Introduction

In 1978, Howard Jarvis, a conservative politician, led what some considered "a second American Revolution" in California. At the time, inflation caused many Californians' home values to soar, raising property taxes to 52 percent above the national average (Sears and Citrin 1982). This increase in taxes ignited a tax revolt. An angry backlash against higher taxes emerged in the public. News accounts of the uprising described taxpayers as "mad as hell and aren't going to take it."[1] As a result, a referendum, Proposition 13, was put on the ballot. It was an amendment to the California constitution decreasing property taxes and requiring a two-thirds majority in both legislative houses to raise future state taxes. But soon after Proposition 13 passed by a two to one margin, Jarvis stated on *Meet the Press*:

> I think welfare is a narcotic in this country. It will eventually destroy the country. To put welfare in the property tax is absolutely an abortion. A lot of people in this country are paying for welfare through property taxes when they don't have enough food to live on in their house. It should be that a guy can go home, shut the front door and tell the rest of the world to go to hell.[2]

No discussion of race took place during the tax revolt, so what impelled Jarvis to bring up his views about race? Sears and Citrin make a similar point, stating, "[s]ome scholars and many blacks had seen racism in the midst of a great many political issues that had little manifest racial content. The tax revolt appears to have been another one of them" (1982, 214). In fact, they find that racial prejudice had a

more substantial impact on support for the tax revolt than did general conservatism and Republican Party identification.

Unfortunately, the tax revolt is not the only example of nonracial anger leading Americans to view politics via a racial lens. A more recent example is the collapse of the 2008 housing market, which contributed to a deep recession that included massive layoffs, home foreclosures, and contraction of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to a 2009 *ABC News/Washington Post* poll, a majority of Americans opted for "angry" – angry about the role banks (70%), the Bush administration (58%), and large corporations (68%) played in the economic recession. But this nonracial anger about the financial meltdown soon turned into blaming blacks for the country's economic woes. For example, when asked who was to blame, Ann Coulter, a conservative pundit, forcefully responded: "[T]hey gave your mortgage to a less qualified minority."[3] Another ostensibly nonracial issue that has evoked strong feelings from a large percentage of Americans is Barack Obama and Democrats' proposal for comprehensive health care reform. In the summer and fall of 2009, we witnessed anger spilling out of town hall meetings on health care reform. Some politicians and pundits suggested that these emotionally charged public demonstrations against reform evoked racism.[4] Others strongly disagreed; they argued opposition to health care reform was simply about policy and had nothing to do with race.[5] All of these examples raise an important question. Can a seemingly nonracial stimulus (e.g., higher property taxes or health care reform) that evokes anger cause racism to play a more prominent role in American society?

Henri Tajfel, a renowned social psychologist, argued that, as humans, we strive for differentiation by dividing ourselves into us versus them to view the social world. Racial and ethnic prejudice is one consequence of this process. It is a phenomenon that dates back to the late medieval and early modern periods (Fredrickson 2002), and it has had a catastrophic impact on society – leading to mass genocide, extreme violence, and open forms of discrimination. Racial prejudice is an enduring problem of international and national importance, and scholars have made significant strides in understanding and combating this human problem. Even so, scholars have devoted little attention to understanding the circumstances that cause racism to have a greater impact on American society. Kinder and Kam agree, stating that "social

scientists have been quite successful in developing and testing explanations [e.g., ethnocentrism], but much less successful in specifying the conditions under which those explanations apply" (2009, 35).

The primary purpose of this book is to examine whether the experience of *anger* increases the role of racial prejudice in people's political decision-making process. My main interest lies in the emotional circumstances that cause racism to have real consequences in American public opinion. On hot button political issues like affirmative action, busing, Confederate flag displays, and health care reform, or in presidential and congressional politics, we cannot fully understand the impact of racism in these domains without taking anger into account. My main theoretical argument is that anger, but not disgust or fear, is tightly linked to contemporary racism in the minds of many white Americans. In fact, I contend that anger and racial prejudice form such a strong bond that evoking anger should activate this racial belief system from memory. As a consequence, those holding strongly prejudiced views should be persuaded to more vehemently oppose racially redistributive policies and candidates perceived to help blacks.

The main contribution of this book – that anger is the dominant emotional underpinning of contemporary racism – suggests that racial thinking can enter into politics, even when political elites avoid using group cues (e.g., racial background). Subtle racial appeals like the "weekend passes" ad that showed a menacing photo of "Willie" Horton – an African American – have proved to be risky if the racial message is discovered, because the appeal loses its effectiveness. It seems we have gotten to the point where there is a strong norm of racial equality when it comes to elite discussions of race, which has driven overt racial appeals into hiding. If so, perhaps the apparent racialization of politics has decreased (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997). But the strong bond between anger and racial considerations suggests an alternative scenario. That is, the conditions under which racial thinking may be salient are more pervasive than scholars may have suspected. Unlike other negative emotions, anger is common in everyday life, so much so that people can become angry up to several times a day (Averill 1982). A similar effect occurs in the realm of politics. When asked how presidential candidates make them feel, people more often respond with anger than with fear (Valentino et al. 2011).[6] The sheer frequency with which people experience anger, in general

and about politics, implies that race may be accessible and ready for use if a relevant judgment is called upon. Because today's battles of race are far less overt does not mean they are less racially potent. My theory of anger and race suggests that racial thinking is so ingrained in American society via emotions that race no longer needs to be salient for racial considerations to impact relevant political evaluations. As a result, scholars' neglect of the specific emotional underpinnings of contemporary racial attitudes has led us to underestimate the impact of racism on various political judgments.

For us to understand why anger and contemporary racism are so strongly linked, I turn to Gordon Willard Allport, a renowned professor of psychology at Harvard University. Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* is widely considered the most influential book written on out-group prejudice. Driven by a strong moral conviction of justice and social concern, he established the theoretical framework for social scientists to understand prejudice. One of the most important aspects of racial and ethnic prejudice to Allport was the concept of *scapegoating*. He stated, "[S]capegoats need not be lily white in their innocence, they always attract more blame, more animosity, more stereotyped judgment than can be rationally justified" (1954, 245–246). With scapegoating, members of the in-group unfairly blame the out-group for causing the in-group's misfortunes. Other scholars, inspired by Allport, also recognized the importance of blame appraisals in prejudice. For example, Thomas Pettigrew's theory of "ultimate attribution error" posits that prejudiced individuals attribute the out-group's negative behavior to individualistic and dispositional causes (1979). Likewise, social dominance theory maintains that dispositional attributions, referred to as *legitimizing myths*, are used to justify group-based social inequality. Sidanius and Pratto state, "[w]hat all these ideas and doctrines have in common is the notion that each individual occupies that position along the social status that he or she has earned and therefore deserves" (1999, 46).

Allport's insight into the role of scapegoating (or blame attributions) in intergroup prejudice helps us explain that the Dutch strongly supported deporting immigrant groups such as Turks and Surinamers because they did not behave in accordance with the values of Northern Europeans (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995); that a majority of whites attribute America's racial problem to the notion that blacks fail to pull

themselves up by their bootstraps (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears and Kinder 1971); that the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India stems, in part, from attributing the out-group's negative behaviors to its internal characteristics (Taylor and Jaggi 1974). Even prejudice toward more recent social groupings is centered on blame such as: people blaming obese people for being overweight and denigrating them for it (Crandall 1994; Oliver 2005) or healthy individuals holding AIDS victims responsible for their medical condition (Devine, Plant, and Harrison 1999). All of these studies clearly illustrate that across social groupings, and around the world, blame is a critical feature of out-group prejudice.

What can scapegoating teach us about the emotional underpinnings of out-group prejudice? When the in-group blames members of the out-group for their disadvantaged status, and they're provided with assistance to improve their social standing, it strikes a strong chord among prejudiced individuals. These individuals believe that they live life by a strict moral code – adhering to the rules and traditions that govern society – while the out-group does not. As a consequence, they view members of the out-group as blameworthy for their position in life. So when the out-group receives rights and resources from government, members of the in-group consider it unfair and unjust. My contention is that these individualistic attributions are strongly linked to feelings of anger (Lazarus 1991; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Weiner 1986). So whenever blame dominates the discourse on out-group animosity, anger will be strongly attached to this belief system.

The arguments that I make here, and more fully in Chapter 1, are meant to be general in scope. My theory of anger and prejudice applies to out-groups generally, and is not limited to any particular group. That is, when people justify their dislike for out-groups (no matter the group) on the basis of perceived negative internal characteristics (e.g., lazy or untrustworthy) – basically undeserving – anger should be strongly linked to their beliefs. With that said, the majority of this book focuses on white Americans' antiblack attitudes. The reason for focusing on racial prejudice in the United States is because the debate on race, since the civil rights movement, has been infused with blame rhetoric. As a result, we would expect anger to be strongly attached to this belief system. Nonetheless, as a point of comparison, I also examine ethnocentrism, which differs from racial prejudice. It "is an

attitude that divides the world into two opposing camps. From an ethnocentric point of view, groups are either 'friend' or they are 'foe.' Ethnocentrism is a general outlook on social difference, it is prejudice, broadly conceived" (Kinder and Kam 2009, 42). In Chapter 2, I investigate whether anger is also a condition under which ethnocentrism enters into people's opinions on matters of race and immigration.

Allport astutely recognized that emotion was an essential component of out-group prejudice. In his definition of prejudice, he included the concept of emotion – "[e]thnic prejudice is antipathy based upon faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed" (1954, 9). According to Allport, the prejudiced individual's insecurity to cope with his/her inner conflict leads to displacing anger and aggression upon the out-group (scapegoat). In fact, he suggested that anger and out-group prejudice coexist.

> Throughout life the same tendency persists for anger to center upon available rather than upon logical objects. Everyday speech recognizes this displacement in a variety of phrases: to take it out on the dog: Don't take it out on me; whipping boy; scapegoat. While the full sequence is frustration-aggression displacement, current psychology speaks more simply of the "frustration-aggression hypothesis." The scapegoat theory of prejudice – probably the most popular theory – rests exclusively upon this hypothesis. (1954, 343)

Allport's approach to understanding prejudice was grounded in the personality of the individual – very similar to Adorno and his colleagues' (1950) authoritarian personality theory. Social identity theorists like Tajfel expanded on Allport's theory of prejudice and integrated it into a group-level process. Tajfel and his colleagues' work on in-group/out-group differentiation helps us understand how dispositional attributions aren't just the result of a personality flaw, but how members of the in-group justify their animosity and hatred toward other groups.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Henri Tajfel and his Bristol colleagues questioned whether intergroup conflict was necessary for out-group discrimination and prejudice to occur. To test this proposition, they devised several ingenious laboratory experiments with the purpose of creating the most minimal conditions possible. To do so, the conflict of interest among groups,

self-interest, and previous hostility were all eliminated.[7] Bristol teenaged boys were assigned to groups on a fairly trivial basis such as: estimating the number of dots shown in rapid sequence, preferring the painting of Klee to Kandinsky (abstract artists), or by the toss of a coin. Afterward, subjects were put into individual cubicles and given a task to allocate points worth money to other participants. They were also notified if the others involved were members of their in-group (estimated the same number of dots, preferred the same painting, or received the same coin flip), members of the out-group, or anonymous individuals. Under these artificial conditions, participants overwhelmingly allocated points to favor their in-group. People favored their in-group even if it posed a loss to both groups, so they could maximize the differences in points between the in-group and the out-group. Remarkably, in the absence of intergroup conflict, cultural differences, or inequality in economic or political power, people acted in a biased fashion. What Tajfel and his colleagues discovered in these experiments was people's inclination to develop a psychological sense of distinctiveness from out-groups – no matter how arbitrary the criteria might be.

To explain these astonishing results, Tajfel argued that a basic function of human nature is to strive for a positive self-identity, and membership in social groups can greatly influence one's self-image. As a result, Tajfel created *social identity theory* (SIT) to explain in-group bias and out-group prejudice. He defines SIT as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (1981, 355). This process suggests that individuals tend to value their in-group more positively, and they maintain this positivity via out-group comparisons. Tajfel proffers that "the 'positive aspects of social identity' and the reinterpretation of attributes and engagement in social action only acquire meaning in relation to, or in comparisons, with other out-groups" (1981, 256). Individuals organize the world into a basic set of categories (e.g., racial background) with people falling into some categories and not into others. For that reason, people accentuate the similarities between themselves and their in-group and emphasize how they differ from out-groups. Consequently, their identity takes on an us versus them mentality.[8]

One way people justify their out-group prejudice, similar to scapegoating, is by using what Tajfel refers to as the *value preservation function*. We already know that people strive for group differentiation to positively enhance their self-image. Another proposition of SIT is that the in-group develops a value system that characterizes its members in a positive fashion such as hardworking, honest, or friendly. On the other hand, the out-group is not considered to possess these characteristics. As a consequence, when in-group bias and out-group prejudice occur, they are justified on these value differentials. These values preserve the positive image of in-group members and reinforce how the out-group differs. They develop a strong sense of moral superiority among in-group members. Brewer agrees:

> To the extent that all groups discriminate between intragroup social behavior and intergroup behavior, it is in a sense universally true that "we" are more peaceful, friendly, and honest than "they." … When the moral order is seen as absolute rather than relative, moral superiority is incompatible with tolerance for difference. To the extent that outgroups do not subscribe to the same moral rules, indifference is replaced by denigration and contempt. (1999, 435)

This lack of subscription by members of the out-group leads to blaming them for their misfortunes. The in-group believes that members of the out-group have control over adopting the values of the in-group, but they stubbornly choose not to. As a result, prejudice toward members of the out-group is justified on the basis that it's their own fault for not adhering to the values of the in-group. When these beliefs form the primary basis for disliking the out-group, I theorize, anger should be tightly linked to out-group prejudice.

One such example is white Americans' prejudice toward African Americans. Since the heyday of the civil rights movement, the subsequent racial debate has predominantly focused on whether blacks receive rights and resources that they do not deserve (Gilens 1999; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Schuman and Krysan 1999). A majority of whites consider issues such as affirmative action and welfare to exemplify the unfair advantage the federal government gives to blacks. They believe discrimination is a thing of the past, and any shortcomings on the part of blacks are due to their lack of motivation. From this perspective, if African Americans would adhere to American traditional values such as the Protestant work ethic, then America wouldn't have

a race problem. Thus, the inequality between blacks and whites rests solely on the shoulders of blacks; they only have themselves to blame. According to Sears and Kinder's (1971) theory of symbolic racism, this belief system characterizes the white racist in American society today. So when the federal government provides assistance to blacks in the form of health care, housing, or education, it evokes a strong feeling of anger among many white Americans. This anger isn't fastened to one specific racial issue like affirmative action, but undergirds most race-based policies. The reason is that blame rhetoric has saturated the racial debate over the past forty years. As a result of blame's dominance in public discussions on race, anger and contemporary racism have been conjoined in the minds of many white Americans.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

This book begins in Chapter 1 by illustrating how the dominant emotional underpinning of racism has changed in American history from a feeling of disgust to one of anger. Old-fashioned racism, the racial belief system prevalent among white Americans up until the second half of the twentieth century, centered on the belief that blacks were a biologically inferior race. This earlier form of racism took on a different emotional character than racism as we think of it today. After discussing this change in the emotional narrative on race, I construct a theory of how anger and whites' contemporary racial attitudes form a strong bond in the minds of a large percentage of white Americans. Then, I propose that evoking anger may bring racial attitudes more easily to the top of the head, even when triggered by an event unrelated to race or politics. To build such a theory, I rely on the works of cognitive appraisal theories of emotion and emotional priming.

After the theoretical argument has been firmly established, Chapter 2 explores the emotional substrates of three explanations for whites' opposition to remedial racial policies: old-fashioned racism, symbolic racism, and race-neutral attitudes. My expectation is that in contemporary America, anger is strongly linked to, and can in fact trigger, symbolic racism while old-fashioned beliefs are rooted in and activated by feelings of disgust. Another expectation is that nonracial values are not activated by any of these negative emotions. To examine these propositions, I utilize two different methodological

approaches. The first is an experiment on an adult national sample, and the second is the 1985 American National Election Study (ANES) pilot study. The first study experimentally induces disgust, anger, fear, or relaxation using an apolitical and nonracial task. This emotion induction procedure allows me to examine whether anger primes symbolic racism, disgust activates old-fashioned racism, and whether any of these negative emotions heighten race-neutral principles. Study 2 uses the 1985 ANES pilot study to examine the relationship between these specific emotions and the three attitude dimensions. Last, study 3 uses the 2008 ANES to investigate if anger matters most in triggering other forms of prejudice such as ethnocentrism. The chapter's findings show that anger is uniquely powerful at increasing opposition to racial policies among whites high in symbolic racism while disgust is mainly responsible for triggering old-fashioned beliefs. On the other hand, race-neutral principles are not activated by any of these negative emotions. A similar effect appears for ethnocentrism; that is, anger, as opposed to fear, increases the impact of this belief system on racial and immigration policy opinions.

In Chapter 3, I move from inducing general emotional states to generating emotion in the context of a racialized campaign ad. Scholars have argued that racial appeals powerfully evoke beliefs about race. A number of scholars and pundits have suggested that racial appeals are effective because they play to whites' racial fear. This chapter examines if anger, rather than fear, facilitates the racial priming effect. More specifically, I investigate how different emotional responses (i.e., anger and fear) to racial appeals affect white support for racial policy opinions. That is, do anger and fear, in the context of an implicit racial appeal, influence whites' views about race differently? Using an experiment that I conducted on a college student sample, I find that arousing anger from an implicit racial appeal, very similar to the "weekend passes" ad, boosts the effect of racial attitudes on racial policy preferences, relative to an implicit appeal that generates fear and the control group. The findings also show that an anger-laden appeal has no effect on self-reported political ideology. Furthermore, using the 1988 ANES, I demonstrate that when the "Willie" Horton story was implicit (not explicit) and most intense in media coverage, anger, not fear, increased the effect of symbolic racism on preference for George H. W. Bush.