM) for Latino Man; (AW) Asian American Woman; and (AM) for Asian American Man.

Akintunde (BM), Janette (BF), and Harold (BM) are respectively business, political science, and economic majors and their families either reside in suburban Chicago or upon the Westside; though originally Akintunde's parents are from West Africa. They are in an All-Black group of eight participants whose other participants also call themselves politically liberal and express a very strong sense of racial-linked fate with other African Americans. Janette, who wears African-inspired clothing, does not like the labels of liberal and conservative but still has a strong critique of the Bush administration's foreign policy and the War on Terrorism.

Of greatest importance is that Akintunde and his group members agree upon iconoclastic reinterpretations of what ought to constitute American patriotism and compassion for others. As the dialogue begins, Akintunde is unconvinced by the pro-War on Terrorism argument and he considers its logic incoherent. Before this part of the discussion, the group merely inferred the identities of the two authors. Harold, who up to this point has been fairly quiet, squarely states the racial standpoints and thus the perceived credibility of the authors of the two articles— pro- versus anti-Bush War on Terrorism. Underlying Harold's comments is the importance of race and one's status as an American. Note how he qualifies his choice of words at the end of his statement:

Akintunde (BM): The first [author] was comparing it [September 11th] to World War II and like the Japanese bias in this country. He was saying that it

was not as bad as that—the numbers don't match up, as though discrimination against Muslims is okay because of the numbers. I didn't see what he was trying to do in this paragraph.

Janette (BF): I hate this slogan, "God Bless America." Why can't we bless everybody, all nations? Why does it just have to be Americans or America? It's such a cliché.

Akintunde (BM): You see flags everywhere. Cars, windows, my mom had one on there.

Janette (BF): They didn't have one up there before that, you know?

Harold (BM): The first one [article] you can take from the standpoint of the majority of White people, because he's never been discriminated against. He doesn't see the problem, while the second you can take as the perspective of Black people. So she's been discriminated against; she knows how it feels. So she can relate... He has no reason to have any hatred, I mean, bias toward the country, because it's been good to him.

In the all-Black conversation above, the introductory comment concerning the Japanese internment camps was a seamless, uncontested contribution in the dialogue. However, with a biracial group (see below)—comprised of Tonya (BF), Derrick (BM), Rich (WM), Cindy (WF), and Ben (WM)—there was an incremental struggle for even basic agreement on the comment about the Japanese internment camps. Most of the group participants are political science majors although there is also a computer science and speech communication major. While most in the group consider themselves moderate to liberal Democrats, Rich calls himself a moderate Republican.

Tonya (BF): I lean toward the second one [article]...

Ben (WM): What didn't you like about the first one [pro-war article]? I kind of thought it was off. He said, you know, "a lot of Muslims and Arabs have been attacked but not that many." I don't know. I thought it kind of downplayed that.

Derrick (BM): I think it sounded like blind patriotism.

Ben (WM): Yeah.

Derrick (BM): Like, he was sitting there saying, "everything that America has done is so great!" It doesn't even sound like he knows half the facts that he's trying to present. Like that part where he said very few have dared to hurt Muslims. I don't necessarily think that is true. I don't know if he knows that's true. It seems like he'd only know what's put out in the media and not everything that happens gets put out in the media. There could been hundreds of thousands [attacked] but no one ever said anything about it.

Rich (WM): Well? ... [raises eyebrows, then says to Cindy], no, you go ahead.

Cindy (WF): Well I was just going to say that I did like the part how he [first author] said that we don't have internment camps anymore. We've come a long way in 60 years since that happened. Back then mainstream society was okay with that. But now, nothing like that could ever happen anymore. In such a short period of time, you know, 60 years is not long.

Ben (WM): But there's still racial profiling.

Cindy (WF): Well, right.

Derrick (BM): They don't have camps now because it's not necessary now. That would be a waste of time now. They've got better ways to do it.

Rich (WM): To do what though?

Derrick (BM): To me internment camps were more to make the Americans on the West Coast feel safer because there was a general paranoia in that area about Japanese Americans. The government felt it was necessary then. If they felt it was necessary now, they would have done it. It just wasn't necessary.

Tonya (BF): And you know, I don't think there's exactly what we would call today internment camps in relation to what happened before because in the second article it pointed out that a lot of Arab Americans have been kind of confiscated and put aside. They've been arrested and held and detained with no charges against them and that may be the new internment.

Ben (WM): [To Tonya] Well, those are the people "suspected" of something, right? You're talking people having to wear ID's? Those may just be people who have dissent. I don't know.

As with the previous group described, Tonya and Derrick challenge the factuality of the first author—the White male moderate—and his inability to see beyond the mainstream media interpretation. However, in this context the author is not racially labeled. The "veil" is referenced but its opposing occupants are not named, even though it bisects the room. What is most intriguing about this exchange is how racial divisions subtly trump an initial, liberal ideological agreement about the emptiness of symbolic or "blind" patriotism. At the beginning, Ben describes himself as very liberal who leans more toward the second, anti-War on Terrorism article as opposed to the first article. He ideologically reinforces the views expressed by one of the African American participants that the contemporary United States is not devoid of the vestiges of racism. Yet, by the end of this section of the conversation, Ben has subtly questioned the iconoclasm of both Black participants. In fact, he notes

in his post-focus group comments to the researchers that he noticed a "racial stance" or divide between the Black and White participants.

Below are three separate dialogues from an All-Black, a Biracial (Black and White participants), and a Multiracial (Black, White, Latino, and Asian participants) focus group conversation where the common topic of conversation is American patriotism. Note how the All-Black dialogue—the first one below—is a seamless recitation of "historical realities." It is an energetic weaving of a shared, racial narrative around a concept termed "selective patriotism" where assertions of invested patriotism, iconoclastic patriotism, and even anti-patriotism are fused. Each conversation excerpt begins with the statements of a Black woman.

> LaTesha (BF): As a Black woman in America, I've never been patriotic for the simple reason that I have a very extensive knowledge of Black history and the history of the United States, period. And as one who knows history of the United States, knows that J. Edgar Hoover and...
>
> Darryl (BM): COINTELPRO!
>
> LaTesha (BF): COINTELPRO took out the whole Black Panther Party, and took out any kind of nationalist organization that has ever been perceived as a threat; infiltrated drugs into the Black community; destroyed the Black community; destroyed the Black family; and just totally attacked what they considered evil acts, so I cannot say I am patriotic. As a Black person who comes from the inner city where I've seen the evils of police brutality and how I had to go school with holes in the walls and no heat, how can I be patriotic to a country that treats me like a second class citizen? Like I don't belong here? And so far as their notion of patriotism, that is very iffy with me and I know a lot of other Black people. But like you said [referring to Jamal] it's a dangerous time right now to be unpatriotic in America...
>
> Darryl (BM): I feel that as far as being patriotic, I'm patriotic. I'm patriotic to Black Americans! I'm patriotic to minority Americans who work hard, not to everyone. I'm patriotic to the people who benefit us as a people. So, I'm not going to say I'm not patriotic, I'm selectively patriotic. That the best word for a Black American in my experience...
>
> Jamal (BM): Don't forget the inventions!
>
> Darryl (BM): Exactly!...We're the ones who made this country what it is...I mean there is just so much. But we should be the most patriotic people because we built this country.
>
> LaTesha (BF): Well, I'll be patriotic when the people who built this country can take control of it!

However, the below Biracial (Black and White participants only) dialogue is not seamless at all. Even when participants begin with a common theme it

devolves into contestation over the most basic of premises—what constitutes normality? Because most of the participants in the All-Black dialogue also knew each other from campus life, they attempted to reinterpret, from slightly differing angles, what constitutes "real" American patriotism. This Biracial dialogue's participants fail to agree such a reinterpretation is even necessary.

Tonya (BF): The whole thing with patriotism I think is some kind of propaganda gimmick. Patriotism, I'm not even sure how to define it, but it comes off as something used to ensure loyalty to the government; to ensure, "Hey, I am on your side." But showing a flag doesn't really do that though. Showing a flag, having a bumper doesn't say that. *That can't be the end all absolute of loyalty.* Even though there are billboards with "United We Stand" "We're together" that's a very powerful propaganda mechanism, and that's how I have to see it because I know where it's coming from. You know what I mean?

Barbara (WF): To me, I was personally involved. My brother's plant was actually on the [terrorist] hit list. He's works for a nuclear company. I don't have to show a flag, but I support the US in as many ways as I can. To me it is a privilege everyday to be able to live in this country. It got more personal to me. I knew people who had friends that were supposed to be at the Trade Center that day. It was harder. The campus only recently got back to normal as compared to six months ago...

Tonya (BF): Normal back to what?

Cindy (WF): It was *really* quiet. Like walking around the quad...

Derrick (BM): Yeah, but the campus was back to normal five months ago. I haven't been here that long, but after about a month I didn't see anything that was that different.

Cindy (WF): Well, uh, just, the overall general feeling.

Tonya (BF): Do you mean edgy versus not edgy...?

Cindy (WF): Yeah, like everyone was walking on eggshells trying not to crack them and now everyone's back and saying it's time to move on.

Tonya (BF): I see. But if we are getting back to normal is that normal before the attacks or a new kind of normal?

Although not seamless, the Multiracial (Black, White, Latino, and Asian participants) dialogue more subtly grapples over basic agreement. Throughout their conversation, the participants voice implicit and explicit feelings of double consciousness—Black and American, South Asian and American, Jewish [or identifying with Israel] and American. Overall, the group deliberated about symbolic, invested, and iconoclastic forms of patriotism and reasons

for the 9/11 attacks. Conceivably this is why participants reported on their post-test surveys that they thoroughly enjoyed hearing the different perspectives of their group members even though were clear ideological differences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is greatly indebted to the assistance of the following undergraduate (or former undergraduate) researchers: Bukola Bello, Clinton Jenkins, Darron Johnson, Jenell Kelly, Maya Pirtle, Lauren Ray, and Keely Stewart.

NOTE

1. The author uses the terms "African American" and "Black" interchangeably to mean persons of African descent who are born in the United States and/or identify themselves as American citizens; although he is mindful of the diasporic uses and connotation of the term "Black."

REFERENCES

ABC News/Washington Post. (2003). Despite a chasm in perceptions of racism, public views of race relations improve. abcnews.go.com/images/pdf/909a3RaceRelations.pdf.

Allen, R. & Bagozzi, R. P. (2001). Consequences of the black sense of self. *Journal of Black Psychology,* 27(1), 3-28.

Barkley-Brown, E. (1989). Negotiating and transforming the public sphere: African American political life in the transition from slavery to freedom. In Dawson (Ed.). *The black public sphere: A culture book.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Baker, W. & O'Neal, J. (2001). Patriotism or opinion leadership. *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 661-687.

Berns, W. (2001). *Making patriots.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Bodnar, J. (1996). *Bonds of affection: Americans define their patriotism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (1999). The new racism: Racial structure in the United States, 1960s-1990s. In P. Wong (Ed.). *Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the United States* (pp. 55-101.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Bositis, D. A. (2002). National Opinion Poll: Politics. Joint Center for Political and Economic Affairs: Washington, DC.

Davis, D. (1997a). The direction of race of interviewer effects among African Americans: Donning the black mask. *American Journal of Political Science,* 41, 309-22.

_____. (1997b). Nonrandom measurement error and race of interviewer effects among African Americans. *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 61, 183-207.

Dawson, M. (1994). *Behind the mule: Race and class in African American politics.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

_____. (2001). *Black visions: The roots of contemporary African-American political ideologies.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Dawson, M & Bobo, L. (2001). *African Americans and the 2000 presidential election study.* Harvard University.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of black folk.* In D. Blight & R. Gooding-Williams (Ed.) 1997. Boston & New York, Bedford Books.

Farley, R., Danziger, S., & Holzer, H. (2000). *Detroit divided.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Figueiredo, R. & Elkins, Z. (n.d.) *Are patriots bigots? An inquiry into the vice of in-group pride.* Unpublished manuscript.

Fern, E. (2001). *Advanced focus group research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Foner, P. & Taylor, Y. (Eds.). (1999). *Frederick Douglass: Selected speeches and writings.* Lawrence Hill Books.

Gamson, W.(1992). *Talking politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Goffman, E. (1983). Presidential Address: The interaction order. *American Sociological Review,* 48, 1-17.
Graham, L. O. (1999). *Our kind of people: Inside America's black upper class*. New York: Harper Collins.
Gregory, S. (1998). *Black Corona: Race and the politics of place in an urban community*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.
Gwaltney, J. (1993). *Drylongso: A self-portrait of black America*. New York: New York Press.
Harris, F. (1999). Something within: Religion as a mobilizer of African-American political activism. *Journal of Politics,* 56, 42-68.
Harris-Lacewell, M. (2004). *Barbershops, bibles, and BET: Everyday talk and black political thought.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Hecht, M., Jackson, R., & Ribeau, S. (2003). *African American communication: Exploring identity and culture.* Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
Heuman, M. (2003). *Good cop, bad cop: Racial profiling and competing views of justice in America.* New York: P. Lang.
Hubbard, L. (2002). *Old glory's new appeal.* Africana.com. accessed 11 September 2002. wysiwyg:/ /Content. 12/http://Africana.com/DailyArticles/index_20010926.htm.
Jackson, R. (2004). *African American communication and identities: Essential readings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Jandt, F. (2004). *Intercultural communication: A global reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Kellerman K, & Hee, S. (2001). Situational urgency and conversational retreat: When politeness and efficiency matter. *Communication Research,* 28(1), 3-47.
Levine, R. (1997). *Martin Delaney, Frederick Douglass, and the politics of representative identity.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Lewis, D. (1993). *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a race*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
____. (1979). *When Harlem was in vogue*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Malcolm X. (1965). *Malcolm X speaks*, edited by George Brietman. New York: Pathfinder Press.
Marable, M. (1990). *Race, reform, and rebellion: The second Reconstruction of black America, 1945-1990.* Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press.
May, R. (2000). Race talk and local collective memory among African American men in a neighborhood tavern. *Qualitative Sociology,* 23(2), 201-14.
Morgan, D. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park: SAGE.
Omi, M. & Howard, W. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* New York: Routledge.
Patillo-McCoy, M. (1999). *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the black middle class.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Portes A. & Rumbaut, R. (1996). *Immigrant America: A portrait.* Second edition Berkeley: University of California Press.
Psathas, G. (1995). *Conversation analysis: The study of talk-in-interaction*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
Rawls, A. (2000). "Race" as an interaction order phenomenon: W.E.B. Du Bois's "double consciousness" thesis revisited. *Sociological Theory,* 18(2), 242-74.
Reed, A., Jr. (1985). *The Jesse Jackson phenomenon*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
____. (1997). *W.E.B. Du Bois and American political thought: Fabianism and the color line.* New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
____. (1999). *Stirrings in the jug: Blacks politics in the post-segregation era*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Saad, L. (2003). *Black dissatisfaction simmers beneath good race relations: Slight majority of blacks think new civil rights laws are needed.* http://www.gallup.com.
Sharpton A. (2003) *Al on America*. New York: Kensington Publishing.
Smith, R. (1996). *We have no leaders: African Americans in the post-civil rights era.* Albany, NY: State of New York University Press.
Sullivan J., Fried, A., & Dietz, M. (2002). Patriotism, politics, and the presidential election of 1988. *American Journal of Political Science*, 36(1), 200-234.
Traugott, M., Brader, T., Coral, D., et al. (2002). How Americans responded: A study of public reactions to 9/11/01. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 35, 511-516.

Waters, M. (1999). *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American realities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

West, C. (1993). *Race Matters*. New York: Vintage Books.

Wiese, J. (1993). *Struggle for the suburban dream: African American suburbanization since 1916*. Ph.D. Thesis. Columbia University.

Wilkins, R. (2001). *Jefferson's pillow: The founding fathers and the dilemma of black patriotism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Wilson, W. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Alfred A Knopf.

Copyright of Journal of African American Studies is the property of Transaction Publishers and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.