

1-1-1999

The impact of interracial contact on stereotypical perceptions

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**THE IMPACT OF INTERRACIAL CONTACT
ON STEREOTYPICAL PERCEPTIONS**

by

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**Bachelor of Art
California State University, Sacramento
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**Masters of Social Work
California State University, Sacramento
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**A dissertation in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the**

**Doctor of Philosophy Degree
Department of Sociology
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**Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2000**

UMI Number: 9973964

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Dissertation Approval
The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

April 13, 2000

The Dissertation prepared by

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Entitled

The Impact of Interracial Contact on Stereotypical Perceptions

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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DEDICATION

To my brother, the late Johnny L. Watts, who was the most influential person in my life. Thank you for your eclectic sense of direction, for always believing in me, and paving the way for my education. I love you, and may you rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

The Impact of Interracial Contact on Stereotypical Perceptions

by

Joann Watts DeBose

**Dr. Robert Parker, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

Situations involving interracial contact and their impact on the reduction of racist attitudes among whites in America will be examined using the contact theory of prejudice. This perspective maintains that evidence for the continued “social distance” between blacks and whites can be quantified in measures of workplace contact. Racial perceptions in schools, churches and neighborhoods provide additional evidence for the contact theory of race relations. Stereotypic perceptions develop when people are unable or unwilling to obtain all the information needed to make accurate judgments about people or situations. Often, the absence of the “total picture” encourages people to fill in the blanks with little reflection. As a result, this lack of reflection engenders negative social predispositions, including feelings of hostility and bigotry toward blacks. To be effective in reducing racial attitudes among whites, interracial contact should take place within an equal social setting. Moreover, the contact must be sustained rather than temporary. Finally, interracial contact needs to be intimate and informal to be effective in reducing stereotypes.

This research is significant in several respects. First the content of racial stereotypes has not been the subject of research for some time. Most research on stereotyping focuses upon the judgments individuals make when they have a limited amount of information about a hypothetical person, usually of a minority or “out-group” member in real-life situations.

This study is exploratory in that it seeks to extend the literature on stereotypes in order to determine if increased interracial contact by whites will be associated with less-prejudiced persons. In order to test the hypothesis, a survey questionnaire was utilized to measure interracial contact and exposure. The research hypothesized that interracial contact by whites will be associated with positive racial attitudes and less exaggerated stereotypical perceptions.

A self-report survey instrument on prejudice was administered to a sample of 135 personnel at the Northwest Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department substation. Preliminary findings suggest contact is a strong predictor of racial attitudes.

The format of the dissertation follows the guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would have not been possible without the support of many special people. First, I would like to thank God for bringing me a mighty long way. I am grateful for the wonderful people you sent to guide, protect, encourage and support me. With sincere gratitude, I would like to acknowledge my support system:

My biggest fan, son Jamel, for his endless love and support. My best friend and mentor, Terry, who encouraged me when I wanted to throw in the towel; my family, Herb, Mountaintop Ministry, Pat, Kenny, Rose, Mattie, Mary, Dr. Moore, Tomeka, Sophia, John M., and the many others who have unknowingly touched my life.

I would like to express sincere appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Robert Parker; without his guidance and mentoring I would not have made it. Special thanks go to my committee members, Dr. David Dickens, Dr. Donald Carns and Dr. Porter Troutman.

Further, I would like to thank Dr. Maralee Mayberry for always being supportive and Captain Hawkins, who so generously volunteered his Northwest Metropolitan Police officers' participation in this study.

Special thanks go to Shelley and G.T., who so generously allowed me to open my heart without reservation. I can never repay the both of you for your warmth and endless willingness to help. I will be eternally grateful.

Finally, I would like to the Department of Sociology secretaries, Veona and Lynn.

PREFACE

Having evolved from an era marked by pervasive racial segregation prompted my interest in race relations. When I was in sixth grade, I was told to enter the building through the “colored” entrance. As a child I did not understand, but slowly and clearly as the years passed, it was affirmed who I was. As a child growing up, I knew that something was wrong with a society that advocates love, the importance of people and then by the same token denies love and humiliates people. However, my parents’ words made me feel that I was important and my thoughts mattered.

As my world expanded, I learned that many others shared similar pain and disillusionment. Upon entering the job market before and during my graduate work, I was increasingly the “first” and many times the “only” African American in the workplace. The on-going struggle of living two lives, one for dominate and one for a subordinate society, creates a peculiar tension, which takes away the ability to be one’s true self.

The achievement of good relations between different racial and ethnic groups continues to be a major problem of our time. The consequences of prejudice undermine our national unity. The “racial problem” often distracts us from seeking a realistic solution for other pressing social and economic problems. As a society, we pay for our prejudices in terms of human happiness. Intolerance leads to fear and uneasiness among members of the privileged majority as well as its victims. Hatred of others fails to make

the maladjusted person feel more secure and socially adapted. Moreover, prejudice not only severely limits the opportunities of minority people, but makes it more difficult for them to develop an integrated and well-adjusted personality. Our knowledge of the manifold causes of prejudice provides us with cues for action. What needs to be done in the individual case may depend on the particular reasons for the emergence of prejudice in a given group in a particular situation.

The question arises as to who will teach prejudiced persons the errors of their ways. They are likely to associate with people whose opinions differ markedly from their own. This teaching should perhaps start early in life, with the young children whose prejudices have not had time to develop. But even if an attempt is made to do the job of educating for democracy, how successful can this be in the face of counter-indoctrination by the parents? What education fails to do might be accomplished if the prejudiced groups could be brought together in close contact with those about whom they are prejudiced. People learn more from what they themselves experience than from what they are being told.

The need for the solution of prejudice cannot be appreciated until a clearer understanding of the nature and extent of prejudice has been reached. As well, the cost of prejudice to society and the individual must be thoroughly examined and clearly understood.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

See that man over there?

Yes.

Well, I hate him.

But you don't know him.

That's why I hate him.

(Allport, 1954, p. 458)

The notion that prejudice and hostility have their basis in ignorance is a truism as much as the idea that social intimacy implies acceptance and equality. In discussions of whites' racial attitudes, these truisms are invoked repeatedly. Physical separation of blacks from whites is such a marked feature of race relations in the United States that, indeed, only a small minority of whites could rightly claim that "some of their best friends" are black (Public Opinion Quarterly, 1986, p. 584). The rarity of interracial friendship combined with the prevailing conservatism of white's racial attitudes would thus seem to underscore the validity of Allport's parable.

Everyday encounters with prejudice are not rare and isolated experiences, but are recurrent and familiar events that can be considered commonplace (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). These experiences consist of short-term interactions such as glares and remarks, as well as embedded encounters; they include incidents where the individual is directly

targeted and those in which the target is an entire social group (e.g., African Americans in general). Perpetrators of these events range from people who have an intimate relationship with the target to strangers. These concrete and specific events are the building blocks of the experience of being a target of prejudice and contribute toward targets' general knowledge about prejudice (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). Since the experience of everyday prejudice is ongoing, the stigmatized individual or groups become able to anticipate prejudicial situations and develop strategies for dealing with these situations. Therefore, it is important to note that individuals and groups are not passive victims who are unable or unwilling to try to deflect the negative consequences of encountering prejudice, but are active agents who make choices in their lives about when to face potential prejudice and when to challenge or confront prejudice (Pettigrew, 1964).

According to researchers, many stigmatized individuals and groups utilize psychological strategies to protect themselves, such as attributing negative outcome to prejudice (Crocker & Major, 1989). In addition to these strategies, individuals can engage in proactive coping "efforts undertaken in advance of a potentially stressful event to prevent it or to modify its form before it occurs" (p. 608). Proactive coping includes the anticipation of stressful events and preparation to prevent or mute the effects of the stressor. In the case of prejudice, targets can use their knowledge and awareness of when, where, by whom and in what manner prejudice is most likely to occur in order to assess the likelihood that they will encounter prejudice in particular situations and to structure their interactions and environment to minimize or avoid potentially hurtful aspects of encountering prejudice (Strangor & Schaller, 1996). Thus, the anticipation of prejudice may affect people's choices about what to say in certain interactions, how to present

themselves, and where to socialize, live, go to college and work. The struggle of living two lives, one for the dominant society and one for the non-dominant, creates a peculiar tension to extract the definition of one's true self from the treatment afforded the denigrated categories in which African Americans are placed (Collins, 1991).

A few years ago one of the nation's most talented young journalists, Leanita McClain, committed suicide. Just 32 years old, she had won several major journalism awards and was the first African American to serve on the Chicago Tribune's editorial board. Why did such a talented black woman commit suicide? The answer is doubtless complex, but one factor looms large: the problem of coping with a culturally different, often racist and discriminatory white world. Black Americans not only face blatant discrimination, but also suffer greatly from the subtle pressures to adapt to the values and ways of that overwhelmingly white world...they learn to wear a mask (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 279).

Civilized men have gained notable mastery over energy, matter and inanimate nature generally, and are rapidly learning to control physical suffering and premature death. However, by contrast, Americans appear to be regressing so far as our handling of race relations is concerned. The checkerboard of prejudice in the United States is perhaps the most intricate of all. While some of the endless antagonism seems based upon a realistic conflict of interests, most of it, we suspect, is a product of the fears of the imagination. Yet imaginary fears can cause real suffering (Allport, 1954). Rivalries and hatred between groups are nothing new. Within the past decade or two, a more solid and

enlightening study has been undertaken in this area than in all previous centuries combined. To be sure, the ethical guidelines for human conduct were stated millennia ago in the great creedal systems of mankind – all of them establishing the need and rationale for brotherhood among the earth's inhabitants. But the creeds were formulated in the days of pastoral or nomadic living, in the time of shepherds and petty kingdoms. To implement these creeds in an industrial society requires an improved understanding of the factors making for hatred and tolerance (Allport, 1954).

Researchers in the 1940s and 1950s grappled with the widespread problem of white prejudice and discrimination in the historical context of a society marked by pervasive racial segregation. Motivated by the spirit of social reform, analysts sought to identify ways in which whites' personal contact with individual blacks might be manipulated by public policy to dissipate their prejudice toward blacks as a group. Out of this concern emerged one of the most prominent theories in the prejudice literature, known as the contact theory. The contact theory maintains that the sharp spatial social gulf between the social lives of whites and blacks promotes a lack of awareness about blacks. This lack of awareness feeds stereotypes, which are erroneous, oversimplified, negative beliefs about blacks; this, in turn, engenders feelings of hostility and discriminatory social predispositions toward blacks.

Stouffer (1949) introduced the contact theory in his book, The American Soldier. This experimental study represents one of the first known attempts to empirically test the contact theory of prejudice. The study reported positive effects on whites' racial attitudes, although the generality of the attitudes to broader social situations were sometimes questionable. Further, in the analysis of behavior and attitudes, the studies

revealed that proximity had a pronounced positive effect on the level of informal interaction and friendship with blacks. According to Stouffer (1949), the relation between intergroup contact and attitude change is not likely to be generalized to other situations, unless the individuals have close personal relationships with the members of the other group in real-life situations.

The contact theory is an important contribution to the field because it pays careful attention to whites' interracial contact and the effect that position has on the development of racial attitudes. While the importance of developing a variety of contacts with blacks is congruent with the contact theory, the same cannot be said of the apparent unimportance of the intimacy of those contacts. This theory emphasizes that contacts with duration and intimacy (such as personal friends) are more motivationally compelling.

This study asserts that to be effective in bringing whites into personal contact with blacks, the contact must meet a specified set of conditions. First, the contact should not take place within a competitive context. Second, the contact must be sustained rather than episodic. Third, the contact must be personal, informal, and one-to-one. Finally, the setting in which the contact occurs must confer equal status on both parties rather than duplicate the racial status differential. Much interracial contact does not meet these conditions. Consider, for example, the contact between white and black neighbors who pass each other daily on the street without personal interaction, or between black and white employees who work together. These forms of contact are considered insufficient to remove whites' blinders and allow them to perceive blacks in a fresh light. In contrast, the contact that occurs between intimate, personal friends appears to meet optimally the

conditions of the contact theory. When asked in a recent interview by the authors Feagin and Feagin (1996), "How do you personally feel being black in a mostly white society?" one Caribbean American professional stated:

I usually interact with American whites from a distance. Most are acquaintances, not friends. Coworkers do not know who I am, what I really want. I am not invited to their informal gatherings. Occasional exchanges in hallways are only superficial. I feel I am expected to live in an intellectual ghetto, a very special and preset place which I call "colonization of thinking." From all appearances, I am expected to fail. I am denied even the basic respect due to me as a human being. In sum, the more dues I pay to this society the less respected I feel. I feel my differences are neither acknowledged nor respected. But in this society everyone must move in the same direction. It simplifies. It unifies. And to the extent that it also inferiorizes, the denial is a perfect tool to keep "others," and blacks in particular, within the boundaries of American cultural definition (Feagin & Feagin, 1996, p. 279).

While the contact theory developed primarily out of a policy-oriented concern with proposals to reduce prejudice, its central tenets rest on important assumptions about the very nature of intergroup attitudes and racial stereotypes. Thus, negative intergroup attitudes are prejudiced attitudes that have an irrational basis and are permeated by feelings of hostility. This fundamental assumption has important corollaries in that people who interact with one another form society: they take one another into account; they communicate, role take and cooperate. Similarly, they share an understanding of

reality, and hence, develop a set of rules by which to live. At the same time, by its very nature, they cut off interaction with those outside that interaction (e.g., minorities). This exclusion is the basis for racial problems in this society and is the basis for similar problems in all societies (Allport, 1954).

The United States has developed a segregated society and thus, in a basic sense is not one society, but several distinctive identities. Today, however, we face conflict arising from that lack of interaction. Without continuous interaction between people in an industrial society, people will fail to communicate with and understand each other, and role-taking and cooperation between them will be minimized. People in the dominant society (whites) through interaction develop a perspective, one that is useful for their understanding of reality. Included in their definition of those in the other society (minorities) and the reason for their differences, as well as a justification for the inequality that exists between blacks and whites. It is through this definition of those who are different that the dominant society (whites) develops prejudice and stereotypes. If people do not regularly interact, communicate and cooperate with each other, no shared culture is likely to develop, and prejudice will continue.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II reviews and critically examines the sociological theories of prejudice. Chapter II also reviews the research literature used to expand the contact theory (e.g., interracial contact and whites' racial attitudes).

In the last 45 years we have had a lot of experience with integration as a solution to ethnic prejudice. While Americans should feel proud of those efforts, how well have they worked? Is it true that as people get to know each other better, will their prejudices appear to be untrue? This is the contention perhaps under certain conditions as defined by the contact theory of prejudice. Like all behavior, prejudice has multiple causes. A more detailed exploration of the causes of prejudice and sociological theories applicable to prejudice seems in order.

Causes of Prejudice

Theory of Personality

Social psychology theories argue that people's situations and social experiences influence their attitudes and beliefs. These experiences lead some people to develop prejudiced attitudes and beliefs, usually through personality need or social learning.

The theory of personality need arises largely from the work of Adorno and his colleagues (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson & Sanford, 1950). In their content analysis of speeches written by right-wing extremist, Adorno, et al. (1950) uncovered a

number of themes not logically related but that nonetheless appeared repeatedly. They discovered that having a certain personality type called the authoritarian personality does appear to be associated with prejudice. After their analysis they sensed a reflection of a certain personality type. As a result, these researchers developed a personality measure to rate distinct attitudes and beliefs: For example, excessive respect for authority, aggression against nonconformism, cynicism, opposition to looking inward to understand oneself, and the belief that the world is a dangerous place.

Why are such people prejudiced? According to Farley (1994), prejudice meets two kinds of personality needs in such people.

1. **SCAPEGOAT(S)** – A person or group against whom an individual displaces feelings of anger or frustration that cannot be expressed toward the true source of the individual's feelings. Instead, they take out their frustration on ethnic or religious minorities or other groups who display nonconformity in their dress or lifestyle.
2. **PROJECTION** – A process by which a person denies or minimizes personal shortcomings by exaggerating the extent to which these same shortcomings occur in others. In particular, this person tends to exaggerate the faults of minority groups. Although personality need theories explain why some people are prejudiced, they do not explain all causes of prejudice.

Social Thinking Theory

According to Pettigrew (1964), people are prejudiced because they grow up in prejudiced environments where they learn prejudice from their significant others. This learning occurs through the processes of selective exposure, modeling, reward and

punishment, and identification. For example, if a person is exposed only to prejudiced attitudes and beliefs, they seem like unquestioned truths. The question remains: If the people you love and respect hold prejudiced beliefs, could such beliefs really be wrong? Ehrlich (1992) has shown that those whose parents and other childhood significant others were prejudiced tend themselves to be more prejudice as adults. Moreover, this type of prejudice is different in an important way from prejudice based on personality need in that it is easier to change. In other words, people can conform to no prejudice as well as to prejudice.

Farley and Frey (1994) believe that prejudice has decreased considerably in the United States, but has not disappeared. For example, recent research shows that stereotypes among whites are important causes of discrimination against African Americans in employment. Further, many researchers believe that modern prejudices have taken on a subtle form called symbolic racism. This term refers to a pattern in which people do not overtly express prejudiced or racist ideas, but oppose social policies that would reduce racial inequality, such as affirmative action and government spending to assist minorities (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). A marginal change has occurred in these attitudes over the past 20 years (National Opinion Research Center, 1991). Why is there opposition to such policies? Perhaps it is the contention that the system is fair, that there is equal opportunity, and that minorities are mainly at fault for the disadvantages they suffer (Kluegel, 1990; Hoschschild, 1995). This belief, however, is not supported by the facts. For example, 44% of black children and 41% of Hispanic children live below the poverty level, compared to 17% of white children (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). Clearly, these differences indicate that people born into the non-dominant group do not

experience equal opportunity. An examination of the social structural theories of prejudice follows.

Structural Functionalism Theory

The structural functionalism theory sees prejudice as arising from characteristics of societies, not individual attitudes and beliefs (Parsons, 1968). According to the functionalism theory, the difficulty of reducing prejudice through interaction leads to the question of whether racial attitudes and prejudice persist because they function to the advantage of certain groups. One answer was provided by functionalism theorist Parsons (1968), who wrote that “the primary historic origin of the modern color problem lies in the relation of Europeans to African Slavery” (p. 366). Parsons was not denying that prejudice is produced through interactions. Rather, he was pointing out that the specific form taken by those interactions—oppression, subordination, domination of blacks by whites—is directly related to the perceived need of white colonialists and traders to use blacks for their own purposes. The whites could abduct, enslave, and sell Africans because their societies had developed technologies (e.g., ships) and institutions (e.g., markets and trading corporations) that made them immensely more powerful than the Africans. From the functionalist perspective, prejudice exists because it serves an important function for particular societies. Thus, in South Africa it was functional for the white government to insist on maintaining apartheid because to do otherwise would mean that whites would become a minority group in a black-dominated society.

According to Durkheim (1964), as a society becomes larger and more complex, it tends to be increasingly characterized by secondary groups and organizations. These organizations make the society more efficient, but can also cause confusion and

unhappiness. Further, Durkheim (1964) believed that modern industrial society was in a state of “moral anarchy,” “disunity,” “disorganization,” and “decadence” (p. 79-80). Sociology was to serve as a tool for diagnosing and analyzing social problems such as prejudice or “pathologies” and for finding their solutions or “cures.” Durkheim believed that only by developing and using positivistic scientific principles of analysis could society be improved and social problems ended.

All societies, according to Durkheim, will typically progress through types of evolutionary changes. He terms these transitional periods, stages, or social reforms. Durkheim maintained that such transitional periods are likely to be characterized by a high degree of social disorganization and widespread social problems such as prejudice. This state of disorganization occurs because the sociomoral rules held over from the earlier evolutionary stage are no longer applicable to events in the evolving, more differentiated and complex stage. Furthermore, social rules suitable to the new social stage are still in a process of creation and thus are not developed to an extent great enough to properly order social life. Durkheim maintained that such transitional problems and disorganization will terminate, as the society evolves fully into the higher social stage or type.

A major flaw in the functionalist perspective is the fact that we have rarely seen anything approaching equilibrium in human societies. Conflict and strife appear to be as basic to society as harmony, integration, and smooth functioning.

Conflict Perspective

It is probably safe to say that the conflict perspective is the most prominent of these theories among sociologists specializing in race and ethnic relations. Moreover,

this paper will shortly explore the important contemporary conflict theories about intergroup relations. These theories share certain elements; unlike the functionalist approach, they do not see prejudice as resulting simply from cultural differences and ethnocentrism. Rather, they believe the critical factor is that one group benefits by subjugating another. Often, groups are in competition for scarce resources and sometimes one group has something (land, wealth) that another wants. These situations, however, in themselves, do not cultivate prejudice. A second condition must also be present: unequal power, which means one group can take what it wants from another (Noel, 1968). When both competition or opportunity for gain and unequal power between groups exist, prejudice is likely to occur (Belanger, 1985). Oppositionally, functionalists believe that ethnocentrism inhibits societal cooperation and contributes to racial and ethnic prejudice. As a result, many functionalists favor assimilation—this term refers to a process whereby differences between groups are reduced, so that the different groups share a common set of values and a common social structure (Gordon, 1964).

According to functionalists, as societies modernize, assimilation occurs, and racial and ethnic prejudices tend to decrease, because interdependence in society increases as society becomes more complex. For example, there is evidence from a variety of countries, including the United States of America, that prejudice and discrimination will sooner or later decline (but will not disappear) when modernization occurs. Conflict theories, however, do a better job than functionalist theories in explaining prejudice. Conflict theories trace the origins of racial and ethnic prejudice to the conflict between classes in capitalist societies. The Marxist theory of prejudice holds that prejudicial attitudes exist, mainly because they benefit the ruling economic class. Because different

groups in society have conflicting self-interests, it is virtually certain, according to conflict theory, that they will have different views about social issues. In short, their values and ideologies—systems of beliefs about reality—will be based in large part on what serves their self-interests. The advantaged use their power to influence the opinions of others, so that, for a time, people tend to believe in values and ideologies that support the existing order (Mannheim, 1936; Marx, 1964). Further, Marx believed that racial antagonisms are primarily a mechanism used by the owners of capital to divide the working class. For example, employers encourage white workers to think that blacks and other minorities threaten them, because they then come to see the minority workers rather than the employer as their enemy. This situation, in turn, perpetuates prejudice and divides the working class along the lines of race, thus ensuring that employers will not have to confront a unified workforce.

According to Farley (1994), the labor history of the early twentieth century in the United States offers considerable support for the above-stated viewpoint. For example, between 1910 and 1920 all-white labor unions struck in the railroad and steel industries. The employers played upon racial antagonism to break these strikes. Through a combination of deception, blacks were offered “good jobs up north” without being told they would be strikebreakers. Through skillful exploitation of black antagonism toward all-white unions, thousands of blacks were recruited to break these strikes (Bonacich, 1976). These tactics, of course, hurt both blacks and whites over the long run. These incidents of strikebreaking, along with a general fear of black economic competition, led to perhaps the worst wave of race riots in American history. Between 1906 and 1921 mobs of whites in a number of cities attacked and murdered at least 125 blacks (Farley,

1988). A study by Olzak (1992) has confirmed that much of this anti-black violence was linked to labor conflict. By the 1930s white workers increasingly realized that their approach of demanding discrimination was hurting them more than it was helping them. Even today the evidence suggests that racial inequality hurts white workers more than it helps them. Since 1980 the minority poor, working class and much of the middle class have lost income, even as the wealthiest whites have gained. These trends are consistent with Marxist theory. Conflict perspectives on prejudice and racial inequality also include the theory of internal colonization.

The internal colonization theory is different from other conflict theories of ethnic prejudice in one important regard: It focuses almost exclusively upon conflicts that occur between (rather than within) racial groups. A powerful country establishes control of a foreign area and its people. Typically, the native people of the colony are assigned a status lower than that of the colonizers (Blauner, 1972). Once the colonized group takes on the status of a conquered people, certain things occur. Colonized minorities are subjected to intense attacks on their culture. Because they are defined as inferior, they are subjected either to isolation or to forced assimilation. Further, they are kept outside the mainstream of economic activity to ensure that they will not compete with members of the colonized minorities (blacks, native Americans and others). This forced exclusion helps to explain why even today these excluded groups occupy the most disadvantaged positions of all American racial and ethnic groups, including immigrant groups whose arrival is much more recent (Domhoff, 1991). Four conditions mark this situation:

1. The “colonial” people did not enter the society voluntarily.

2. The culture of the “colonial” people has been destroyed or transformed into a version of the dominant culture that is considered inferior.
3. The dominant population controls the “colonial” population.
4. Members of the “colonial” population are victims of racism; that is, they are seen as inferior in biological terms and are oppressed both socially and psychologically (Blauner, 1972).

Although these characteristics describe colonial people everywhere, the theory of internal colonialism asserts that these characteristics also apply to subordinated ethnic and racial groups in societies such as England, the United States, Canada, and nations of the former Soviet Union. Hechter (1975) extended the theory to show that societies that have created colonial or “ghettoized” populations within their boundaries also develop a “cultural division of labor” in which the subordinate group is expected to perform types of work considered too demeaning to be done by members of the dominant population. The South African Institution of Baaskop was (and in some parts of the nation still is) an example of this phenomenon. Baaskop maintains that exhausting work is appropriate for Blacks, and that whites should never accept “black” work nor allow themselves to be subordinate to blacks. Are the segregated ghetto communities of black and Hispanic Americans a product of internal colonialism? The answer to this question depends on whether the residents of those communities are able to achieve upward mobility (Park, 1924).

One other important conflict theory of intergroup relations focuses in part upon economic conflicts within the majority group, pointing out that such conflicts may have an important effect on majority-minority relations. The split labor market theory lists

three economic groups: employers (owners of capital), higher-paid labor, and lower-paid labor (Bonacich, 1975). As mentioned earlier, in multiethnic or multiracial societies, higher-paid labor is often made up of majority-group members, while minority-group members are reconcentrated in the lower-paid labor category (Bonacich, 1975).

According to the split-level theory, majority-group workers demand and benefit from prejudice because it protects their favored position in the labor force. Employers, on the other hand, are often hurt by prejudicial attitudes, because they drive up wages by reducing the labor pool and it deprives them of the opportunity to hire the best worker (Becker, 1971). Many workers undoubtedly believe that prejudicial attitudes work to their advantage. Majority-group workers, however, can only benefit from prejudice and discrimination if they (rather than their employer) control the hiring process. To a certain extent, white workers exerted this control in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by threatening to “cause trouble” if minorities were hired. The reality is that, except in occupations with union hiring halls, workers do not control the hiring process.

Of some importance to consideration of the patterns of intergroup relations are the causes of those patterns, and some of the theories that have been proposed to explain them. Equally important are the underlying values and attitudes that shape people's consciousness of other groups and, hence their behavior toward members of those groups. Chief among these attitudes are the tendency to view members of other groups in terms of stereotypes and to use those stereotypes to justify differential attitudes (prejudice) and behaviors (discrimination) toward such individuals. People often express the opinion that specific traits of members of certain groups are responsible for their disadvantaged situation. Thus, in South Africa it was common for whites to assert that blacks were not

ready for full citizenship because many view them as childlike and simple. In the United States the fact that Hispanics are more likely to be found in low-paying jobs is explained by the assertion by many that “they don’t want to learn English.” And high black unemployment rates are explained by a statement that “they don’t want to work. They like sports and music, but not hard work, especially in school.” These explanations are stereotypical, inflexible, erroneous images of a racial or cultural group held without regard to whether the images are true. Even though stereotypes usually have some basis; they never take account of all the facts about a group.

Prejudice and Discrimination

The fact that many people hold stereotypical ideas about other groups may be an indication that they are ignorant or prejudiced. But this fact does not imply that they will actually discriminate against people whom they perceive as different. Prejudice is an attitude; discrimination is a behavior. As Merton (1948) pointed out, many people are prejudiced and discriminate against members of particular groups. There are also people who are not prejudiced but who discriminate because it is expected of them. With these distinctions in mind, Merton (1948) constructed the following typology (Figure 1).

PREJUDICE	
<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
TRUE BIGOT	WEAK LIBERAL
Does not believe in the American creed and acts accordingly.	Not prejudiced, yet afraid to go against the bigoted crowd.
CAUTIOUS BIGOT	STRONG LIBERAL
Does not believe in the American creed, but is afraid to discriminate.	Not prejudiced and refuses to discriminate.

Figure 1. Typology Chart of Prejudice

Merton's (1948) typology is valuable because it points to the variety of attitudes and behaviors that exist in multicultural and multiracial societies. However, the typology fails to account for situations in which certain groups are discriminated against regardless of the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. This form of discrimination is part of the "culture" of a social institution and is practiced by people who are simply conforming to the norms of that institution, known as institutional discrimination.

In this context it is necessary to examine a more common type of prejudice and a more detailed historical exploration of stereotypes. Stereotyping refers to an exaggerated belief concerning a group of people. Stereotyping has fascinated social scientists for over seventy years and relationships with the topic has always been slightly ambivalent. Researchers have long debated the meaning of the term and the degree to which stereotypes reflect reality. It is evident that stereotyping is a crucial part of everyday

adaptation to the social world, yet many insist that it is a distortion of reality, that it represents a failure to appreciate the way people really are—unique, differentiated, disparate individuals.

Many different views of stereotypes have emerged. Early conceptual development and controversies surrounding the concept of stereotypes are discussed before presenting the current research. It is argued that stereotypes are natural concept systems (i.e., inevitable products of experience) that fulfill a heuristic function. As well, information may be more or less at odds with some criteria of accuracy, but may possess some predictive validity at the group level. Important societal concerns not treated here are stereotype holders' causal inferences about perceived differences (inherent verses cultural/learned) and the issue of how stereotypes may be used inadvisably in judging individual group members.

The arguments in this proposal were developed under the assumption that perceived differences exist in attribute possession among groups of different ethnicity. Whether or not these perceptions represent real differences cannot presently be determined. The criteria developed in an attempt to assess the “reality” in these perceptions are necessarily confounded because the criteria by which stereotypes are measured are based on perception. Given that reality as it is known, is perception-based. Perceptions themselves are at least as important as whatever “truth” might be, since behaviors are a result of perceptions. The conceptual development of the term “stereotype” was first introduced to the social sciences by Lippman (1922) in his book entitled Public Opinion. Lippman borrowed the term “stereotype” from the printing industry, a term that refers to the process of making metal printing plates. In this process,

a mold is made and then a cast in type metal is made from the mold. The stereotype is the resulting plate cast in the type metal. Stereotyping is the craft of making the stereotype.

Lippman (1922) used the term “stereotype” figuratively to refer to pictures in people’s minds of the outside world. More specifically, he used the term to refer to oversimplifications and generalizations with regard to perceptions (or “mental pictures”) of categories of people. In his view such stereotypes were rigid, illogical, grossly generalized, inaccurate and resistant to revision.

Perhaps because of Lippman’s (1922) description, others have expressed similar views. For example, Katz and Braly (1958) and Klineberg (1951) believed stereotypes are based upon “hearsay, rumor and antidotes,” and therefore denounced their reliability and validity. Spears, Oakes, Ellemers and Hasham (1997) commented on the lack of correspondence between the “stereotypes” of ethnic groups and the actual characteristics of these groups.

Although these views were written three to five decades ago, the literature today is not lacking authors who endorse a similar view of stereotypes (Hamilton, 1981). Further, adding to the negativity were theoretical assertions that stereotypes serve to help prejudiced individuals rationalize the personal biases they possess (Allport, 1954). Some, however, have questioned these views and the meaning and implications of this concept.

Prejudicial Stereotypes Conceptualization in Past Research

Many controversies exist concerning the qualities of stereotypes. The onset of the controversy arose from the conceptual development of stereotypes with regard to word meaning and word usage and the inadvisable practice of using of lay terms for scientific

inquiry (Calder, 1977). Part of the problem was that scientists have assisted in the development and perpetuation of statements about ethnic groups.

Gardner (1973) believed that stereotypes are those traits or trait combinations for which there is a given level of consensus among the general population. Further, Gardner, Kirby and Finlay (1973) utilized semantic differential scales to assess stereotypes. In addition, Gardner (1973) introduced the concept of individual differences in stereotypy, but congruent with his conceptualization, operationalized differences as the sum of an individual's semantic differential ratings on those traits determined to be stereotypes via group consensus. Therefore, individual differences in his view were differences in the magnitude of ratings on a set of stereotypical traits, as defined by consensus.

Brigham (1971) maintained that stereotypes were individually held and are represented generalizations that are deemed unjustified by an observer. Brigham (1973) operationalized this definition by having observers estimate the percentage of members who possess certain traits and the percentage they would consider to be an unjustified estimate. Though this viewpoint allows for individual differences in stereotype content itself, individualizing the very definition of stereotypes (personal levels of justifiability--stereotypes) are so tailored to the individual that analyses based on aggregated data would be meaningless. Averaging justifiability ratings, as Brigham (1973) did, basically ignores the individual differences in defining the construct that he purports is necessary.

Further, stereotypes were defined by McCauley, Stitt, and Segal (1980) as "those generalizations about a class of people that distinguish that class from others. In other words, stereotyping is differential trait attribution based on group membership

information” (p. 197). McCauley and Stitt (1978) devised what is called the diagnostic ratio measure of stereotypes. This measure essentially requires subjects to estimate percentages of people at large who possess the characteristic; these are compared in ratio form. A diagnostic ratio that differs significantly from 1.0 would indicate that the item was stereotypical.

Finally, stereotypes have been defined and measured in a number of different ways. The most important distinctions among measures are: 1) whether consensus is a required attribute; and 2) whether the measure results in interval-level data. Requiring consensus appears to be problematic. It seems unnecessary that everyone agree that an attribute describes a group for it to be considered a stereotype. If one follows this logic to its natural conclusion, there may be no such thing as a stereotype, except physical characteristics. One must only talk among friends to discover that stereotypes and beliefs differ from others. If total consensus is unnecessary, the problem then becomes how much consensus is necessary for an attribute to be a stereotype.

The position taken in this research is that stereotypes occur at the individual level. It is suggested, however, that individually held stereotypes are held by meaningful subgroups of the population who share perspectives based upon a common, correlated variable.

Stereotype Conceptualization in the Present Research

Based on the presented arguments, the following conceptualizations of stereotypes are utilized in this research:

Definition 1: A stereotype is a generalization about a class of people that distinguishes that class from others according

to the individual perceiver, or differential attribution based upon group membership information.

Definition 2: A social stereotype is one shared by a meaningful subgroup of a population or a stereotype for which there is some consensus within the given subset of population.

Theoretical Context

As mentioned, the social judgment literature has been criticized for its focus on errors made in laboratory experiments which rarely involve social interaction of any kind (Cohen, 1977; 1979; Einhorn & Hogarth, 1981; Funder, 1987). These researchers emphasize that social judgment occurs in a social context, and contextual factors which can produce violations of logical principles, when based upon prescriptive and rational theory. Further, Einhorn and Hogarth (1981) assert that context does not only refer to the task situation or environment, but also to the decision maker as an individual, with a history of experience, prior learning, and biological limitations. Therefore, the individual is part of the context of social judgment.

Smith and Zaraté (1992), in their latest and perhaps most comprehensive model of social judgment, also emphasized the importance of the context and individual differences in perceivers' goals, past experiences, and exposure to the target group. Smith and Zaraté also discussed the importance of in-group/out-group differences and minority status. These authors' overall thesis is that cognitive structures relating to person perception are exemplar-based, and that the exemplar drawn upon in any given

judgment will depend on all of the above factors. They make a case for the overwhelming saliency of race in social judgment.

...perceivers who are more racially prejudiced, in whose social context Blacks constitute a small minority, or for whom Blacks are an out-group, may pay more attention to a target's race than to his or her occupation, personality characteristics, or other attributes. More attention to race in turn means that all Blacks are perceived as relatively similar to each other and different from non-Blacks (Allport, 1954, p. 458).

Consider the salience and obviousness of cues to social categories like race, gender and age compared with less perceptually obvious categories like occupation or sexual orientation. In most every day encounters in which the perceiver is not motivated to gather extensive additional information about the target (Fiske & Neuberg, 1988), easily perceptible surface features will likely receive the bulk of the perceiver's attention... However, ease of perception is not the whole story, for social and cultural factors shape the meanings attached to attributes like skin color (Katz, 1935, p. 180).

Smith's and Zarate's (1992) exemplar-based model states that perceiver, contextual, and motivational factors influence exemplar similarity (i.e., the perceived similarity of the mental exemplar with the current target, under consideration) by affecting the perceiver's allocation of attention to specific stimulus attributes, such as race. Further, perceiver factors such as motivation and prejudice will cause individuals to store an attitude or motive consistent with the interpretation of a target group member, thus increasing the

predominance of these features in the exemplars drawn upon in future interactions.

Again, although salient features like race are most easily perceived, their model points to the insufficiency of this fact alone in explaining certain stereotypes effects, as they recognize that “social and cultural factors shape the meaning attached to attributes like skin color” (Smith & Zaraté, 1992, p. 12).

Smith and Zaraté (1992) discuss how exposure and past experiences, as well as attitudes, affect judgments. In terms of exposure and past experience they point to the prevalence of particular associations between attributes and social roles. When group members are unequally distributed into particular social roles or economic statuses, the roles most associated with group memberships serve to increase the saliency and attention given to group membership (and the corresponding attributes based on roles), even if out of context of the roles. An example of this scenario is the unequal distribution of women and men in the role of caretaker.

In terms of exposure, Smith and Zaraté (1992) assert that people usually exposed at a distance (e.g., without involvement or intimacy) will increase the number of stored exemplars with stereotype-consistent attributes. In contrast, increased familiarity with a group member resulting from extensive personal interaction over time would expose the perceiver to counter-stereotypic attributes, and a different type of store exemplar would result.

Smith and Zaraté (1992) also suggest that while stereotypical knowledge structures are real, they may come into play in some contexts, contingent upon the perceiver’s history and motivation. In fact, the authors suggest that the importance of these knowledge structures varies, based upon all the context and individual differences

variables mentioned above. However, this group-level knowledge structure is important to the extent that it often does come into play. In view of these contributions it seems likely that group stereotypic knowledge structures have substantial impact on perceptions of individuals belonging to salient identity groups. Therefore, research aimed at determining the relative accuracy of such knowledge structures, and who may be more or less accurate, is of importance.

In conclusion, many factors may affect the content of individuals' stereotypes of ethnic or racial groups and the degree to which these stereotypes are called upon in situations regarding an individual group member. The focus of this research is the manner in which two variables, racial attitudes and interracial contact, are related to the content and accuracy of held stereotypes. For the purpose of this discussion attitudes are thought to refer to one's feelings about the target group and stereotypes refer to generalized perceptions or beliefs about the attributes of the target group. The groundwork for specific hypothesis regarding these factors follows.

Attitudes and Stereotypes

As discussed, from the time that stereotypes were introduced into the social sciences, they were considered to represent attitudes related to prejudice or authoritarianism (Vinacke, 1957). However, once theorists began assessing the qualities of stereotypes empirically, the situation became unclear. That is, it has not been determined whether stereotypes do in fact represent attitudes or even if they are related to attitudes towards the stereotyped group. Moreover, it is possible that these constructs co-vary to a certain degree while also maintaining some independence (Taft, 1959). Some ethnic stereotypes may be shared across individuals of varying attitudes toward the ethnic

group, while others may be systematically related to how one feels about the ethnic group, and therefore may not be shared by all (Brigham, Woodmansee & Cook 1976). In the following review, an attempt is made to demonstrate that stereotypes and attitudes are different constructs. Racial or ethnic attitudes may be associated with the content of individuals' stereotypes of an ethnic or racial group. Although much of the literature on this topic either directly or indirectly indicates that attitudes lead to stereotypes (prejudice), it is possible that stereotypical perceptions themselves create one's attitudes (Allport, 1954). The causal order between these constructs, however, is not investigated.

In early research evidence indicated that consensual stereotypes (prejudice) or uniformity within the respondents base little or no relation to group preferences (Katz & Braly, 1933; Taft, 1959). In other words, trait descriptions that met with uniformity or agreement within the sample population were not related to general feelings toward the group the traits described. Similarly, these researchers suggested from their findings that mean favorability ratings of the stereotypes chosen were not good predictors of attitudes towards stereotyped groups. In addition, Brigham, et al. (1976) suggested that degree of stereotyping did not correlate with attitudes toward blacks. Brigham (1971, 1973) has reported, however, that there were tendencies for specific trait attributions made by whites about blacks to be related to racial attitudes of whites in his study. He indicated, though, that these specific traits were not necessarily stereotypical, as there was no relationship between uniformity (agreement) and favorableness of attitudes towards blacks, and uniformity was a necessary criterion to stereotype in the paradigm used.

These results are confused by the various criteria thought to be necessary for a trait ascription to be a stereotype; that is, consensus or uniformity within the entire

sample population were necessary criteria for something to be called a stereotype. Given the definition of stereotypes endorsed in the present study, however, it is possible that those traits are stereotypical for some and not for others. More specifically, it is postulated here that subgroups of the sample population who have negative racial attitudes may hold different stereotypes than subgroups of individuals with less negative (or more positive) racial attitudes. When considering this possibility, it is clear that no trait is unconditionally a stereotype of a given group, but traits may be stereotypical according to different subgroups perceivers (Katz & Braly, 1933).

Given the findings reported thus far, there is evidence that individuals with different attitudes towards an ethnic or racial group may also hold some different stereotypes about that group. It appears that attitudes and stereotypes (prejudice) are likely related such as the fact that those with negative attitudes toward a group tend to hold more negatively evaluative stereotypes of that groups, in addition to others more commonly adhered to. In support of this contention Vinacke (1957) suggests that "it is probably not the fact of stereotyping per se, which marks the prejudice person, so much as the content of the stereotypes and how they are used" (p. 230). Further, he suggests that the content of the stereotype of persons high and low in prejudice may be different. For example, it is likely that prejudiced persons possess stereotypes with different evaluative tones than nonprejudiced individuals. Results from Devine (1989) also support this contention. She studied the labels and thoughts listed by high and low prejudiced individuals with regard to black Americans. She found that while there was equal knowledge of stereotypes and labels typically used in describing blacks, the thoughts and beliefs listed were significantly different in content for those high in

prejudice as compared to those low in prejudice. It follows then that stereotypes held (believed or adhered to) by these groups may be different.

Interracial Contact, Exposure, Racial Stereotypes

Many have suggested that familiarity or contact with the target group should have a positive association (i.e., reduce prejudice, decrease the negativity of stereotypes, or increase the accuracy of stereotypes) with racial or ethnic attitudes and stereotypes (Brigham, 1971; Taft, 1959; Mackie, 1973). This contention is a general basis of the contact theory and the anticipated positive effects of integration (Cook, 1978). Much of the research regarding contact theory has taken advantage of “natural” experiments involving segregation environments. Other research efforts have focused on explicit types of interactions between whites and blacks. Later research will be reviewed in detail, as the implications from the project are viewed as offering insight into the general attitudes and stereotypes of adults today. However, some generalizations based on results from this study are presented below.

Interracial Contact and Racial Attitudes

According to Allport (1954) the evidence of association between interracial contact and racial attitudes has been mixed. Positive results have been contingent upon the amount and type of contact exposure. Specifically, this author reports that positive outcomes with regard to interracial or interethnic contact are more likely to result under conditions where there is equal status (Allport & Kramer, 1946). A cooperative atmosphere (Cook, 1978), supportive or egalitarian norms (Campbell, 1967), or settings that promote intimacy (Cook, 1978) are among other factors (Cook, 1987; Rothbart & John, 1985). Likewise, most researchers acknowledge that increased exposure or contact

under circumstances without these qualities may serve to reinforce traditional negative attitudes and stereotypes of ethnic groups. Therefore, contact or exposure is not a panacea, but intergroup contact that includes some of the above-noted characteristics may effect a change in social perceptions.

As mentioned, the empirical evidence on the effects of interracial contact have been mixed (Carithers, 1970; St. John, 1963). In a summary of the research presented by St. John (1963), there were as many positive findings as there were negative findings with regard to the impact of interracial contact upon racial attitudes.

The issue of who, in everyday living, is exposed to interracial interactions under the conditions specified in the contact theory is an important one. This issue is especially important for those who have prejudicial attitudes, because such attitudes enter into how a person interprets such encounters (Smith & Zaraté, 1992). Also, Weigel and Howes (1985) cite evidence that a prejudiced person “is uninformed about the way out-group members behave and the way in-group members should behave toward them” (p. 132). This lack of information reportedly increases anxiety at the mere prospect of having to interact with a person of another racial or ethnic group. Therefore, prejudiced individuals tend to avoid interracial interaction. Anxiety and avoidance not only create less opportunity to alter racial attitudes (Smith & Zaraté, 1992), but as both Rothbart and John (1985) and Smith and Zaraté (1992) point out, likely mediate the outcomes of such contact when such an individual is “exposed” to members of the other group.

Another important point is that some interracial experiences are easier to avoid than others. Some individuals, especially prejudiced individuals, will likely have typical, superficial interactions for the most part. Therefore, it is postulated that those with

negative racial attitudes may keep their attitudes intact by avoiding interracial contact, especially contact that is involving in any way.

Validity or Accuracy

Several social scientists have taken issue with Lippman's (1953) view (Brigham, 1971; Campbell, 1967; McCauley & Stitt, 1978). Most of these objectors do so on the basis of logic and lack of scientific evidence regarding accuracy. For example, if one contends that something is inaccurate, it implies that one knows what is accurate (Brigham, 1971; Kruglanski, 1989). We usually do not know if a stereotype is accurate. Therefore, focus must be on assessing the "accuracy" of stereotypes empirically, using a myriad of potential criteria as a substitute for different aspects of accuracy.

According to Brigham (1971), stereotypes are incorrect and gross generalizations. He argues that this assumption must be assessed empirically, for assuming a valid criterion is known, a generalization may be more or less correct. Hence, there are different levels of accuracy in generalizations. For example, some individuals may attend more to race prompting than others, and the prompting itself may mean different things to different people. It is interesting and relevant to note that some have reported empirical evidence that counters the assumption that stereotypes are overgeneralized (Martin, 1987; McCauley & Stitt, 1978; McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980). Further, these results have shown that often error is in the direction of underestimation of population base rates.

In addition, associated with the issue of accuracy is the issue of predictive validity. A prediction can be inaccurate in absolute terms while still possessing some validity. In essence, imperfect predictions may possess some predictive validity.

Pertinent questions regarding validity have to do with when and how stereotypes

(prejudice) might aid in predicting behavior. Is it possible that social psychologists have used the word “stereotype” to stigmatize beliefs of which they disapprove, but which they do not know to be false? Overall, the message surrounding stereotypes is that they contain a large portion of error and projection, which become overcompensated into an implicit denial of group differences (Campbell, 1967). Mackie (1973) states that social scientists have arrived at a sort of “truth by definition,” reinforcing their preferences. He writes that, “the ‘equalitarian dogma’ holds that since everybody is really equal, everybody is alike. The man on the street who perceives differences is simply mistaken” (p. 435).

Some studies have attempted to overcome these methodological limitations with mixed results. According to Jussim (1991), by allowing for the possibility that some stereotypes have some validity, he suggests that we re-evaluate the empirical evidence with regard to the effects of stereotypes. In general, most claims of inaccuracy have been assumed and not empirically verified (Martin, 1987).

General Comments and Conclusions

While not everyone would agree that stereotypes possess validity, many have recognized their functionality and have accepted stereotypes as inevitable outcomes of people’s attempts (unconsciously) to deal with a complex world and too much information (Brigham, 1971; Brown, 1965; McCauley, Stitt & Segal, 1980; Mackie, 1973; Vinacke, 1957). Even Lippman (1922) acknowledged the functional nature of stereotypes, as well as their potential validity, stating that,

Were there no practical uniformities in the environment, there would be no economy and only error in the human trait of accepting foresight for sight.

But there are uniformities sufficiently accurate, and the need of economizing attention is so inevitable that the abandonment of all stereotypes for a whole innocent approach to experience would impoverish human life (Lippman, 1922).

Emphasizing this aspect even more was Vinacke (1957), who suggested that “stereotypes should properly be regarded as concept systems, which positive as well as negative functions, having the same general kinds of properties as other concepts, and serving to organize experience as do other concepts” (p. 435).

The scientific community has recognized that stereotyping (prejudice) is, in part, an inevitable consequence of social learning (Lippman, 1922; Brown, 1965; Brigham, 1971; Taylor, 1981; Vinacke, 1957). To paraphrase Simpson and Yinger (1965), we cannot escape the impact of our cultural environment, which includes “knowing” what others are like, for we are heirs of a tradition that informs us. We are also, however, heirs to our own experiences, which are preserved in an organized fashion in long-term memory to serve us.

An important point to make is that stereotypes, by definition, are associated with predictions about groups of people, not about individuals. Thus, the question of interest here must be stated and investigated at the group level. It is postulated that social stereotypes do not refer exclusively to the stereotype as defined by consensus in the overall population, but to stereotypes held in common by any substantial or meaningful sub-population of individuals. Thus, when subgrouping individuals based upon attitudes such as prejudice toward a group, different stereotypes may be possessed by these subgroups (Spears, Oakes, Ellemers & Hasham, 1997).

The following hypotheses were born out of previously discussed literature on racial prejudice. These research hypotheses will be explored and the results discussed in Chapter IV.

- 1) Increased interracial contact by whites will be associated with less prejudiced persons.
- 2) Increased interracial contact by whites will be associated with decreased exaggerated stereotypes about blacks.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study utilized a self-report Social Contact Survey form (Appendix B) to measure social contact between police personnel. Although it is most common for self-administered questionnaires to be implemented through the mail, this survey relied on group administration.

After an extensive review of the relevant literature and numerous substantive discussions with the chair of the writer's graduate committee, other committee members and the chair of the department, a preliminary draft of the questionnaire was developed. After six drafts, the survey was pre-tested by walk-in undergraduate students majoring in education. Minor revisions were made based on the respondents' feedback.

The final version of the questionnaire was approved and permission to conduct the study was granted by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Human Subjects Committee. The questionnaire contained approximately twenty-seven closed-ended questions designed to elicit information on the following: 1) demographics, 2) prejudice, 3) attitudes, and 4) social distance. On average, the questionnaire took between fifteen and twenty minutes to complete.

Definitions

For the purpose of this research, prejudice is narrowly defined as any categorical and unfounded belief or over-generalization concerning African Americans. Interracial friendship is defined as adults with whom the respondent enjoys at least once a month,

and any adults who live elsewhere that the respondent keeps in close touch with by calling or writing. Social distance/proximity is defined as the degree of association between African Americans and whites outside the workplace.

The global question (Do you have any friends who are African American?) allows the research to reach beyond the bounds of good friendship and make an approximate assessment of the racial composition of individual-level data on the respondent's best friends as opposed to the respondent's entire circle of friends. Physical separation of blacks from whites is such a marked feature of race relations in the United States that, indeed, only a small minority of whites could rightly claim that "some of my best friends are black." The rarity of interracial contact combined with the prevailing conservatism of whites' racial attitudes would thus seem to underscore the validity of Allport's (1954) parable.

Are the conditions specified by the contact theory necessary for a change in attitudes, or is mere exposure to blacks sufficient enough to break down prejudice in this segregated society? Are whites who have one or more black friends different in their racial attitude? Is such personally observed data disregarded unless there is a less token presence of blacks in a white's social environment?

Sampling and Administration

Initially, the plan for this paper was to conduct a random sample of the University Medical Center employees. However, the administration was uncomfortable with my research agenda. An alternative sampling strategy was developed after being denied access to the ideal sample population. As a result, the study relies on a "convenience sample" of metropolitan police officers at the Northwest Area Substation in Las Vegas,

Nevada. The northwest police substation was sampled in order to ensure that the study captured the widest range of demographic diversity (e.g., gender and ethnicity). The survey went into the field the first week of March, 1999. The final set of questionnaires was administered on April 27, 1999. During each administration a scripted set of instructions were used to introduce the questionnaire and to provide a complete set of instructions to potential respondents. Questionnaires were passed out to every police officer at the substation. Only those police officers who read the provided cover letter/consent form were permitted to participate in the study (Appendix A).

After sampling from two large shifts at the Northwest substation and one smaller shift, it became apparent that females, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans were underrepresented or not represented at all (3 to 1 ratio) in the sample. This distribution would not allow testing for significant differences between genders. This problem was not corrected as other substations were also underrepresented. An attempt was made, however, to interview all females at this particular substation (total N = 135).

Operationalization of Key Concepts

Racial Attitudes

The data contain nine sets of measures uniquely suited to the analysis of personal interracial contact and white racial attitudes. Questions about respondents' friends were introduced as follows: Do you have any close friends who are African American? The second set of measures is an unusually comprehensive series of questions to reflect white's racial attitudes. The items appear in Appendix B.

The items encompass all the primary elements of “prejudice” and personal predispositions for contact with or avoidance of blacks. All of the items have neutrally balanced response options in order to avoid response biases, and the most sensitive items were ordered accordingly to minimize socially desirable pressure.

Social Distance/Proximity

According to Schuman and Stele (1986) in their Public Opinion Quarterly Report, whites’ proximity to blacks is strongly related to their likelihood and frequency of personally interacting with African Americans, as well as their likelihood of having African American friends and acquaintances. Clearly, the neighborhood is not the only place whites may come into contact with African Americans, but it does constitute one major potential meeting place.

The researcher, therefore, chose to focus on contact outside the workplace rather than the workplace for two reasons. First, data on workplace proximity are available only for respondents who are currently employed, a restriction that severely reduces the N (unless one cares to make the heroic assumption that people who are not employed have less proximity to blacks). The idea of having blacks in the neighborhood rather than in the workplace represents a more significant arena of proximity.

Interracial Contact

A series of open-ended questions were designed to elicit information about interracial contact among police officers. Questions about interracial friendship were introduced as follows: Do you have any close friends who are African American? Which categories best describe how often you are in personal contact with African Americans? Friendship is operationally defined as people considered to be good friends. Good

friends infers persons with whom you enjoy getting together at least once a month or keep in close touch with by calling or writing.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of racial attitudes, interracial contact and social distance measures included in this survey instrument are supported by previous research. However, the validity of the argument presented here cannot be demonstrated unequivocally with cross-sectional data. But its assumptions and empirical expectations differ sharply enough from those of the self-selection thesis that assumes that whites' racial attitudes determine whether they enter or avoid situations where blacks are present, or, if forced into an interracial situation, whether they engage in personal contact with blacks. The argument assumes that the racial composition of an individual's friendship circle primarily reflects the availability of blacks and whites in their day-to-day lives. A series of empirical expectations derives from these assumptions, which can be subsumed under two broad issues: 1) The relationship between proximity to blacks and personal contact with blacks; and 2) the nature of the association between interracial contact and racial attitudes.

Data Analysis

The data for this study were analyzed, utilizing the statistical software package known as SPSS. Independent and dependent variables were measured at the nominal, ordinal, and interval levels.

Research Design

The research design included both advantages and limitations.

Advantages. Group administration of a respondent-completed questionnaire offers a number of advantages. First, it is a reasonably inexpensive way to quickly and efficiently reach a large number of respondents. A second advantage is control. The researcher can choose the venue for administration, answer questions when needed, as well as monitor the completions of the surveys. Such control allows the researcher to make each administration as similar as possible, thus exposing each respondent to reasonably similar environmental conditions. A final advantage concerns the nature of questions asked. Methodological studies tend to show that self-administered surveys are more effective in obtaining truthful answers to sensitive questions than other types of surveys (Babbie, 1989).

Limitations. Despite the advantages, self-administered surveys are not without their problems. The length and complexity of self-administered surveys are limited because questions are most likely to be short and simple, causing respondents to be more motivated to answer the questions. In contrast, respondents are less likely to answer long and complete questionnaires that rely substantially on open-ended questions (Babbie, 1989). Also, self-administered survey designs must pay attention to the literacy level of potential respondents. Substantial variation in the reading ability of potential respondents makes it necessary to use simple, easy-to-read questions. Concerns over the reading level of potential respondents were largely mitigated in this study, since sampled respondents were drawn from police officers. As a result of these concerns, this study relies exclusively on closed-ended questions, regrettably limiting the depth of the information obtained.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter IV will discuss and present the data gathered from the survey questionnaire (Appendix B). The data will include a description of demographic characteristics, as well as an overview of the interrelationship between variables, and a discussion of suggestive probability findings of sample, as it relates to the hypothesis statements.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic data allow the researcher to answer specific questions about subgroups as well as the population as a whole. The manner in which a population is distributed according to age and sex of its members is among the most useful and revealing of population data. Such information can be important when attempting to explain or understand a given finding. An analysis of the demographics also allows for determination of the extent to which the sample population is representative of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police population.

Gender

Table 1 compares the gender distribution in this study with the gender distribution at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Women comprise 4.4% of the sample; men constitute 95.6% of the sample. According to the 1999 Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Recruitment Section, women constitute 11.7% of the metropolitan police department. On the other hand, men comprise about 88.3% of the Las Vegas

Metropolitan Police Department. The sample for this study under-represents women by 7.3%; it over-represents men by 7.3%. Therefore, the sample was not large enough for gender to serve as a control variable throughout the substantive analysis.

Table 1

Sample Comparison by Gender (in percent)

Gender	Survey Sample	Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department	Difference
Male	95.6	88.3	7.3
Female	4.4	11.7	7.3

Race

Table 2 shows that 76.5% of the sample identified themselves as Caucasian; 1.5% as Asian; 12.5% African American; 5.1% Hispanic American; 2.8% Native American, and 1.5% indicated “other” as their racial background. This list of racial groups is relatively comparable to the racial composition of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. According to the 1999 Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Recruitment Section, 81.73% of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is white (non-Hispanic); 6.65% Hispanic; 9.11% African American; 1.8 % Asian; 0.64% Native American; and there was no percentage of “other.”

Table 2**Sample Comparison by Race (in percent)**

Gender	Survey Sample	Las Vegas Metro- politan Police Dept.	Sample Difference
Caucasian	76.5	81.73	-5.23
Asian	1.5	1.8	-0.3
Hispanic	5.1	6.65	-1.55
African American	12.5	9.11	+3.39
Native American	2.9	0.64	+2.26
Other	1.5	0	+1.5
Total	100	99.93	Not applicable

The survey sample under-represents Caucasians by 5.23%, Hispanics by 1.55% and Asians by 0.3%. African Americans are over-represented by 3.39% and Native Americans by 2.26%. According to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Recruitment figures, no one identified as belonging to the “other” racial category listed in Table 2.

Social Class

This study relied on two basic measures of social class: Income and education. Table 3 is a summary of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Northwest substation’s educational attainment.

Table 3

Las Vegas Northwest Metropolitan Police Department Substation (in percent)

Amount of Education	Police Officers
Less than high school graduate	.7
High school graduate	18.4
Some college attended after high school	52.9
College graduate	24.3
Post graduate or professional degree	2.9
Not known	0.8
Total	100

Less than 7% of police officers failed to earn at least a high school diploma. On the other hand, 18.4% earned a high school diploma; 52.9% of the police officers reported having earned some college credits after high school; 24.3% of the police officers earned a college degree; post-graduate or professional degrees were attained at 2.9% and 0.8% are not known. It is important to note that approximately 19.1% of Las Vegas Metropolitan Northwest Substation police officers have not attended college. This result suggests a low educational attainment rate at this particular substation.

Income

Income was used as a second measure of social class. Incomes are divided into five categories. Each of these categories should have a distinct standard of economic life and social similarities. Table 4 provides a summary of police officers' total income

including income from other sources (spouse, cohabitating with someone, widowed, divorced) before taxes.

Table 4

Summary of Household Income (in percent)

Income	Police Officers' Households
Under \$15,000	.7
\$15,000 – 25,000	11.8
\$26,000 – 39,000	32.4
\$40,000 – 59,000	50.0
\$60,000 – plus	.7
Don't know	4.4
Total	100

As seen in Table 4, only .7% of police officers' households earned under \$15,000 yearly; 11.8% earned between \$15,000 and \$25,000; 32.4% earned \$26,000 to \$39,000; 50.0% earned \$40,000 to \$59,000; .7% earned \$60,000 plus and 4.4% of these cases are missing. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Human Resources declined to provide supporting income figures due to confidentiality.

Summary

The above section provides a demographic description of the samples used in this study. Where possible, the characteristics of this sample were compared with those of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department population. This study did not take special steps to draw a scientifically representative sample and thus, did not capture a great deal

of diversity. Although the results of this study cannot be generalize beyond this sample, it is important to note that these research results rely on a sample with sufficient variability. The analysis that follows will report major variables such as racial prejudice and interracial contact. Unfortunately, due to a relatively small sample size ($N = 135$), there were not enough cases within the social class categories to effectively use these variables as a control.

Racial Attitudes and Interracial Contact

As discussed in Chapter II, the contact theory of prejudice suggests that to be effective in bringing whites into personal contact with blacks, the contact must meet a specified set of conditions. First, the contact should not take place within a competitive context. Second, the contact must be sustained rather than episodic. Third, the contact must be personal, informal and one-to-one. Finally, the setting in which the contact occurs must confer equal status on both parties rather than duplicate the racial status differential. Stouffer (1949) revealed in his analysis of the behavior and attitude study that proximity had a pronounced, positive effect on the level of informal interaction and friendship with blacks. The data contain nine sets of measures that are uniquely suited to the analysis of personal interracial contact and white racial attitudes. Questions about respondents' level of interracial contact with blacks were introduced as follows:

Have you ever invited an African American to your home for dinner?

Table 5

Cross-tabulation

Caucasian or White		<u>Ever invited African American to dinner</u>		Total
		Yes	No	
1.0	Amount Contact	24	11	35
	African-American Daily	68.6%	31.4%	100.0%
	Weekly-Monthly	19	8	27
		70.4%	29.6%	100.0%
	Less – Not at all	7	25	32
		21.9%	78.1%	100.0%
Total		50	44	94
		53.2%	46.8%	100.0%

Chi-square Test

Caucasian or White	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
1.00 Pearson chi-square	19.130a	2	.000

A Pearson correlations co-efficient cross-tabulation indicated that the association between the amount of contact and prejudice was statistically significant ($\Sigma^2 = 19.130$, $P < .05$).

After reviewing the relevant research literature on prejudice and interracial contact, it was suggested that proximity had a pronounced, positive effect on the level of

informal interaction and friendship with blacks. Further, Stouffer (1949) examined the relation between inter-groups' contact and attitude change and found that it is not likely to be generalized to other situations unless the individuals have close personal relationships with the member of the other group in real-life situations. Hence, proximity may serve as an intervening variable in the relationship between prejudice and interracial contact. The following hypotheses help to explore this possibility.

Hypothesis One: Increased interracial contact by whites will be associated with less prejudiced persons.

Following is an examination of the significance of white respondents' specific racial composition of their friendship circle. The measures (each to be addressed in turn) regarding white respondents' friends were presented as follows:

Presently, do you have any close friends who are African American?

During the time you were growing up, did you have any close friends who are African American?

The data are considerably more detailed and specific than previous research, insofar as assessing the extent of interracial contact. Previous research proposed the standard global question: Are your friends all white, mostly white, about half white and half black, mostly black or all black? The current measure goes beyond seeking non-detailed, but complete, information on the individual level data on whether white respondents have close African American friends.

Table 6**Amount of Contact with African Americans by Number of African American Friends****Caucasian**

Afro Cont	No Friends	One Friend	Two Friends	Three Plus Friends	Total
Count % within AFRO Cont.					
Daily	6	4	6	20	36
	16.7%	11.1%	16.7%	55.6%	100.0%
Weekly-Monthly	4	4	9	11	28
	14.3%	14.3%	32.1%	39.3%	100.0%
Less-Not at all	14	4	9	5	32
	43.8%	12.5%	28.1%	15.6%	100.0%
Total	24	12	24	36	96
	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	100.0%

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	15.846a	6	.015

Following is an examination of the significance of African American contact with the number of Caucasians who have close African American friends. According to the data, 16.7% of Caucasians with daily contact with African Americans have no African American friends; 11.1% have one friend; 16.7% have two friends; and 55.6% have three

or more African American friends. In addition, of those Caucasians who have weekly-monthly contact with African Americans, 14.3% had no African American friends; 14.3% had one African American friend; 32.1% had two friends; and 39.3% had three or more African American friends. Lastly, Caucasians with less-not at all contact with African Americans, 43.8% had no African American friends; 12.5% had one friend; 28.1% had two friends and 15.6% had three or more African American friends.

Table 6 is a cross-tabulation that depicts the relationship between the number of African American friends held by Caucasians. A value of 15.846a identified a significant chi-square value ($\Sigma^2 = 15.846$, $P < .05$).

One of the drawbacks in the interracial contact data analysis is the fact that acquaintances with African Americans were not measured. Respectively, it is suggestive that Caucasians who have one or more African American friends are different in their racial attitudes, as opposed to Caucasians who have no African American friends. However, it is also suggestive that personal interracial contact and acquaintances both foster the same principles and therefore should increase proximity to African Americans. Further, the relative proximity of African Americans should not be related to the amount of contact Caucasians have with African Americans (Deutsch, Morton & Collins, 1956) and Wilner et al. (1955). Previous and present research reported a strong relationship between the degree of proximity to African Americans and the extent of informal interaction and close interracial contact with African Americans.

The contact theory emphasizes that the development of personal ties is critical. If so, controlling for sheer proximity to blacks should not alter the effects shown in Table 6.

The next measure is a question that reflects whites' racial attitudes and personal predispositions for contact with or avoidance of African Americans. The baseline question was proposed as follows:

How strongly would you object if a member of your family wanted to bring an African American home to dinner?

Table 7

Amount of Contact by Social Distance with African Americans

Caucasian	V39		Total
1.00 Afro Cont.	Accept	Warmly Accept	
Daily	16	19	35
	47.7%	54.3%	100.0%
Weekly-Monthly	13	15	28
	46.4%	53.6%	100.0%
Less-Not at all	17	11	28
	60.7%	39.3%	100.0%
Total	46	45	91
	50.5%	49.5%	100.0%

Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
1.00 Pearson chi-square	1.675a	2	.433

Of Caucasians who have daily contact with African Americans, 45.7% would accept family members inviting an African American to dinner and 53.3% would warmly accept. Of Caucasians with weekly or monthly contact with African Americans, 46.4% would accept while 53.6% would warmly accept. Of Caucasians with less-not at all contact, 60.7% would accept while 39.3% would warmly accept.

A Pearson correlation co-efficient cross-tabulation indicated that the association between the amount of interracial contact with African Americans and social distance were statistically insignificant ($\Sigma^2 = .1.675$, $P > .05$). Conversely, it appears that whites' racial attitudes determine whether they enter or avoid situations where African Americans are present, or, if forced into an interracial situation, whether they engage in personal contact with African Americans. A series of empirical expectations derives from this measure, which can be subsumed under two broad issues: 1) the relationship between proximity to African Americans and personal contact with African Americans, and 2) the nature of the association between interracial contact and racial attitudes.

To supplement the measures on whites specific racial composition of close friends, an examination was made of the significance for whites' racial attitudes of the establishment of close personal friendships to blacks during the time they were growing up. The question regarding respondents' close personal friends while growing up was

introduced as follows: "During the time you were growing up, did you have any close friends who are African Americans?"

Table 8

African American Friends Growing Up by
Ever Invited African American Friends to Dinner

Caucasian		Invited		Total
1.00 Afro Grow.	Yes	No		
No Friends	10	22		32
	31.3%	68.8%		100.0%
One Friend	6	3		9
	66.7%	33.3%		100.0%
Two Friends	9	7		38
	56.3%	43.8%		100.0%
Three Plus Friends	26	12		38
	68.4%	31.6%		100.0%
Total	51	44		95
	53.7%	46.3%		100.0%

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
1.00 Pearson chi-square	10.449a	3	.015

According to the data of Caucasians who had no African American friends growing up, 31.3% stated they have invited an African American to dinner, 68.8% said they had never invited an African American to dinner. Caucasians with one African American friend growing up reported that 66.7% had invited an African American to dinner, 33.3% had not. Caucasians with two African American friends growing up reported 56.3% had invited an African American to dinner, 43.8% had not invited an African American to dinner. Of Caucasians with three or more friends, 68.4% had invited an African American to dinner, while 31.6% had not.

A Pearson correlation co-efficient indicated that the association between African American friends growing up and inviting an African American to dinner was statistically significant ($\Sigma^2 = 10.449$, $P < .05$). Conversely, it appears that personal contact accompanied by physical proximity to African Americans will influence whites' racial attitudes, and the longer sustained the greater the impact that personal contact has.

To supplement the measures in Table 8, consideration was given to other conditions specified by the contact theory necessary for a change in attitudes. Or is mere exposure to African Americans sufficient to break down prejudiced attitudes in this racist society? In addressing this question, we relied on percentage cross-tabulations. Table 9 is a comparison of effects of having African American friends growing up with Caucasians present number of African American friends.

Table 9

African American Friends Growing Up by
Present Number of African American Friends

Caucasian	Afro Friends		
	No Friends	One Friend	Two Friends
1.0 Afro Grow.	15	2	10
No Friends	44.1%	5.9%	29.4%
One Friend	2	1	4
	22.2%	11.1%	44.4%
Two Friends	5	4	3
	31.3%	18.8%	18.8%
Three plus Friends	22	40	
	50.0%	100.0%	
Total	36	99	
	36.4%	100.0%	

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
1.00 Pearson chi-square	18.465a	9	.030

A Pearson correlation co-efficient indicated that the association between Caucasians with African American friends presently versus while growing up is

statistically significant ($\Sigma^2 = 18.465$, $P < .05$). Consideration of the relationship between personal interracial contact and racial attitudes raises the possibility of self-selection: No doubt something as personal as one's circle of friends reflects our own choices and not factors that are out of one's control. It is a given fact that many Caucasians would prefer to avoid or minimize their contacts with blacks. However, it is hoped that whites' initial racial attitudes have little to do with their likelihood of acquiring an African American influence the way Caucasians think about African Americans as a group. There may be occasional extreme cases of Caucasians who eagerly seek out contact with African Americans, but for the vast majority, other exigencies overwhelm racial considerations in the selection of African American friends. Many whites might prefer to avoid African Americans. However, economic and practical concerns constrain individuals to take a job regardless of African American presence in the workplace and in a neighborhood regardless of African Americans presence there (Farley, 1994).

Society often expresses the opinion that specific traits of members of certain groups are responsible for their disadvantaged situation. Thus, in South African it was common for Caucasians to assert that blacks were not ready for full citizenship because "they remain childlike and simple." In the United States, the fact that Hispanics are more likely to be found in low-paying jobs is explained by the assertion that "they don't want to learn English." And the fact that black unemployment rates are generally twice as high as Caucasian unemployment rates is explained by the statement that "they don't want to work; they like sports and music, but not hard work, especially in school." These stereotypical explanations are stereotypical, inflexible images within a category invoked by the individual to justify prejudice (Kornblum, 2000).

Further, Stouffer (1949) asserts that negative inter-group attitudes are prejudiced attitudes that have an irrational basis and are permeated by feelings of hostility. This fundamental assumption has three important corollaries. First, inter-group attitudes are interpreted primarily as a property of individuals. Researchers were drawn by individual-level variation in attitudes toward blacks and attempted to account for that variation by examining individual differences in personality, socialization or interracial experience. The contact theory focused on the latter as a potential policy tool. Second, if negative inter-group attitudes are founded in irrationality and misinformation, the way to positive attitudes is with rationality and correct information. Serious differences do not exist between blacks and whites, and thus, exposure to blacks (under the conditions of contact theory) will reveal the falsity of negative beliefs about blacks. Third, because discriminatory behavior predispositions toward blacks reflect a feeling of antipathy, the way to nondiscriminatory predispositions is to generate positive feelings toward blacks. In short, the problem of racial prejudice is in the individual, in erroneous generalizations, and in the connection between personal feelings of antipathy and discriminatory predispositions. These all point logically to the probable efficacy of situations that would foster close personal friendship between individual Caucasians and African Americans. The following hypothesis will help to explore this possibility.

Hypothesis Two: Increased interracial contact by whites will be associated with decreased exaggerated stereotypes about blacks.

To supplement the measures on interracial contact and stereotypes, the following questions were presented.

During the time you were growing up, did you have any close friends who are African American?

How strongly would you object if a member of your family wanted to bring an African American home to dinner?

Table 10

Afro Grow. and Attitude by Social Distance

Caucasian	V 39		
	Accept	Warmly Accept	Total
1.0 Afro Grow.	17	10	27
No Friends	63.0%	37.0%	100.0%
One Friend	2	7	9
	22.2%	77.8%	100.0%
Two Friends	10	5	15
	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Three plus Friends	17	24	41
	41.5%	58.5%	100.0%
Total	46	46	92
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
1.00 Pearson chi-square	7.454a	3	.059

A Pearson correlation co-efficient found that association between having African American friends while growing up and families' reaction to inviting an African American home to dinner was statistically insignificant ($\Sigma^2 = 7.454$, $P > .059$). Of Caucasians with no African American friends while growing up, 63.0% would accept a family member inviting an African American to dinner, 37.0% would warmly accept. Of Caucasians with one African American friend growing up, 22.2% would accept, 77.8% would warmly accept. Of Caucasians with two African American friends growing up, 66.7% would accept, 33.5% would warmly accept. Of Caucasians with three or more African American friends growing up, 41.5% would accept, and 58.5% would warmly accept.

The next measure is a question that reflects Caucasians' exposure to African Americans while growing up and their present disposition toward African Americans. The baseline questions were proposed as follows:

While growing up, did you attend a school that was predominantly black, white, or fairly racially balanced?

Have you ever invited an African American to dinner?

Table 11

Racially Balanced High School by Ever Invited an African American to Dinner

Caucasian	Invited		
	Yes	No	Total
1.00 Racial Mixed	27	22	49
High School	55.1%	44.9%	100.0%
Predom White	24	24	48
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	51	46	97
	52.6%	47.4%	100.0%

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig	Exact sig	Exact sig
			(2-sided)	(2-sided)	(1-sided)
1.0 Pearson	.253a	1	.615	.686	.382
chi-square					

Table 11 summarizes the correlations between whites attending a racially balanced high school and ever invited an African American to dinner. As seen in Table 11, there is no significant relationship between the two measures. For all measures, this study attempted to explore interracial contact to the extent to which whites respond in a unitary or divergent way to the establishment of personal ties with blacks. In addressing the measures presented, reliance was placed on percentage cross-tabulation to reduce the

data as little as possible and to account for the overall variance in whites' racial attitudes for this kind of endeavor, a more formal statistical procedure is designed. So far focus has been on the contact theory's more modest prediction that when personal contact with blacks takes place, prejudice is reduced. Measures of whites attending a racially balanced high school and the number of African Americans are a further consideration. A cross-tabulation between the two measures is summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Racially Balanced High School by African American Friends

	Afro Friend				Total
	No Friends	One Friend	Two Friends	Three plus Friends	
Caucasian					
1.00 Race High School	11	6	13	21	51
Racially Mixed	21.6%	11.8%	25.5%	41.2%	100.0%
Predom. White	16	6	11	16	49
	32.7%	12.2%	22.4%	32.7%	100.0%
Total	27	12	24	37	100
	27.0%	12.0%	24.0%	37.0%	100.0%

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig (2-sided)
1.00 Pearson chi-square	1.729a	3	.631

As Table 12 indicates, there does not appear to be any significant relationship between whites who attended fairly racially balanced high schools and the number of

present African American friends. The last measure examines the correlation between whites who attended fairly racially balanced high schools and social distance. Table 13 summarizes the correlation between the two measures. Table 13 does not show any significant relationship between the two measures ($\Sigma^2 = .013$, $P > .538$).

Table 13

Racially Balanced High School by Social Distance

Caucasian		V 39		
		Accept	Warmly Accept	Total
1.0 Race High School	25	25	50	
Racially Mixed	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
Predom White	22	21	43	
	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%	
Total	47	46	93	
	50.5%	49.5%	100.0%	

Chi-square Test

Caucasian	Value	df	Asymp.sig	Exact sig
			(2-sided)	(1-sided)
1.00Pearson	.013d	1	1.000	.538
chi-square				

However, this researcher's data indicate that if proximity results from purposive behavior on the part of whites, interactions with blacks should be highly probable among

all whites with some proximity to blacks, regardless of the degree of proximity. If it is the degree of personal contact that reflects racially motivated purposive behavior within interracial situations the probability of interaction with blacks would be expected to be equally high or low regardless of the relative proportion of blacks in an integrated situation.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Discussions

This study represents an attempt to empirically test the contact theory of prejudice. The major implications of the theory were tested: Increased interracial contact by whites will be associated with less prejudiced persons.

Analysis identified a positive cross-tabulation between having invited an African American to dinner by the amount of contact by whites $\Sigma^2 = 19.130$, $P < .05$ (see Table 5). As depicted, the measure of association between contact and prejudice was significant. According to Deutsch and Collins (1951), Caucasians who have one or more African American friends are different in their racial attitudes as opposed to Caucasians who have no African American friends. This is a general implication of the contact theory and the anticipated positive effects of integration (Cook, 1978). Further, several measures of the relationship between interracial contact and whites racial attitudes contradict the logical expectations of contact theory. Table 6 demonstrates a statistically significant correlation between the number of African American friends reported by Caucasians and the amount of contact $\Sigma^2 = 15.846$, $P < .05$. This result is, however, consistent with a significant research tradition discussed by Brigham (1971), Taft (1959), and Mackie (1973), all of whom suggest that familiarity or contact with the target group should have a positive association (i.e., reduce prejudice, decrease erroneous

stereotypes). A correlation analysis of these variables suggests the following model of interracial contact.

Correlation Model of Interracial Contact and Whites' Racial Attitudes

Interracial Contact → Prolonged Positive Association with Blacks → Reduced Prejudicial Stereotypes

Lack of Prolonged Association with Blacks Prejudicial Increased Prejudicial Stereotypes

Figure 2.0 Correlation Model of Interracial Contact and Whites' Racial Attitudes

The relationship between the amount of contact between African Americans and Caucasian Americans, and social distance was insignificant $\Sigma^2 = 1.675$, $P > .05$. However, the mutually reinforcing effects of proximity and personal contact reported in Table 7 undermine the idea that Caucasians with negative racial attitudes avoid interacting with African Americans in settings dictated by the contact theory. If these avoidance tactics were taking place, Caucasians with no interracial contact would have more negative attitudes than whites who have had no exposure to African Americans. The issue of who, in everyday living, is exposed to interracial interactions under conditions specified in the contact theory is an important one, especially for those who have prejudicial attitudes. Such attitudes enter into how a person interprets such encounters (Smith & Zaraté, 1992).

Further, Weigel and Howe (1985) cite evidence that prejudiced persons are uninformed about the way out-group members behave and the way in-group members should behave toward them. These behaviors reportedly increase anxiety at the mere prospect of having to interact with a person of another racial or ethnic group. Therefore, it is suggestive that prejudiced individuals tend to avoid interracial contact. Much of the

literature on this topic indicates that attitudes lead to stereotypical prejudices (Allport, 1958).

The effects of both current and previous exposure to African Americans suggest a cumulative process whereby whites with more interracial experience find it easier to establish contact when they encounter African Americans, as depicted in Table 9 $\Sigma^2 = 18.465$, $P < .05$. However, the data in Table 10 offer no evidence for these expectations. The data analysis identified a negative correlation between the number of African American friends held by Caucasians while growing up by social distance $\Sigma^2 = 7.454$, $P > .059$. However, as implied previously Caucasians who experience either proximity or personal contact, without the reinforcement of the other, have essentially the same profile of racial attitudes as Caucasians with no exposure to African Americans. In terms of exposure, Smith and Zaraté (1992) found that people are usually exposed at a distance (e.g., without stereotype-consistent attributes). In contrast, increased familiarity with a group member resulting from extensive personal interaction over time would usually expose the perceiver to counter-stereotypic attributes, and a different type of exemplar would result. Table 11 summarizes the relationship between previous exposure to African Americans in high school ever invited an African American to dinner. This result showed an insignificant relationship between the two measures $\Sigma^2 = .253$, $P > .382$.

The remaining measures were also insignificant. Table 12 summarizes experience in racially balanced high school and present identification of African American friends $\Sigma^2 = 1.729$, $P > .631$. As observed in Table 12, there is no significant relationship between the two variables. However, the data suggest that if proximity results from purposive behavior, interaction with African Americans should be highly

probable among all Caucasians who experience proximity to African Americans, regardless of the degree of proximity. If the degree of personal contact reflects racially motivated purposive behavior within interracial situations, the probability of interaction with African Americans would be expected to be equally high or low, regardless of the relative proportion of African Americans in an integrated situation. Moreover, it is possible that these constructs co-vary to a certain degree while also maintaining some independence (Taft, 1959).

Conclusions

This study attempted to test the contact theory of prejudice and extend the literature on prejudice. The results demonstrated a significant relationship between interracial contact and prejudice. However, the study also identified an important association used to construct a model of interracial contact and whites racial attitudes (see Figure 2.0). The analysis suggests that lack of prolonged association with blacks will increase prejudicial stereotypes.

Allport (1958) argued that the effects of proximity and personal contact are mutually dependent and mutually reinforcing; each much be present for the other to have an effect, and the impact of each tends to increase as the level as the other increases. These results confirm and generalize for a broad array of racial attitudes. Sheer proximity to blacks appears to be of little value, unless accompanied by personal contact. But proximity does have a direct effect of its own on racial attitudes, when personal contact accompanies it, and the more personal contact there is, the greater the effect of proximity. Conversely, it appears that personal contact needs to be backed up by

physical proximity to African Americans if it is to influence whites' racial attitudes, and the more sustained the proximity, the greater the impact that personal contact has.

While the importance of developing a variety of contacts with blacks is congruent with the contact theory, the same cannot be said of the apparent unimportance of the intimacy of those contacts. The contact theory emphasizes that contacts with duration and intimacy (such as friendships) are more motivationally compelling. This study found support of this measure. The second stipulation of the contact theory infers that interracial contacts should take place between status equals to be effective. However, when placed in the context of the research results, the meaning changes. The contention is that interracial contact cannot offset the status differential between Caucasians and African Americans; this is embedded in the fabric of society.

The policy implication of these results is less than encouraging. While forcing people to engage in highly intimate contacts across racial lines is undesirable, the significance of experiencing a variety of extended interracial contact cannot be underestimated. Therefore, social policies that encourage individuals of diverse backgrounds to interact with another in a variety of settings should be promoted wherever feasible (in the schools, workplace and community). Most Caucasian Americans who have contact with African Americans only experience "token" contact. This refers to a perfunctory effort or symbolic gesture toward accomplishing racial integration. It is proposed that a more in-depth study of inter-group attitudes is in order. Given this perspective, the empirical relationship between contact and whites' racial attitudes presents a different issue than that posed by the contact theory. The issue is that such intrinsic factors invade the boundaries of intimate friendship. For example, the pervasive

force of societal defined inequalities determines the predisposition of the individual. A relationship between African Americans and Caucasian Americans not marked by historical discrimination and inequality would perhaps be a different relationship from the one with which American society is confronting today. The important question is not whether interracial contact can counter prejudicial stereotypes, but rather how to foster equality between the two conflicting groups.

Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

One major limitation of this study was the use of a small, non-random sample, a use that presented numerous problems. First, there were not enough cases to control for a number of demographic variables (e.g., gender and education). This lack of cases makes it difficult to know the extent to which gender and education can account for the variation in central variables like interracial contact and prejudice. Further, the under-representation of females and the over-representation of males made it difficult to interpret the results of the study. A larger sample means may have produced more significant results.

The sample population was also problematic. Without further investigation the study was unable to point to mutually conclusive limitations. The researcher suggests that a methodological explanation be made valuable to future researchers. In the future it would be preferable to do a more in-depth study of inter-group attitudes and behaviors in a variety of settings, especially in the schools. Although a number of interesting results were generated by this study, it would be useful to use a random, representative sample to test the model in Figure 2.0. It would be useful to vary the racial and ethnic identity of the researchers to see if this makes a difference. A predominantly Caucasian police force

that has been under attack for its racial conducts toward African Americans would perhaps present a different public persona. Despite the fact that a Caucasian liaison was present during the interviews, this presence may not have provided a true depiction. It is recommended that a replicate study be in order. It is the contention that this study can be used as a foundation for further research.

It would seem fair to conclude that most studies show that true acquaintance lessens prejudice. One important qualification must, however, be noted. Prejudice is reflected in both beliefs and in attitudes. It seems highly probable that increased knowledge of a minority group would lead directly to a truer set of beliefs. It does not follow, however, that attitudes will change proportionately. For example, plenty of rationalizations for prejudice are available to people who have a good deal of sound knowledge. For the sake of caution, therefore, the study concludes as follows:

Interracial contact that brings knowledge and acquaintance is likely to engender sounder beliefs concerning minority groups, and for this reason can contribute to the reduction of prejudice. Moreover, it is also fair to conclude that interracial contact as a variable cannot always overcome the prejudice variable. Prejudice may be deep-rooted in the character structure of the individual. The trend of evidence favors the conclusion that knowledge about and acquaintance with African Americans make for tolerant and friendly attitudes.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

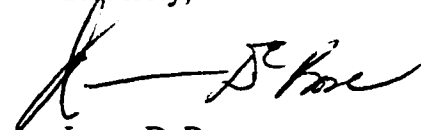
Dear Participant:

My name is Joann DeBose and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation research project that examines interracial contact.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your responses are anonymous and can in no way be associated with you as an individual. If you should have any questions or concerns about this study, feel free to contact me at the UNLV Department of Sociology, (702) 985-3322. You may also contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University (702) 895-1357 to verify the legitimacy of this research. You are under no obligation to sign this consent form. However, only those participants who signed forms will participate in this study.

Your support of this research is sincerely appreciated. It is extremely important to learn as much as we can about interracial contact. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Joann DeBose

CONSENT FORM

I have read the instructions provided above and agree to participate in this research project.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL CONTACT SURVEY

SOCIAL CONTACT SURVEY

DATE _____
TIME _____

Hello, my name is _____. I am a Graduate Student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. We are interested in your opinions and experiences regarding interracial contact within and outside the workplace. Your participation is voluntary and all your responses will be kept completely confidential. The questions will take about 10 to 12 minutes. Thank you.

First, I would like to ask you some questions about being a police officer.

1. How many years have you been a police officer in metro?
____ 1. 1-2 years
____ 2. 3-5 years
____ 3. 6-10 years
____ 4. 11-15 years
____ 5. 16-20 years
____ 6. 21+ years
2. What was your occupation before you became a police officer?
_____ [POSTCODE]
3. There is a lot of talk in society about police officers being required to have minimum college credits in order to be certified by the state for initial employment. Do you [READ]
____ 1. Strongly Agree
____ 2. Agree
____ 3. No Opinion
____ 4. Disagree
____ 5. Strongly Disagree
4. If you had to do it all over again and knew what you now know, would you still become a police officer or not?
____ 1. Definitely yes
____ 2. Probably yes
____ 3. Don't know
____ 4. Probably no
____ 5. Definitely no

5. There are many personal characteristics viewed as essential in performing the duties of a police officer. I would like to read you a few of these characteristics and ask you to what extent you strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of them? [READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES]

A. Police officers must exhibit ethical conduct toward all persons equally.	SA	A	D K	D	SD
B. Police officers must maintain a balanced perspective in the face of exposure to the worst side of human nature.	SA	A	D K	D	SD
C. When confronted with the possibility of losing control of a Situation, police officers must be aggressive.	SA	A	D K	D	SD
D. Police officers must tolerate personal stress in many forms.	SA	A	D K	D	SD
E. Police officers must use their best judgment in dealing with the public.	SA	A	D K	D	SD

6. As a police officer, you come into contact with many groups of people. In your off duty hours, how often do you have close personal contact with African Americans?

- ☐ 1. Daily
☐ 2. Weekly
☐ 3. Monthly
☐ 4. Little
☐ 5. Not at all
☐ 8. [DK]
☐ 9. [RA]

7. In your off duty hours, how often do you have close personal contact with Asian Americans?

- ☐ 1. Daily
☐ 2. Weekly
☐ 3. Monthly
☐ 4. Little
☐ 5. Not at all
☐ 8. [DK]
☐ 9. [RA]

8. In your off duty hours, how often do you have close personal contact with Hispanic Americans?

- ☐ 1. Daily
- ☐ 2. Weekly
- ☐ 3. Monthly
- ☐ 4. Little
- ☐ 5. Not at all
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about personal contact outside the workplace.

9. Have you ever invited an African American to your home for dinner within the last year?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

10. Have you ever been invited by an African American to his/her home for dinner?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

11. Which categories best describe how often you are in personal contact with African Americans in your neighborhood during the work week?

- ☐ 1. Once a week
- ☐ 2. Twice a week
- ☐ 3. Three to four times a week
- ☐ 4. Less
- ☐ 5. Not at all
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

12. Which categories best describe how often you are in personal contact with Asian Americans in your neighborhood during the work week?

- ☐ 1. Once a week
- ☐ 2. Twice a week
- ☐ 3. Three to four times a week
- ☐ 4. Less
- ☐ 5. Not at all
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

13. Which categories best describe how often you are in personal contact with Hispanic Americans in your neighborhood during the work week?

- ☐ 1. Once a week
- ☐ 2. Twice a week
- ☐ 3. Three to four times a week
- ☐ 4. Less
- ☐ 5. Not at all
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

14. Presently, do you have any close friends who are African American?

- ☐ 1. No, not really
- ☐ 2. One
- ☐ 3. Two
- ☐ 4. Three
- ☐ 5. Four or more
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

15. Presently, do you have any close friends who are White?

- ☐ 1. No, not really
- ☐ 2. One
- ☐ 3. Two
- ☐ 4. Three
- ☐ 5. Four or more
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

16. During the time you were growing up, did you have any close friends who are African American?

- ☐ 1. No, not really
- ☐ 2. One
- ☐ 3. Two
- ☐ 4. Three
- ☐ 5. Four or more
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

17. During the time you were growing up, did you have any close friends who are White?

- ☐ 1. No, not really
- ☐ 2. One
- ☐ 3. Two
- ☐ 4. Three
- ☐ 5. Four or more
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

18. Did you attend a school that was predominantly Black. White or fairly racially balanced?

- ☐ 1. Black
- ☐ 2. White
- ☐ 3. Fairly racially balanced
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

19. How strongly would you object if a member of your family wanted to bring an African American home to dinner? Would you:

- ☐ 1. Strongly object
- ☐ 2. Object
- ☐ 3. Accept
- ☐ 4. Warmly accept
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

Next, we would like to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes.

20. In which state did you spend most of your time growing up?

_____ [POSTCODE]

21. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic background? Is it: [Read]

- ☐ 1. African American
- ☐ 2. Hispanic or Latin American
- ☐ 3. White
- ☐ 4. Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ 5. Native American/Alaskan
- ☐ 6. Other (Specify: _____) [POSTCODE]
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

22. Are you presently [Read]

- ☐ 1. Married
- ☐ 2. Single, never married
- ☐ 3. Living with someone
- ☐ 4. Widowed
- ☐ 5. Divorced
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

23. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? [Read]

- ☐ 1. Less than high school graduate
- ☐ 2. High school graduate
- ☐ 3. Some college attended after high school
- ☐ 4. College graduate
- ☐ 5. Post graduate or professional degree
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

24. Please indicate your approximate total household income from all sources before taxes this year. Is it: [Read]

- ☐ 1. Under \$15,000
- ☐ 2. \$15,000 -- \$25,000
- ☐ 3. \$26,000 -- \$39,000
- ☐ 4. \$40,000 -- \$59,000
- ☐ 5. \$60,000 -- plus
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

25. What best describes your religion or faith? Is it: [Read]

- ☐ 1. Catholic
- ☐ 2. Protestant
- ☐ 3. Christian (specify: _____) [POSTCODE]
- ☐ 4. Jewish
- ☐ 5. Other (Specify: _____) [POSTCODE]
- ☐ 6. No affiliation
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

26. Are you male or female?

- ☐ 1. Male
- ☐ 2. Female

27. What is your rank?

- ☐ 1. Patrol
- ☐ 2. Sergeant
- ☐ 3. Lieutenant
- ☐ 4. Captain
- ☐ 8. [DK]
- ☐ 9. [RA]

APPENDIX C

HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL LETTER



DATE: January 3, 2000

TO: Joann Watts-DeBose
M/S 5033

FROM: *K. Green* Kerry Green, Sponsored Programs Coordinator
Office of Sponsored Programs (X1357)

RE: Status of Project Involving Human Subject
Protocol Title: The Impact of Interracial Contact on Stereotypical Perceptions

Advisor: R. Parker
OSP Number: 115s0299-187e

The protocol for the project referenced above was reviewed by the UNLV Institutional Review Board in February of 1999. The protocol was approved for a period of one year from the date of that approval notification.

According to Federal regulations, approvals may be given for a one year duration. If the project is still active, i.e., interaction with human subjects still being conducted, then the investigator must notify the Office of Sponsored Programs. If all interaction with human subjects is complete on the project, no notification is necessary.

Please submit to our office through your advisor a written request to extend your research project. In your memo please indicate whether there is a change or no change in your protocol. If there is a change in your protocol, i.e., research methods or procedures or subjects, please resubmit a protocol to this office for review.

If we do not receive any notification by way of memorandum requesting an extension of your protocol, then we will assume that the project is completed. Please submit your memo and/or protocol to our office as soon as possible (M/S 1037). Please reference the above name of project and the OSP number when submitting your memorandum.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact our office at Ext. 1357.

cc: Advisor
OSP File

Office of Sponsored Programs
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 451037 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1037
(702) 895-1357 • FAX (702) 895-4242

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Dissertation Title: The Impact of Interracial Contact on Whites' Racial Attitudes

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