

DIFFERENTIAL RACIAL ATTITUDES
OF BLACK AND WHITE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS
IN THREE NORTHERN CITIES

A SUBSTANTIVE PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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Advisor: Prof. Betty A. Cook

The present study grew out of a concern for the effects of the racial attitudes of public school teachers on the academic and personality development of their students. The author's aim was to design a quantitative study to evaluate the extent to which prejudicial racial attitudes exist among black and white public school teachers. Specifically, the author proposed to examine the differential attitudes of a sample of 100 black teachers and a sample of 100 white teachers as they relate to members of their own racial group and to members of the other racial group.

CONCENTRATION (PPA)

SUBSTANTIVE AREA (ID)

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In recent years much attention has been directed to the equalization of educational opportunities in the United States. Much of this effort has focused on the professional responsibility of public school teachers. In 1968, the National Education Association formulated a code of ethics for teachers which has acted as a broad control over teacher's attitudes and behavior. These standards generally require teachers to be moral and to conduct themselves in such a way as to command the respect of their students. One of the ethical pronouncements commits teachers to "deal justly and considerately with each student." In the last analysis, however, each individual teacher works out his own code of ethics and behavior within the rather broad frame of social and professional expectations.

Principle I, Section 5 of the NEA code speaks directly to the subject of racial discrimination. A task force employed by NEA (1968) to look into discrimination practices reported numerous acts which seem to constitute violations of this provision. Prejudicial attitudes, stemming from preconceived notions of superiority and inferiority of certain racial and ethnic groups, were found to be prevalent among both black and white public school teachers. These

attitudes of subordination and superordination often find overt expression in many classrooms, and thus serve to negate the teacher's learning objectives.

Racial prejudice runs deep in the fabric of American society, influencing the private as well as the public lives of all individuals. Despite the depth to which it reaches, racist practices are not always detected. It is not limited to blatant confrontations between the majority group and minorities, but most daily manifestations of racism are disguised and rationalized in many ways. For example, it may be hidden behind the sanctification of the "neighborhood school" by whites bent on blocking compliance with court orders to desegregate schools. Or it may be covered over by thinly veiled assertions that minorities characteristically have little interest in education. But hidden or obvious, racial prejudice is pervasive in our society.

Moreover, racial prejudice and discrimination have become institutionalized in American society. That is, racial inequality has been created and maintained by white dominated institutions and condoned by white society. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the system of public education. In operating as they do, many schools engage in what Merton has termed the "self-fulfilling prophecy."¹

¹Robert K. Merton, Social Theory And Social Structures, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), pp. 147-150.

In other words, organizing and operating on the assumption of minority inferiority these schools produce the very condition that was originally held to exist. This condition of racial inequality in public education persists despite the recent trend toward desegregation, and teachers are very instrumental in its perpetuation.

As members of society, public school teachers are not immune to the prevalent racial attitudes that exist in their particular subculture. We might expect, then, that many of them would possess the prejudicial attitudes toward other racial groups that are commonly expressed by members of their own racial group. The racial attitudes of teachers are particularly important because of their prominent role in the learning process. They impart knowledge, implant values, mold attitudes, and help young learners to mature as total personalities. Teachers are academic parents during the school day and their actions and human relationships must be reasonable and fair. Prejudicial racial attitudes hinder the degree to which the teacher can deal fairly with all students, and when they do not they can cause irreparable damage to the young learner.

Moreover, prejudicial attitudes not only limit a teacher's effectiveness, but these attitudes are passed on the subjective anecdotal records that are kept in the pupil's school file. A study by Diboky reports that there is tre-

mendous abuse in the preparation of these records.² Student records are used more and more to get a picture of the whole child, his family, and his psychological, social, and academic development. Other officials and agencies have access to these records, including the local police, juvenile courts, health department officials, and even FBI and CIA agents. Thus, derogatory comments made by teachers and recorded in the student's permanent file is a problem that needs to be evaluated in terms of the teacher's prejudices because they are potentially damaging to his chances for future employment or equal justice under the law.

Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to determine the differential racial attitudes of public school teachers. Specifically, we will attempt to ascertain the existence and extent of prejudicial attitudes held by public school teachers toward students of the same race and of races different from their own. Stereotypes may be usefully employed to empirically evaluate teachers' racial attitudes. A stereotype is generally defined as a standardized concept or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group.³ In addition to describing recognized groups, ste-

²Diane Diboky, "How Secret School Records Can Hurt Your Child." Parada Magazine, (March 1974), pp. 32-36.

³Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice. (New York: Doubleday Press, 1958), pp. 84-92.

reotypes function to specify the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior to which group members are expected to conform. Thus, they are an aggregate of shared beliefs and values and, as such, constitute cultural norms. We make the assumption that, defined as social norms, stereotypes have utility as indicators of the degree of racial prejudice in a society.

Significance of the Study

There was a time when the problems of the abused child solved themselves. He waited until he was old enough to get a job, dropped out of school and went to work. Today these problems cannot be solved so simply. Political, social, and economic pressures are demanding that these students complete their high school training. The minority student whose retardation is not induced by mental deficiencies recognizes the instructors teaching down to him and this knowledge often adds to his frustration and lack of interest. This undesirable situation deserves special attention that is directed to its alleviation.

Scope of the Study

The study will limit itself to: (1) administering a questionnaire designed to provide information concerning the racial attitudes of black and white public school teachers; (2) Modifying the Katz and Brady adjective list, using 50 of the traits which measure the favorableness of a number of traits typically used to characterize different racial

groups; and (3) analyzing the differential attitudes of black and white public school teachers toward different racial groups. The study will utilize this information to make some projections about the effects of the differential attitudes, if any exist, on the academic and social growth of students.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research on Teacher Attitudes

Much of the research dealing with teachers' attitudes toward working in desegregated teaching situations is of a case study type in which quotes involving teacher attitudes are used. Giles used this approach in a study of white teachers' feelings about the expected difficulties in an integrated classroom.⁴ An analysis of the statements made by the teachers show that they were at first reluctant about mixed classes. Giles found, however, that the teachers later gained courage after observing how things went and were willing to try.

Robert Amos surveyed the attitudes of a group of black teachers toward integration.⁵ He found that eighty-eight percent of the black teachers felt there would be adjustment problems in faculty integration. They cited the potential for racial development which was enhanced by segregated schools. They felt the black child in integrated schools

⁴Harry H. Giles, The Integrated Classroom, (New York Basic Books, Inc., 1959), pp. 48-71.

⁵Robert Amos, "The Dominant Attitudes of Negro Teachers Toward Integration in Education". The Journal of Educational Psychology. Dec., 1955, pp. 118-121.

would be excluded from the normal associations of school life and would be deprived of his natural channels of self-expression.

Other studies are reports of local surveys made to sample teacher attitudes concerning desegregation. Doddy and Edwards conducted an attitudinal study on one hundred fifty black public school teachers in South Carolina.⁶ Fifty percent of the teachers questioned stated that they would stay with the segregated school if given a chance. However, the same teachers projected that three-fourths of all black teachers would stay in a segregated situation if given a choice. The authors concluded that: "It is axiomatic that people who have generally lived apart and whose limited associations have been on the basis of status inequality, hold imperfect images of one another."

Valien in another local study reports on the desegregation of schools in St. Louis, Missouri. She reported that less than five percent of the teachers had not changed their basic attitudes about desegregation. She quoted one teacher as saying, "It will take some time to get over some of my Southern background and teaching." Another teacher expressing a different attitude said, "It is amazing how quickly you can get over racial generalizations and stereotypes and

⁶Harley Doddy and Franklin Edwards, "Apprehension of Negro Teachers Concerning Desegregation in South Carolina." Journal of Negro Education, Fall, 1955, p. 62.

begin to see and respect people as individuals." Valien reported that black students noticed distinct discrimination from some teachers. One black student remarked, "Some teachers are still prejudiced and regardless of how hard you work you get bad grades."⁷

The St. Louis school system reported its progress three years after desegregation. One teacher who felt desegregation a mistake states, "The Negro children do not try to conform to our standards. They show less ambition, do not want to work, and are more troublesome. I attribute it to the fact that the parents have relaxed and the children are reverting to type." The report of another teacher in that system indicates a different attitude: "Work with mixed classes has been no different this year than last, and the problems are individual, not racial."⁸

The Southern Educational Reporting Service conducted a secret poll of the racial attitudes of teachers in Marshall, Texas. Both black and white teachers were asked, "In a classroom situation, do you believe that Negro children can be better understood by white teachers or by Negro teachers?" The question was repeated using "white children" in the phrase. The results indicated that 95.5 percent of the

⁷Bonita Valien, The St. Louis Story: A Study of Desegregation, (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, 1956), pp. 187-193.

⁸Ibid., p. 195.

teachers felt the black child would be best understood by a black teacher. Only three respondents reported that a white teacher would better understand a black child. The rephrased question indicated that 94.3 percent believed that the white child would be better understood by a white teacher. Five respondents felt a black teacher would understand a white child better in the classroom situation.⁹

Albert Spruvill investigated the attitude of 280 black teachers in four border states after they had been placed on desegregated faculties. Only thirty percent of the respondents reported that the teacher-pupil relationship was better than before desegregation. The thirty percent felt that there was a better acceptance by pupils, fewer disciplinary problems, a lower rate of school difficulty, and more student motivation.¹⁰

Robert Havighurst completed a three-year comprehensive study of the Chicago school system which included teachers' attitudes about desegregation. Havighurst asked the teachers about working in "difficult" schools. Fifty-three percent of the elementary and fifty-two percent of the high school teachers said they liked working in such schools. Of those who had no such experience, twenty-eight percent of the ele-

⁹ Southern Education Reporting Service, (Southern School News, Volume IV, July 1957), pp. 20-31.

¹⁰ Albert Spruvill, "The Negro Teacher in the Process of Desegregation", Journal of Negro Education, (Winter 1960), pp. 88-91.

mentary and thirty-one percent of the high school teachers said they would be willing to accept an assignment in such a situation.¹¹

King, et al., made an analysis of classroom behavior at the elementary level in terms of teacher-pupil interaction by race and sex. They discussed the impact of a school desegregation plan on teacher-pupil relations at the classroom level. King and his collaborators found that white males were most skillful in teacher interaction and black males were least skillful of the four race-sex groups. All students interacted more with teachers in an integrated than in the all black school.

Ritterband and Silberstein investigated group disorders in public school in New York City. They attempted to determine the extent to which variations in rates of student disorder and disruption reflect variations in ethnic and racial aggregates in the schools. They suggest that disorder is a response to academic failure and occurs when inexperienced teachers (who tend to teach the non-white students) cannot capture their pupils' interest and cannot control them.¹²

¹¹Robert Havighurst, The Public Schools of Chicago, (Chicago: Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1964), pp. 101-113.

¹²Paul Ritterband & Richard Silberstein, "Group Disorder in the Public Schools", American Sociological Review, (August, 1973), pp. 33-34.

Dianne Diboky reported on the effects of the derogatory information recorded by teachers in students' personal files. Her survey of representative school systems throughout the country revealed that there is tremendous abuse on preparation of these records. She found that teachers thought nothing of inserting comments like the following: "I feel sorry for the teacher who gets this kid next year." Not only are direct comments made but derogatory interpretations have been made by over-zealous teachers. For example, one teacher wrote, "An habitual liar and a real sickie. Ego-impaired and maladjusted, unnaturally interested in girls, this child has caused me a lot of concern. Very hyperactive and immature; I recommend a medical exam at the end of the year."¹³

Diboky found that a nine-year old boy who once hugged a classmate had "homosexual tendencies" written into his permanent record. In one case, a teacher wrote, "Can read and do numbers but is too immature and refuses to use his left hand." She did not mention the boy had an orthopedic problem on his left hand. Another example shows where a high school student who once criticized his principal on a radio station had "radical tendencies" written into his record.¹⁴

The review of the literature indicates that there is a need for continued analysis of teacher attitudes toward de-

¹³Diboky, Op. Cit., p. 78.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 79.

segregation. Few studies, for example, have sampled both black and white teacher attitudes on the same questions. The present study proposes to do so. The approach used in this analysis is grounded in the psychological correlates of prejudice and stereotyping.

Prejudice and stereotyping

Edgar Vinacke conducted a study which gives a number of useful insights on how stereotyping emerges. First, stereotyping is not a one-way street with only the dominant group engaging in the practice. A group not only stereotypes other groups but is itself stereotyped by other groups. Thus, the study found that a group may characterize another favorably and be favorably characterized in return, or characterize a group unfavorably and be unfavorably characterized. Furthermore, each group tends to stereotype not only other groups but also itself. And the two images may not always coincide.¹⁵

Gordon Allport presented the classic work on the concepts of prejudice and stereotypes. In his book, The Nature of Prejudice, he contends that categorical information concerning a person is formed daily; such as he is black, he is white, she is a teacher, he is a principal. If one is to evaluate or form an opinion of that person, their impression

¹⁵Edgar Vinacke, "Stereotyping Among National-Racial Groups in Hawaii: A Study in Ethnocentrism." Journal of Social Psychology, Volume 30, (1949), pp. 386-387.

will be strongly colored by the categorical information obtained. The act of assigning attributes to a person solely according to the category to which he belongs is known as stereotyping.¹⁶

We have noted that stereotypes can be usefully employed to evaluate racial attitudes. Stereotypes are a special class of categories in which individuals are assigned according to the possession of a common characteristic. An individual is recognized, and then on the basis of this one feature, other attributes are assigned to him. Thus, membership in one category is sufficient to evoke the judgment that a given individual possesses all the attributes commonly assigned to that group. In this sense, stereotypes represent a categorical response to racial and ethnic groups.

We have further noted that, defined as social norms, stereotypes are useful for evaluating the attitudes of public school teachers. In addition to describing recognized groups, stereotypes function to specify the attitudes, beliefs and behavior to which group members are expected to conform. Thus, they are an aggregate of shared beliefs and values and, as such, constitute cultural norms. The interaction between members of dominant and minority groups is governed by social norms. Norms constitute the rules and regulations which govern the behavior of the members of society. They are the ex-

¹⁶Allport, *Op. Cit.*, p. 107.

pectations shared by the members of the overall society or by the members of particular groups within the society.

A large part of human behavior can be understood in terms of the operation of the social norms of our society or of subgroups of which we are members. Racial prejudice and discrimination can also be explained on the basis of the operation of social norms. The individual is viewed as functioning within a subculture in which racial prejudice and discrimination are prescribed by the prevailing norms. Social norms serve to channel and regulate the patterns of interracial relations. They tell the dominant group member how he is expected to think, act, and feel toward a minority group member. Similarly, they tell the minority group member how he is expected to think, act, and feel toward a dominant group member.

Of key importance to our analysis is a basic assumption implicit in stereotypes as they function as social norms. This assumption states that a dominant group establishes the social norms to which the total society is to conform. This implies that to the extent that minorities subscribe to the social norms in their society, they will absorb the stereotypes entertained by the majority group, including negative stereotypes regarding themselves. This suggests that students will absorb the negative stereotypes concerning their racial group reflected by their teachers. Such a situation, if it

exists, has dire consequences for the personality development and self-esteem of minority students. Thus, to the extent that negative racial attitudes are found to be prevalent among public school teachers, this problem exists in American public education.

Studies of Racial Stereotypes

A number of studies report the existence, persistence, or change of racial stereotypes in America. One methodological approach to the topic has involved the selection by subjects (usually college students) from a list of adjectives those traits they consider applicable to given racial and ethnic groups. In an original study employing this method, Katz and Brady asked undergraduate students at Princeton University to select from a list of adjectives those traits considered most characteristic of ten racial and ethnic groups. No traits were suggested to the students. The purpose of the authors was to obtain an exhaustive list of adjectives unlimited by their knowledge of stereotypes. The adjectives generated by the 25 students comprised a list of 84 qualities to which a different student sample was requested to respond. The sample of 100 white undergraduate students were instructed to select from the list of 84 traits those characteristics considered most typical of each of ten racial or ethnic groups. No limit was placed on the number of adjectives to be selected. After all of the attributes

pertaining to each group had been selected, the subjects were asked to go back over the ten listing and check the five most characteristic traits of the respective groups. Katz and Brady found that white Americans assigned positive traits to themselves, while assigning negative traits to black Americans.¹⁷

Bayton and Meene, in two subsequent studies, employing the same procedure as Katz and Brady, found that blacks also assigned positive traits to white Americans while acknowledging the negative traits assigned to their own racial group. This pattern was found to still persist in a Post-World War II study by Bayton and Byoune. Using the Katz and Brady instrument, they discovered that blacks continued to assign positive traits to whites but were inclined to attribute negative traits to blacks.¹⁸

Focusing upon the question of stereotype rigidity, G. M. Gilbert repeated the Katz and Brady experiment at Princeton University. Hypothesizing that stereotypes persist or fade over time as an accompaniment of shifting international relations, socio-economic conditions, and propaganda, Gilbert found that stereotypes were consistently weaker in 1950 than

¹⁷Daniel Katz and K. W. Brady, "Stereotypes of 100 College Students", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Volume 28, (1932), pp. 101-105.

¹⁸James A. Bayton, "The Radical Stereotypes of Negro College Students", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Volume 36, (1941), pp. 98-99.

in 1932. The negative traits listed most frequently to describe blacks in 1950 were the same as those in 1932, but by a much smaller percentage of the respondents. Gilbert also noted a greater reluctance of the students he sampled to engage in stereotyping at all.¹⁹

Karlin, et al., again replicated the Katz and Brady study to determine the persistence or change in stereotypes over three generations of Princeton students. He discovered that this generation of students held weaker stereotypes of blacks than both the students in the original 1932 study and the 1950 study by Gilbert. During each period the negative traits assigned to blacks were the ones most frequently in the initial Katz and Brady study; however, in each succeeding study the traits were checked by a significantly smaller percentage of students than in the previous studies.²⁰

Maykovich investigated the reciprocity of stereotypes between black and white Americans. Applying the Katz and Brady technique, he tested the hypothesis that minorities absorb negative traits regarding themselves held by the majority. Maykovich found that, relative to earlier studies, white subjects characterized themselves in deci-

¹⁹G. M. Gilbert, "Stereotype Persistence and Change Among College Students", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Volume 46, (1951), pp. 276-277.

²⁰Marvin Karlin, et al., "On Fading of Social Stereotypes: Studies in Three Generations of College Students", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Volume 13, (1969) pp. 304-305.

dedly less positively terms, while shifting their perceptions of blacks to more aggressive characterizations, like "revengeful" and "quarrelsome." Moreover, while whites continued to describe themselves with, more or less, positive traits, blacks resisted absorbing this white image and tended to describe whites in negative terms. Maykovich concluded that while in the past it was the black minority that reflected the dominant white view, the emergence of "Black Power" changed the direction of influence in disseminating the stereotype. As a result, the attempt of blacks to create a new image for themselves was also reflected in white perceptions.²¹

Bayton, McAlister, and Hamer argued that a major fallacy contained in the typical stereotype studies was the implication that persons who stereotype do not make subgroup distinctions within the large group being stereotyped. Hypothesizing that racial stereotypes vary according to class distinctions within race, they demonstrated, using the Katz and Brady method, that when members of a racial group were identified in terms of class differences, the stereotyped impression of a group varied significantly.

The above studies employ the sample technique originally formulated by Katz and Brady in their 1932 study. This par-

²¹Minako Maykovich, "Reciprocity in Racial Stereotypes: White, Black and Yellow", American Journal of Sociology, Volume 77, (1972), pp. 427-428.

ticular literature includes studies of the uniformity in attitudes held toward various racial and national groups shown by the American majority, (Katz and Brady, 1932), studies from the opposite direction concerning the attitudes of American minorities toward the majority and toward each other (Bayton, 1941; Meene, 1943; Maykovich, 1972), the amelioration of such attitudes over time (Gilbert, 1951; Bayton and Byoune, 1947; Karlin, et al., 1969), and the salience of racial stereotypes in terms of class within race (Bayton, McAlister, and Hamer, 1956). The present study employs this theoretical and methodological viewpoint in a study of the racial attitudes of black and white public school teachers.

CHAPTER III
HYPOTHESES AND METHOD

Some Guiding Hypotheses

As stated earlier, the main purpose of this study is to provide some quantitative data to evaluate the differential racial attitudes of black and white public school teachers. The writer suggests that the degree of conformity that black and white public school teachers exhibit to the prevailing racial attitudes of their respective racial subgroups can be determined by an evaluation of the stereotypes they hold. By having black and white teachers assign stereotypes to their own, and to each others racial group, we propose to test the existence and intensity of their racial attitudes. The divergence between black and white racial attitudes will be tested in terms of the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis I

White teachers are likely to hold positive images of white Americans, while black teachers will tend to characterize white Americans with negative terms.

Hypothesis II

White teachers are likely to assign negative traits to Black Americans, while black teachers will tend to describe black Americans with positive terms.

Methods and Data

The present study employs the method developed by Katz and Brady with certain modifications and variations to be specified below. A questionnaire was administered to black and white public school teachers employed in New York state. The questionnaire listed 50 adjectives chosen to represent several degrees of favorableness. The 50 traits used were selected from the list of 84 traits contained in the original 1932 study. The 25 most favorable and the 25 least favorable traits were selected based upon the evidence of the later Karlin, et al., (1969) study. Karlin, et al., asked subjects to rate the degree of favorableness of each of the 84 traits using a five-point rating scale. The frequencies for each trait were multiplied by their respective favorableness values on the five-point scale. The products were summed and divided by the total number of responses. The traits with the greatest frequency at the highest value (+2) on the five-point scale was ranked number one in a continuous distribution. The trait with the highest frequency at the lowest favorableness value (-2) was ranked at the bottom of the scale. This rank-order listing of favorableness scores provided on an index of the direction and intensity of stereotype composition.

The questionnaire was administered to 100 black and 100 white public school teachers in three New York cities. The

sample consisted of 35 black and 35 white teachers in Newburgh, New York, 25 black and 25 white teachers in Beacon, New York, and 40 black and 40 white teachers in Poughkeepsie, New York. The subjects were asked to select as many traits from the list of 50 adjectives that they thought typical of the following two groups: White Americans and black Americans. No limit was placed on the number of adjectives to be selected. When the four listings had been completed, the subjects instructed to assign a numerical rating to each of the 50 adjectives relative to its degree of perceived favorableness.

The approach used in measuring the degree of favorableness for each quality was similar to that employed in the earlier study by Karlin, et al., (1969). On this task the subjects utilized a five-point scale running from -2.0 (which represented the least favorableness) through 0 (which was a neutral point on the scale) to +2.0 (which was the highest degree of favorableness). The instructions given were the same as those used in Karlin's study which read:

Instructions: Read through the list of words on page 1 and select those which seem to you typical of each of the following groups. On the lines in each section write as many of these words you think are necessary to characterize these people adequately. List at least five (5) words for each group. If the list contains less than five words which you feel accurately describe a given group, list those words which you consider to be most characteristic of the groups in question.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation of the data was limited to the ten most frequently selected traits by the black and white subjects for each of the two racial groups. Tables I and II contain the percentage of black and white teachers listing each of the ten traits selected most often for each racial group, and their assigned favorableness ratings based upon the total samples. They also contain the percentage of the teachers assigning the same ten traits to the other racial group.

Table I summarizes the evidence relevant to hypothesis I. This hypothesis held that white teachers were more likely to assign a greater number of positive traits to white Americans than to black Americans. The tables depict sharp differences between the number of positive and negative traits assigned by the white teachers to white Americans and to black Americans. As may be seen, the white teachers assigned white Americans into nine positive traits but assigned only two positive traits to black Americans.

The greatest degree of agreement among the white teachers for black Americans was reached when 54 percent of them stereotyped blacks as musical. The next most favored trait by the white teachers as typical of black Americans was sensi-

TABLE I

THE PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF FAVORABLENESS OR UNFAVORABLENESS SCORES
OF THE TEN TRAITS MOST FREQUENTLY ASSIGNED TO TWO RACIAL
GROUPS BY 100 WHITE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS
(WITH PERCENTAGE COMPARISONS BETWEEN
RACIAL GROUPS) IN 1979.

Ten Traits Most Frequently Assigned by White Teachers	P E R C E N T		
	Black Americans	White Americans	Assigned Scores
Black Americans			
Musical	54%	17%	.77
Sensitive	51%	22%	.40
Revengeful	47%	11%	-1.33
Lazy	41%	14%	-1.28
Quick-tempered	38%	12%	- .89
Ignorant	36%	4%	-1.13
Loud	33%	6%	- .79
Unreliable	31%	12%	-1.31
Quarrelsome	30%	7%	- .90
Superstitious	30%	0%	- .53
	White Americans	Black Americans	Assigned Scores
White Americans			
Ambitious	57%	14%	1.48
Intelligent	49%	12%	1.40
Practical	48%	9%	1.15
Progressive	46%	13%	1.30
Scientific	43%	6%	.70
Gluttonous	41%	9%	-.98
Individualistic	39%	15%	1.22
Imaginative	37%	17%	1.46
Efficient	32%	3%	1.31
Persistent	30%	20%	.57

tive (51%). This compares to only 17 percent and 22 percent of the white teachers viewing white Americans as musical and sensitive, respectively. Typically, blacks were viewed in such negative terms as revengeful (47%), lazy (41%), quick-tempered (38%), ignorant (36%), loud (33%), unreliable (31%), quarrelsome (30%), and superstitious (30%). None of the eight negative traits assigned to black Americans was viewed by more than 14 percent of the white teachers as being also characteristic of white Americans. The traits most favored by white teachers for white Americans were ambitious (57%), intelligent (49%), practical (48%), progressive (46%), and scientific (43%). The only negative trait assigned by white teachers to white Americans was gluttonous (41%). Of the nine positive traits assigned to white Americans, the only one assigned to black Americans by the white school teachers was persistent (20%).

The data in Table II show support for hypothesis II, which states that black teachers are likely to perceive black Americans as possessing more positive traits than white Americans. Referring to Table II we see that the trend is in the expected direction. Black teachers assigned black Americans eight positive traits, but assigned only three positive traits to white Americans. The leading characteristic assigned by the black teachers to white Americans was deceitful with an endorsement from 62 percent of the subjects. Other negative adjectives selected were cruel (39%), treacherous (38%),

TABLE II

THE PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF FAVORABLENESS OR UNFAVORABLENESS SCORES OF THE TEN TRAITS MOST FREQUENTLY ASSIGNED TO TWO RACIAL GROUPS BY 100 BLACK PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS (WITH PERCENTAGE COMPARISONS BETWEEN RACIAL GROUPS) IN 1979.

Ten Traits Most Frequently Assigned by Black Teachers	P E R C E N T		
	Black Americans	White Americans	Assigned Scores
Black Americans			
Musical	54%	0%	1.01
Sensitive	47%	9%	.77
Imaginative	44%	12%	1.22
Quick-tempered	41%	9%	-.29
Artistic	39%	3%	1.09
Ambitious	38%	40%	1.37
Intelligent	35%	19%	1.31
Progressive	30%	14%	1.45
Revengeful	30%	18%	-.51
Witty	28%	7%	.91
White Americans			
	White Americans	Black Americans	Assigned Scores
Deceitful	62%	5%	-1.01
Ambitious	40%	28%	1.37
Cruel	39%	8%	-1.05
Treacherous	38%	6%	-.98
Industrious	36%	16%	1.15
Arrogant	34%	17%	-.55
Evasive	34%	9%	-.29
Conceited	29%	19%	-.62
Scientific	27%	3%	.55
Grasping	26%	8%	-.46

arrogant (34%), evasive (34%), conceited (29%), and grasping (26%). The only positive traits selected were ambitious (40%), industrious (36%), and scientific (27%).

Musical was also the most frequently assigned trait by black teachers to black Americans, as 54 percent ascribed this trait. The second most frequently assigned trait by black teachers to black Americans was sensitive (47%). By comparison, no black teachers saw white Americans as musical, and only nine percent viewed them as sensitive. Other positive traits assigned by black teachers to black Americans include imaginative (44%), artistic (39%), ambitious (38%), intelligent (35%), and progressive (30%).

The only two negative traits assigned by black teachers to black Americans were quick-tempered (41%), and revengeful (31%). Of the positive traits assigned by black teachers to black Americans, the one assigned most frequently to white Americans was ambitious (40%). None of the other positive traits assigned to black Americans was assigned to white Americans by more than 19 percent of the black teachers.

Table III presents the mean favorableness scores of the ten traits most often assigned by black and white teachers to each of the two racial groups. The procedure for computing these averages involved summing the favorableness scores of the ten traits assigned to the respective groups and dividing by the total number of traits (10).

The data presented in Table III also lends support to

TABLE III

MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE PUBLIC SCHOOL
TEACHERS ON TEN TRAITS MOST FREQUENTLY ASSIGNED
TO TWO RACIAL GROUPS IN 1979.

Teacher Group	Mean Scores	
	Black Americans	White Americans
Black Teacher	.83	-.19
White Teacher	-.70	.96

hypotheses I and II. The mean favorableness scores of the ten traits most often assigned to each of the two racial groups by the two teacher samples are compared in the table. The black teachers assigned a mean favorableness score or $-.19$ to the ten traits assigned to white Americans. This is 1.15 points lower than the favorableness score of $.96$ assigned by the white subjects to the ten most frequently chosen adjectives for white Americans. Conversely, the mean favorableness score of the ten traits most frequently recorded by the black teachers for black Americans was $.83$. This compares to a mean score of $-.70$ assigned to black Americans by the white teachers, reflecting a difference of 1.53 points.

Table IV gives a breakdown of the mean favorableness scores by black and white teachers according to the cities from which the samples were selected. The data show that differences in racial attitudes are not significantly effec-

TABLE IV

THE PERCENTAGE OF BLACK AND WHITE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS
ASSIGNING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEAN SCORES TO
TWO RACIAL GROUPS IN 1979 (BY CITIES).

Sample Groups	Mean Scores			
	White Americans		Black Americans	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Beacon, New York				
Black Teachers	6	19	21	4
White Teachers	25	0	9	16
Newburgh, New York				
Black Teachers	15	20	32	3
White Teachers	33	2	8	27
Poughkeepsie, New York				
Black Teachers	16	24	35	5
White Teachers	38	2	11	29
Total				
Black Teachers	37	63	88	12
White Teachers	96	4	28	72

ted by location. For each city the trends were in the expected direction.

The above analysis completes a test of the two stated hypotheses. The evidence that white teachers more frequently assigned positively evaluated traits to white Americans than to black Americans is clear. It is equally clear that the black teachers more frequently assigned positively evaluated traits to black Americans than to white Americans. Hence, the

differences in the racial perceptions of the two teacher samples provide support for both hypotheses.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study grew out of a concern for the effects of the racial attitudes of public school teachers on the academic and personality development of their students. Our aim was to design a quantitative study to evaluate the extent to which prejudicial racial attitudes exist among black and white public school teachers. Specifically, we proposed to examine the differential attitudes of a sample of 100 black teachers and a sample of 100 white teachers as they relate to members of their own racial group and to members of the other racial group.

Basic to our analysis was the concept of racial stereotypes as they function as social norms. We postulated that a comparison between the stereotypes held by the two groups of public school teachers, black and white, would allow us to determine the degree of variation in racial attitudes between the two groups. The differences in stereotypes that emerged from the two teacher samples tend to support our two hypotheses which state: (1) White teachers are likely to hold more positive images of white Americans than they do of black Americans, and (2) Black teachers are more likely to perceive black Americans in more positive terms than they do white Americans.

The findings of this study suggest a possible answer to the question of why some minority students perform so poorly in school. The data show that public school teachers do possess different stereotypes of other racial groups even though they may not express them or feel that their judgments are affected by them. It seems clear that some white teachers sincerely believe that their black students are intellectually inferior, and that they are incapable of benefitting from a normal curriculum. Even when this attitude is unconscious, the teacher cannot avoid communicating it to the students in some way. And the attitude is not always unconscious. While the responses of our limited sample of public school teachers can scarcely be regarded as conclusive, the author feels that the evidence presented here warrants the attention of public school teachers, counselors, and administrators.

A P P E N D I X

On the following pages are various groups of people about which we all have beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. We all think differently about such matters, and this scale is an attempt to let you express your beliefs and opinions. There are no right and wrong answers, and your responses will be quite anonymous. You are asked not to sign your name.

Thank you for your participation.

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Hometown: _____

Number of Years Teaching in Public School System: _____

Appendix (Continued)

Adjectives

Ambitious _____	Scientifically-minded _____
Lazy _____	Loud _____
Individualistic _____	Persistent _____
Boastful _____	Mercenary _____
Progressive _____	Musical _____
Humorless _____	Quick-tempered _____
Jovial _____	Straightforward _____
Ostentatious _____	Grasping _____
Neat _____	Sensitive _____
Superstitious _____	Quarrelsome _____
Practical _____	Witty _____
Evasive _____	Gluttonous _____
Generous _____	Cruel _____
Revengeful _____	Intelligent _____
Efficient _____	Rude _____
Ignorant _____	Alert _____
Faithful _____	Unreliable _____
Conceited _____	Artistic _____
Industrious _____	Stupid _____
Cowardly _____	Kind _____
Imaginative _____	Physically dirty _____
Treacherous _____	Sportsmanlike _____
Honest _____	Arrogant _____
Deceitful _____	Courteous _____
Brilliant _____	Slovenly _____

Appendix (Continued)

Now go back over the eight list of words which you have chosen and mark with an X the five (5) words in each list which seem to you the most typical of the group in question.

PART II

Instructions: Look again at the adjectives on the next page. Decide for each one whether it is favorable, unfavorable, or neutral, as normally used to describe people. Indicate the degree of favorableness of each adjective as follows:

1. If the adjective is favorable, write a plus (+) beside it. If it is very favorable, write two pluses (++) beside it.
2. If the adjective is neutral, write a zero (0) beside it.
3. If the adjective is unfavorable, write a minus (-) beside it. If it is very unfavorable, write two minuses (--) beside it.

Example: If the word "Conservative" appears to you to be very positive, you would write two pluses on the lines beside it as follows:

Conservative + +

There may be several usages and criteria to consider in determining the degree of favorableness implied by a given adjective. We want only a common or average rating, so give us your immediate first impression, and do not spend too much time on any single one.

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