

INTERRACIAL INTERACTIONS: A RELATIONAL APPROACH

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The term social interaction conjures up images that involve at least two people. These two people are likely to have beliefs about one another, beliefs about how the other person views them, and beliefs about the interaction. Moreover, these beliefs are likely to influence both individuals' experiences during the interaction. Although interconnectedness of this type has been pursued in examinations of interpersonal interactions (e.g., Baldwin, 1992; Darley & Fazio, 1980), research on interracial interactions has tended to adopt a more individualistic approach. Similar to interpersonal interactions, individuals' experiences in interracial interactions are often shaped by the beliefs individuals have about one another and their beliefs about how they will be perceived by their interaction partners. In this chapter we examine interracial interactions from a perspective that highlights the interconnectedness that is often at the core of interpersonal interactions between members of different racial groups. This perspective highlights that there are *two* people involved in dyadic interracial interactions and these two people influence each other's outcomes and experiences.

I. Conceptual Approaches to Study Interracial Interactions

The nature of interracial interactions allows researchers to explore how interpersonal perceptions and behaviors can be shaped by the presence of group boundaries. As has been recently suggested, however, to be such an *interpersonal* phenomenon, an overwhelming abundance of research on

interracial contact has been quite *intrapersonal* in nature (Devine, Evett, & Vasquez-Suson, 1996; Hebl & Dovidio, 2005; Shelton, 2000). There is considerable research that shows that when social psychologists investigate intergroup interactions, we tend to rely on an individualistic approach. We approach the interaction as if only one person is present in the situation. Moreover, the focus tends to be on one individual's impressions of other people, with the majority of this research focusing on Whites' beliefs about Blacks (Fiske, 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). For example, researchers have examined the extent to which Whites' racial beliefs influence their judgments about Blacks. Although the implicit assumption is that these racial beliefs and judgments have implications for Blacks' experiences during the interaction, Blacks' actual experiences are often left unexamined. The individualistic approach has undoubtedly been fueled by the important research on prejudice reduction (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). We venture to add that social psychologists' emphasis on how cognitive underpinnings, specifically stereotypes, influence social perception and interactions has obscured our understanding of the interpersonal reality of interracial interactions. In this chapter we offer a framework that is grounded in the belief that in order to obtain an understanding of interracial interactions that reflects social reality, it is necessary to take a more relational approach.

A. PARADIGM SHIFT

Adopting a relational approach represents a paradigm shift in the way social psychology attempts to understand the dynamics of interracial contact. Specifically, research will need to extend beyond the typical processes associated with person perception (i.e., stereotyping) and begin to consider *meta-perceptual processes*. Such an extension is not trivial, given the differences between the person perception and meta-perceptual frameworks. In person perception research, for instance, the focus is on individuals' perceptions of and feelings about others (e.g., Whites' beliefs about Blacks). The psychological analysis is primarily about *intrasubjectivity*, and the self (the perceiver) is conceptualized as separate and distinct from the other (often the target). In contrast, in meta-perception research the focus is on individuals' perceptions of and feelings about how others view them (e.g., Whites' perceptions of Blacks' beliefs about Whites). The psychological analysis is primarily about *intersubjectivity*, and both the self and other are conceptualized as interconnected in important ways. Consistent with Baldwin's (1992, p. 468) research on relational schemas, our approach to interracial interaction maintains that "as well as observing the external behaviors of self and other, an individual in an interaction will be aware of his or her own internal states

and also quite likely will be inferring something about the internal state of the other person."

The proposed framework also requires a careful rethinking of the ways in which Whites and ethnic minorities are included as research participants. The majority on studies of interracial contact adopt a distinctly individualistic approach. That is, the dominant paradigm of this research includes only one individual. In its purest form, the relational approach is reflected in methodologies that include both Whites and ethnic minorities as participants in the same study. Our review of the literature revealed that this quintessential relational methodology has been underutilized (for the exception see Hyers & Swim, 1998; Ickes, 1984; Shelton, 2003; Vorauer & Kumhry, 2001; see also Hebl & Dovidio, 2005 for a similar argument), resulting in the neglect of interesting and important research questions that can only be examined with a relational lens. For example, Do Whites and ethnic minorities share similar experiences during interracial interactions? Whose beliefs, Whites' or ethnic minorities', are most influential for individuals' affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes during interracial interactions? Do Whites' and ethnic minorities' beliefs interact to influence individuals' experiences in a manner that differs from the independent effects of each person's beliefs?

Although a two-participant methodology affords the most ecologically valid benefits of a relational approach, it can be a logistical nightmare, contributing to why researchers often shy away from employing it. Admittedly, we do not always utilize this methodology in our research. We argue, however, that taking a relational perspective to the study of interracial interactions is largely independent of the particular methodology employed. For instance, a relational perspective can easily be adopted through the use of confederates. The use of confederates allows for greater experimental control than studies with two naïve participants, while continuing to allow for the intersubjectivity of the interaction to be highlighted and influential. When facing an interaction with an actual person of a different race, albeit a confederate, in other words, participants are less likely to focus on their own perceptions of the other person exclusively, but, rather, to consider what the other person in the interaction might be thinking about them as well.

Furthermore, even in situations in which contact with either actual naïve participants or with confederates is not possible, a relational approach can still be adopted. For instance, the relational approach can be embodied in the types of questions asked of participants, irrespective of whether they interact with another individual. Specifically, a relational spirit is captured by the fact that participants are not only asked to evaluate an outgroup "target," but they are also asked to think about how the outgroup "target" is likely to evaluate them. In other words, participants' attention to the self as both a perceiver and target

of the outgroup emphasizes the notion that the participant is not in the interaction alone—the essence of a relational perspective.

B. CLASSICS REVISITED

In some ways, this shift from an individualistic to a relational approach to studying interracial interactions could be considered a call for social psychology to revisit the classic analyses of stigma and race relations. Goffman (1963) and Jones et al. (1984) placed the management of stigma in social interactions at the forefront of their discussion of stigma. They emphasized the importance of considering the experiences of both nonstigmatized and stigmatized individuals in interactions. In addition, although the topic of interracial contact was tangential to the broader issue of attitude–behavior consistency, LaPiere's (1934) classic study shows the utility of the relational approach when studying interactions. LaPiere discovered that when he asked in a written letter whether or not an establishment would provide service to a Chinese couple, the overwhelming majority of responses were a definitive no. However, when he and the Chinese couple arrived at the establishment, the couple was provided service more often than not. LaPiere eloquently noted that the written letter required people to respond to an entirely symbolic situation. What was missing in the symbolic situation was the intersubjectivity of the situation. In the symbolic situation, people failed to think about how concerned they would be about being evaluated by others, including outgroup members, in the situation. Additionally, in the symbolic situation, people did not have to consider characteristics of outgroup individuals that might alter their decision. Consequently, the symbolic situation was unable to map on to the realities of actual interracial contact.

The classic study by Word, Zanna, and Cooper (1974) also emphasized a relational approach when exploring the dynamics of interracial interactions. Word et al. (1974) examined interactions between Whites and Blacks in the context of a job interview setting. In Study 1, they found that naïve, White interviewers displayed less friendly nonverbal behaviors toward Black interviewees than toward White interviewees (the interviewees were trained confederates). In Study 2, Word et al. (1974) trained White interviewers (confederates) to display either friendly or unfriendly nonverbal behaviors toward naïve, White interviewees. Word et al. (1974) found that the naïve, White interviewees who were the target of unfriendly nonverbal behaviors performed worse during the interview than those who were the target of friendly nonverbal behaviors. This classic study shows the importance of taking a relational approach when studying interracial interactions by exploring the interaction from the perspective of both individuals in the interaction. Not only

was it important to demonstrate that Whites behaved in a more negative manner toward Blacks than Whites, but it was also important to demonstrate how these behaviors influenced the other interactant.

The goal for exploring interracial interactions from a relational approach is not to reveal one specific psychological phenomenon. Instead the goal is to demonstrate that the approach may generate novel findings that can lead to a more ecologically valid understanding of the dynamics of interracial interactions. Because of differences in sociocultural perspectives, the psychological experience of an interracial interaction may differ for Whites and ethnic minorities. It is only by examining both individuals' perspectives that we are able to uncover, and begin to understand, these differences.

C. OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

What follows is a description of research from our and others' laboratories on interracial interactions derived from, or consistent with, a relational approach. We focus on two issues to illustrate what a relational approach can contribute to the study of interracial interactions. First, we consider the ways in which individuals' beliefs regarding how their interaction partner is likely to view them influence the avoidance of interracial contact. Second, we examine the dynamics of interracial interactions, focusing on the consequences that individuals' beliefs have for their own and their partner's experiences during the interaction. Before we turn to these two issues, however, we provide a general background about intergroup meta-perceptions.

II. Intergroup Meta-Perceptions

Meta-perceptions are individuals' beliefs about another person's impression of them (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993). Theories, such as symbolic interaction theory, attachment theory, and self-verification theory, suggest that individuals give considerable thought to understanding others' reactions to them (Vorauer, 2001). Consistent with research on general meta-perceptions, Whites and ethnic minorities also think about how others might view them during interracial interactions, and these meta-perceptions shape their interaction experiences. Indeed, research assessing cultural stereotypes shows that Whites and ethnic minorities are aware of the stereotypes associated with their ingroup and outgroup (Krueger, 1996; Sigelman & Tuch, 1997). For instance, Wout, Shih, and Jackson (2005) examined Blacks' perceptions of how they are viewed by both Whites and Blacks. They found that Blacks expect Whites more than other Blacks to view Blacks as a group as

untrustworthy, athletic, aggressive, and not hardworking, and to apply those stereotypes during interracial contact experiences.

The majority of research on meta-perception in an intergroup context has been inspired by the study of Vorauer and her colleagues. In one study, Whites listed the stereotypes they thought that First Nations have about Whites (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). Results revealed that Whites believe that First Nations perceive Whites as being prejudiced, selfish, and closed-minded. In subsequent research, Vorauer, Hunter, Main, and Roy (2000) found that when Whites imagined (Study 1) or anticipated (Study 2) having an interaction with a First Nations person, these meta-stereotypes (i.e., prejudiced, selfish, closed-minded) were activated as measured by a word fragment completion task and a lexical decision-making task. Importantly, exposure to a First Nations person whom Whites did not expect to interact with was not associated with an increase in meta-stereotype activation. Consistent with research employing the person perception model, such exposure was associated with increased activation of negative stereotypes about First Nations individuals. Taken together, research on meta-perceptions suggests that the context of an interracial interaction often activates concerns about being judged negatively in both Whites and ethnic minorities—a *relational facet of interracial contact that is unlikely to be revealed by more individualistic approaches to prejudice, stereotyping, and interracial contact.*

Contemporary models and theories of prejudice have begun to incorporate these meta-perceptions. Largely, this research suggests that Whites and ethnic minorities wrestle with these meta-perceptions during interracial interactions, and these meta-perceptions manifest as interpersonal concerns that individuals have regarding interracial interactions. Most models and theories propose that Whites are often concerned with appearing prejudiced (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Monin & Miller, 2001; Monteith, 1993; Plant & Devine, 1998) and ethnic minorities are often concerned with being treated negatively because of prejudice during interracial interactions (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Miller & Meyers, 1998). Whites' and ethnic minorities' meta-perceptions, and resultant interpersonal concerns, are similar and different in important ways. The similarity lies in the fact that both individuals are concerned that outgroup members will perceive them in a way that threatens their true identity (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) and outgroup members will ultimately reject them during interracial interactions.

The fundamental difference between Whites' and ethnic minorities' meta-perceptions is that Whites' concerns during interracial interactions are primarily self-focused, whereas ethnic minorities' concerns focus on both the self and their White interaction partners. Specifically, Whites are often concerned about maintaining their self-image as egalitarian, unbiased people during the interaction. Ethnic minorities do not want to be perceived in a

stereotypical manner, and they do not want to be the target of biased, unfair treatment from Whites. Essentially, therefore, both Whites and Blacks are concerned that the White interaction partner will behave in prejudiced ways during their interactions with one another. These concerns have implications for individuals' experiences during actual interactions, and as we demonstrate in the next section, contribute to whether interracial interactions occur at all.

III. Avoiding Interracial Interactions

On many occasions, people have control over the types of social interactions they engage in. When given the opportunity, people typically choose situations and interaction partners that are consistent with their personal preferences (Ickes, Snyder, & Garcia, 1997). Research shows that when choosing situations people tend to avoid interethnic interactions (Plant & Devine, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Towles-Schwen & Fazio, 2003). Building on the notion that Whites and ethnic minorities hold intergroup meta-perceptions, we began to explore how these meta-perceptions might influence the extent to which individuals choose to avoid interacting with outgroup members. Specifically, we began by addressing the influence of meta-perceptions on individuals' explanations for why they and outgroup members avoid interracial interactions. Individuals are likely to avoid such contact in part because they are concerned with how they will be viewed by outgroup members; more specifically, they are concerned that outgroup members will reject them because of their social identity. To what extent, however, do people believe that outgroup members have similar interpersonal concerns about interracial interactions? Is it possible that individuals fail to recognize that outgroup members' avoidance of interracial contact reflects the same interpersonal concerns—being perceived stereotypically and fears of rejection because of their social identity—as their own?

We started to address this question by first illustrating that Whites and ethnic minorities believe they, as well as their ingroup, are more interested in engaging in interracial contact than outgroup members (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). In our first study, we asked White and Black students to indicate their interest in having more outgroup friends, as well as having more contact with outgroup individuals in general. In addition, we asked these same students to indicate to what extent they thought the average White and Black student was interested in having more outgroup friends, as well as having more contact in general with outgroup members. As predicted, both racial groups perceived that they wanted to have more outgroup friends and interracial contact than the average outgroup student.

For example, Whites reported that they wanted to have more contact with Blacks, but that Blacks did not want to have more contact with them (see Tropp & Anderson, 2003 for a similar pattern of results).

A. DIVERGENT ATTRIBUTIONS

Given this discrepancy in individuals' perception of their own and outgroup members' interest in having contact, we reasoned that individuals may rationalize that lack of interest is a more likely explanation for why outgroup members avoid interracial contact than those outgroup members' concerns about being rejected. Thus, in the next set of studies (Shelton & Richeson, 2005, Studies 3–5) we examined the extent to which Whites and Blacks make divergent attributions about their own and an outgroup member's explanation for avoiding interracial interactions. We predicted that when explaining why interracial contact fails to occur, Whites and Blacks would attribute their own failure to initiate contact to concerns with being rejected because of their race, whereas they would attribute an outgroup member's failure to initiate contact to lack of interest. For our initial test of this prediction we asked Whites and Blacks to imagine the following situation: You enter the dining hall for dinner. You are alone because your close friends are in a review session. As you look around the dining hall for a place to sit, you notice several White (Black) students who live near you sitting together. These students also notice you. However, neither of you explicitly makes a move to sit together.

Approximately half of the White and Black participants imagined that the targeted students were White, and the other half imagined that the targeted students were Black. After imagining the situation participants answered the following questions: How likely is it that fear of being rejected because of your race would inhibit you from sitting with these students; how likely is it that your lack of interest in getting to know the students would inhibit you from sitting with them; how likely is that fear of being rejected because of their race would inhibit the students from inviting you over; and how likely is that the other students' lack of interest in getting to know you would inhibit them from inviting you over?

The findings supported our predictions, revealing that both racial groups believed different psychological states were underlying their own and the outgroup members' motivations for not initiating interracial contact (Fig. 1 contains data for Blacks). Specifically, Whites and Blacks indicated that fear of rejection because of their race would be a more likely explanation for their own inaction than for the outgroup members' inaction. Conversely, both Whites and Blacks indicated that lack of interest would be a more likely

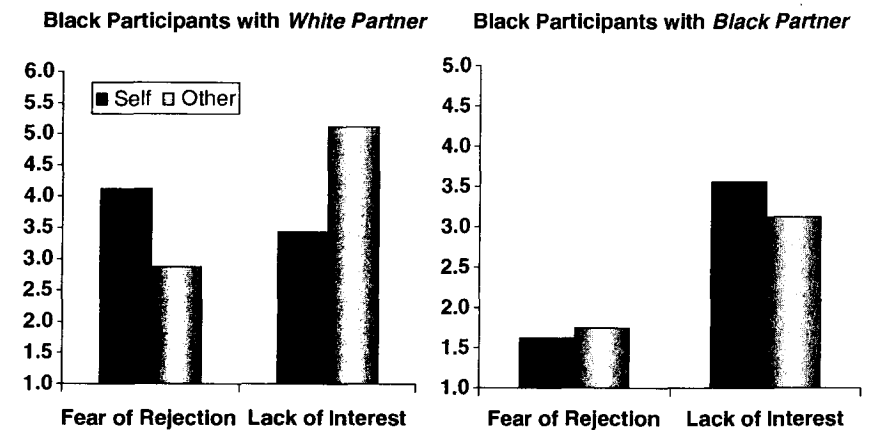


Fig. 1. Attributions for why Blacks avoid interracial contact.

explanation for the outgroup members' inaction than for their own. Additionally, when considering the attributions behind the outgroup members' failure to establish interracial contact, individuals believed that the outgroup members' lack of interest was a more likely attribution than their fear of being rejected. Conversely, when considering the reasons behind their own failure to establish interracial contact, individuals tended to report that fear of rejection was a better attribution than lack of interest.

B. DIVERGENT ATTRIBUTIONS AND RACIAL ATTITUDES

In subsequent research, we assessed the extent to which these divergent attributions are moderated by Whites' racial attitudes (under review). In order to examine this question, we administered the attitudes toward Blacks scale (Brigham, 1993) to a group of White students during a pretesting session and several weeks later invited them to participate in a second session on social perception and friendship development. During the second session, the experimenter informed participants that they would have an interaction with another student. Furthermore, in order to encourage a sense of interdependence, the experimenter explained that if the two students decided they could be friends, then they would work on additional tasks together. Immediately prior to the supposed interaction, the experimenter explained that in order to facilitate the discussion, participants would exchange background information and a picture with their partner. Participants received a same-sex photograph of either a White or Black student (confederate). After the participants had the opportunity to view

the photograph and read the background information sheet, they completed a preinteraction questionnaire. Specifically, participants indicated how interested they were in being friends with their partner, how interested they thought their partner was in being friends, how concerned they were that the other student would accept them as a friend, and how concerned they thought the other student was about being accepted as a friend.

Results revealed that all participants reported the self–other discrepancy in their attributions when their partner was Black but not when their partner was White. That is, all participants indicated that they were more interested in becoming friends and more concerned about being accepted than the other student. However, low-prejudice Whites were especially likely to make these divergent attributions. Although this result may seem counterintuitive, it is consistent with previous research on meta-stereotypes. Specifically, Vorauer et al. (1998) found that low-prejudice Whites believe that racial minorities will contrast them against the meta-stereotype that they are prejudiced, whereas high-prejudice Whites believe that racial minorities will assimilate them to the meta-stereotype. If low-prejudice Whites do not expect Blacks to think that they are prejudiced, then they are also particularly likely to underestimate the extent to which a Black interaction partner might be concerned that they will reject them. Moreover, once low-prejudice Whites take fear of rejection off the table as a possible explanation for why a Black individual might not want to pursue a friendship with them, then they are left with the possibility that the Black individual is simply not interested in interacting with them. By denying the possibility that fear of rejection may motivate potential interaction partners, while simultaneously harboring concerns about being rejected themselves, low-prejudice Whites exaggerate the self–other bias we obtained in our original study.

Collectively, our findings suggest that individuals are concerned about how they will be viewed and treated by outgroup members during interracial interactions. In addition, perhaps because they are focused on themselves, individuals have a difficult time realizing that outgroup members may also be concerned with how they will be viewed and treated. In fact, individuals tend to (mis)perceive outgroup members as not being interested in pursuing interracial contact.

C. IMPLICATIONS OF DIVERGENT ATTRIBUTIONS

One implication of a self–other bias in which outgroup members are thought to avoid interracial contact because of lack of interest but ingroup members avoid contact because they are concerned about rejection is the

possibility that individuals will simply avoid interracial contact all together. We set out to explore this possibility empirically. We examined whether individuals' proclivity to generate the self–other bias, when considering why interracial contact does not occur, influences the probability that they will engage in interracial interactions in the future (Shelton & Richeson, 2005, Study 6). At an initial testing session during the 2nd week of the academic year, White students responded to the interracial contact vignette (i.e., imagine you enter a dining hall and notice Black students) and the associated attribution questions described previously. In addition, we asked these students to report the approximate percentage of their social interactions that occurs with other White individuals and the approximate percentage that occurs with Blacks. Approximately 7 weeks later, we asked these same White students to report how much contact they had had with Whites and Blacks since the beginning of the school year. Consistent with predictions, the more Whites believed that fear of rejection because of their race was a better explanation for their own inaction in the scenario (i.e., their unwillingness to pursue interracial contact) compared to the Black students' inaction, the less contact they had with Blacks over the course of the first semester of school. In other words, Whites' disproportionate focus on their own susceptibility of being rejected by Blacks in a hypothetical scenario seemed to influence the frequency with which they engaged in interracial contact over time.

Although our data speak specifically to the comparison of self and other regarding the avoidance of interracial contact, several other studies show that meta-perceptions alone influence the extent to which individuals avoid interracial contact. Building on theory on rejection sensitivity in close relationships, Mendoza-Denton, Purdie, Downey, Davis, and Pietrzak (2002) developed a measure of race-based rejection sensitivity for Blacks in which participants are asked to rate the extent to which they would be concerned about and expect to be the target of racial prejudice across several scenarios. For example, participants are asked: Imagine you have just finished shopping, and you are leaving the store carrying several bags. It is closing time, and several people are filing out of the store at once. Suddenly, the alarm begins to sound, and a security guard comes over to investigate. Next, participants rate how concerned or anxious they would be that the guard might stop them because of their race/ethnicity. In addition, participants rate how much they would expect that the guard might stop them because of their race/ethnicity. According to the rejection-sensitivity theory, Blacks who are high in race-based rejection sensitivity anxiously expect to be rejected because of their race because of previous experiences with discrimination and awareness of stereotypes associated with their group. Mendoza-Denton et al. (2002) found that Blacks high in race-based rejection sensitivity had

fewer Whites friends and interacted with professors and teaching assistants less compared to students low in race-based rejection sensitivity.¹ Race-based rejection sensitivity, however, was unrelated to the number of Black friends participants reported having demonstrating that Blacks higher in race-based rejection sensitivity are likely to avoid only those they feel are most likely to reject them on the basis of race.

Research on a related construct, stigma consciousness, also provides support for the notion that individuals' perceptions of how outgroup members will perceive them predict their avoidance of intergroup settings. Pinel's (1999) research on stigma consciousness reveals that individuals are aware that their social identity is a pivotal factor in how people interact with them. People high in stigma consciousness expect to be viewed through the lenses of stereotypes associated with their group, and these expectations prompt them to avoid situations in which the possibility that they could be stereotyped is high. For example, Pinel (1999, Study 6) found that when women were required to have an interaction with men during a game of "jeopardy," the higher women scored on an individual difference measure of stigma consciousness the more likely they were to avoid stereotypically male topics. For example, women high in stigma consciousness avoided selected topics such as automobile names and the military. Thus, although not in the context of interracial interactions, these findings corroborate our claims that individuals' meta-perceptions regarding outgroup members impact their wariness regarding intergroup settings in which there is the potential to become the victim of prejudice.

D. RECONVERGING THE ATTRIBUTIONS

Considered as a whole, the research suggests that individuals' meta-perceptions influence their own behavior, but individuals often fail to see how similar concerns might impact the behavior of outgroup members. As other researchers have argued with respect to self-other biases in general (Prentice & Miller, 1996; Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004; Vorauer, 2001), the divergent attributions regarding why people avoid interracial interactions are likely a result of a difference in individuals' access to private self-knowledge. As actors, individuals have access to their inner feelings and beliefs. Because these feelings and beliefs are salient to them, actors assume they must be transparent to others as well. As observers, however,

¹The professors and teaching assistants are most likely to be White because the institution where this study was conducted is predominately White.

individuals are not privy to others' inner feelings and beliefs. Instead, they only see others' behavior, which they take as reflecting their true selves. Thus, as actors, Whites and Blacks are aware of their interpersonal concerns with prejudice and are likely to use them when making judgments about why they avoid interracial encounters. As observers, however, Whites and Blacks are not privy to how outgroup individuals are feeling; instead, they are only privy to the outgroup individuals' behavior.

Although access to private knowledge and feelings is certain to contribute to the divergent attributions, we offer an additional possibility. Individuals might also make divergent attributions about why they and outgroup members avoid interracial contact because outgroup members are not included as part of their sense of self (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Research suggests that individuals include ingroup members (but not outgroup members) in the self (Smith & Henry, 1996; Smith, Coats, & Walling, 1999; Tropp & Wright, 2001). Because of this inclusion of other in the self, individuals grow to feel and think as if the other person is a part of the self and vice versa. With the inclusion of other in the self, characteristics of the other are considered to be part of the self, and, furthermore, individuals' self-representations include the other. That is, there is a perception and feeling of interconnectedness between the self and other. Because of this interconnectedness, individuals are able to empathize with ingroup members' concerns, fears, and problems, whereas they are relatively unable (or unlikely) to do so with outgroup members' concerns, fears, and problems. If outgroup members were included in the self, however, individuals would be more likely to consider their concerns and fears and recognize that they are identical to their own. Specific to our study, if outgroup members were included in the self, then individuals should not make divergent attributions about the self and other because they should believe that the same forces driving their own behaviors are also driving the behaviors of outgroup members.

We tested our belief that inclusion of the other in the self contributes to the self-other bias regarding the avoidance of interracial interactions (Shelton & Richeson, 2005, Study 7). Similar to our other studies on this topic, we asked half of the White students in our sample to imagine the dining hall scenario, described previously, in which neither they nor a group of Black (or White) students "make a move to sit together." We asked the other half not only to imagine the same scenario, but also to imagine that, "You don't know these students well, but your best friend enjoys hanging out with them." Why ask participants to imagine that their best friend enjoys socializing with these outgroup members? According to the extended contact effect (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), when people are aware that an ingroup member has a close relationship with an outgroup

member, they tend to include the outgroup member in the self. Because individuals in a close relationship are perceived as a single representation (Sedikides, Olsen, & Reis, 1993) the outgroup member is now linked to the ingroup member, who is already included in the self. Therefore, by asking participants to imagine that their best friend, who is most likely to be an ingroup member, enjoys hanging out with the outgroup individuals in the scenario, we are encouraging them to include these outgroup members in the self.

After reading the scenario, participants answered the following questions: How likely is it that fear of being rejected because of your race would inhibit you from sitting with these students; how likely is it that your lack of interest in getting to know the students would inhibit you from sitting with them; how likely is it that fear of being rejected because of their race would inhibit the students from inviting you over; and how likely is it that the other students' lack of interest in getting to know you would inhibit them from inviting you over?

Our findings revealed that for Whites who did not have knowledge of their best friend's opinion, the now familiar pattern of divergent attributions emerged when the targeted students were Black, but not when the targeted students were White. That is, Whites reported that fear of rejection because of their race explained their inaction more than the Black students' inaction, whereas lack of interest explained the Black students' inaction more than their own. However, Whites who had information that their best friend enjoys socializing with the targeted Black students did not reveal the same pattern of divergent attributions. In fact, Whites who had information about their best friend's opinion reported that the Black targeted students were just as likely to be inhibited by fears of rejection because of their race as they themselves were. Likewise, there was no difference in the extent to which Whites reported that lack of interest influenced their own and the targeted Black students' behavior. A closer examination of the pattern of results revealed that appearances of outgroup acceptance by knowing about a cross-race friendship reduce Whites' fears of rejection. Taken together, these findings suggest that expanding the self to include outgroup members may be an effective strategy for reducing biased perceptions of why ingroup and outgroup members avoid interacting with one another, and, by extension, may serve to increase the extent to which individuals actually engage in interracial interactions.

These two explanations, one based on differential access to internal feelings and the other on the (lack of) inclusion of the other in the self, both offer reasonable accounts for the divergent attributions individuals make regarding why they and members of outgroups avoid interracial interactions. Of course, future research is needed in order to explore additional factors that

lead to divergent attributions that undermine both the quality and quantity of interracial interactions.

1. Summary

When examining why interracial contact occurs so rarely, researchers have focused on individuals' beliefs about others. Research that has taken a more relational approach has shifted the focus from person perception to meta-perception. In doing so, researchers have learned that interracial interactions may occur so rarely because people are concerned with how they are being perceived by the outgroup not just because they dislike the outgroup.

IV. Dynamics of Interracial Contact: A View from Both Sides

One of the original goals of the "contact hypothesis" was to understand the conditions under which contact between members of different groups would improve intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954). Although the improvement of attitudes remains an extremely important outcome for research on intergroup contact, recent research has begun to explore immediate experiences and outcomes of intergroup contact. In our relational approach to study interracial interactions, we have focused on how both Whites' and ethnic minorities' interpersonal concerns with prejudice and their racial attitudes influence affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes for the self and one's partner during interracial interactions.

V. Interpersonal Concerns with Prejudice and Interracial Contact

A. WHITES' PREJUDICE CONCERNS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SELF

Given that Whites are often concerned with appearing prejudiced during interactions, we set out to document affective, cognitive, and behavioral consequences of these concerns for both Whites and their ethnic minority partners during interracial interactions. We began by exploring how Whites' concerns with appearing prejudiced influence cognitive functioning for the self. Specifically, we considered the extent to which harboring concerns about prejudice during an interracial interaction may deplete Whites of important cognitive resources, resulting in their underperformance on

subsequent cognitive tasks. This possibility stems from research showing that individuals carefully monitor their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during interracial interactions in order to avoid being perceived as prejudiced (Devine et al., 1996; Monteith, 1993). Such regulation and monitoring of thoughts, feelings, and behavior are cognitively demanding, however, resulting in the temporary depletion of important cognitive resources (Engle, Conway, Tuholski, & Shisler, 1995; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Thus, this study suggests that concerns about prejudice will leave Whites cognitively exhausted.

In order to examine this possibility, we activated the prejudice concerns of White participants just prior to an interracial interaction (Richeson & Trawalter, 2005, Study 1). After the interaction, these same participants' extent of cognitive depletion was tested using the Stroop color-naming paradigm. We predicted that compared to a control group of White participants for whom prejudice concerns were not heightened, participants whose concerns were triggered would reveal greater evidence of cognitive disruption after the interaction. Specifically, we asked participants to take part in a study presumably examining "serial cognition." We told them that we were interested in the influence of one cognitive task on a subsequent task when there is a delay between the two. For the first cognitive task, participants completed the race version of the Implicit Association Test (IAT) (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), which is a measure of automatic racial bias. Immediately after completing the IAT, participants received one of two types of feedback. In the prejudice concern condition, the experimenter told participants, "Several studies have used this task to study racial bias. These studies show that most people are more prejudiced than they think they are." In the control condition, performance concerns were activated by telling participants, "Several studies have used this task to study category associations. These studies show that most people perform worse than they think they did." Based on previous research (Dutton & Lake, 1973; Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Czopp, 2002), the prejudice concern feedback, but not the performance concern feedback, was expected to prompt participants to engage in the regulation of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during the interracial interaction, and, ultimately to the depletion of cognitive resources.

Immediately after receiving the feedback, participants went to a different room where they engaged in an ostensibly unrelated session with either a Black or a White experimenter. During this "delay task," the experimenter remained in the room and videotaped the participants for approximately 8 minutes providing their opinions on several topics, including one race-related topic (e.g., campus diversity). After this task, participants returned to the room with the original experimenter and completed the second cognitive

task—the Stroop color-naming task, which measures inhibitory performance. The more cognitively depleted participants were, the worse they were expected to perform on the Stroop task. Consistent with our predictions, results revealed that in the interracial interaction (i.e., when the second experimenter was Black), Whites who received the prejudice feedback performed significantly worse on the Stroop task than Whites who received the general performance feedback. The feedback did not influence Whites' performance on the Stroop task in the same-race interaction (i.e., when the second experimenter was White).

In a subsequent study, Whites' concerns about appearing prejudiced were allayed rather than elevated (Richeson & Trawalter, 2005, Study 2). Specifically, Whites were asked to have an interaction with either a Black or White confederate during which they were videotaped responding to a question about the costs and benefits of racial profiling. For most Whites, prejudice concerns will be active during such an interaction, especially with the Black confederate. In order to reduce these concerns, however, the confederate provided half of the participants with a written response to the question that they were allowed to use as a guide during the interaction. Thus, Whites could attribute any of their comments that could be perceived as controversial or potentially biased to the script, rather than to their own opinion. Consequently, Whites who were provided with the script were expected to be less concerned about appearing prejudiced, and, therefore, less likely to engage in effortful self-regulation in order to maintain a nonprejudiced self-image. After the interaction, participants completed the Stroop task in order to assess the extent to which the interaction left them depleted of cognitive resources. Consistent with predictions, participants who were provided with the script performed as well on the Stroop task as participants who interacted with the White confederate, all of whom performed better on the Stroop task than participants who interacted with the Black confederate without the script. Considered in tandem with the previous experiment, this study underscores the potential for prejudice concerns to result in relatively negative outcomes for the self.

Whites' interpersonal concerns with prejudice are likely to influence more than cognitive outcomes during interracial interactions. Research has illustrated that interracial contact fosters negative affective reactions (e.g., Britt, Boniecki, Vescio, Biernat, & Brown, 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Whites' concerns with appearing prejudiced may add to the affective distress they experience. Therefore, our next goal was to examine whether harboring concerns with appearing prejudiced results in negative affect for Whites during interracial interactions (Shelton, 2003). In this study, Whites and Blacks engaged in a get-to-know-you interaction with one another. Prior to the interaction, the experimenter told all of the White participants that

they would be interacting with a Black student. In addition, the experimenter told half of the White participants that "previous psychological research has shown that during interracial interactions Whites' impressions of Blacks are often biased by racial stereotypes, which often make them appear as prejudiced individuals. You should try not to be prejudiced during this interaction." The experimenter did not provide this information to the other half of the White participants. After receiving this information, participants met their partner and engaged in an approximately 15-minute interaction, which was videotaped. In order to facilitate the discussion, the experimenter gave participants eight discussion topics. The first four topics were race neutral (e.g., discuss your hobbies) and the last four were race relevant (e.g., discuss campus race relations). Next, participants completed various questionnaires, including items to assess how much anxiety they experienced during the interaction (e.g., nervous, anxious, tense, worry). As predicted, Whites who were instructed to try not to be prejudiced reported experiencing more anxiety compared to those who were not given these instructions.

Additional research supports the notion that Whites' concerns with prejudice yield negative affective reactions during interracial encounters (Devine et al., 1996; Ickes, 1984; Plant & Devine, 1998, 2003). For instance, Plant and Butz (2004, Study 1) led non-Black participants to be concerned with being perceived as prejudiced by manipulating their expectations about their self-efficacy for facilitating pleasant interracial interactions. They found that non-Black participants who were provided feedback that they are likely to experience difficulty when interacting with Blacks experienced more anxiety about an anticipated interaction with a Black person, compared to participants who did not receive feedback. In a subsequent study, Plant and Butz (2004, Study 2) found that non-Blacks who received negative feedback experienced more anxiety, anger, and general negative self-directed emotions about the anticipated interaction with a Black person, compared to participants who received positive efficacy feedback. Moreover, individuals who received the negative, rather than the positive, feedback were more anxious during the interaction, as measured by self-report and coders' ratings.

In a related study, Vorauer et al. (1998, Study 2) found that the more Whites expected a First Nations interaction partner to view them as consistent with the stereotypes associated with their group (e.g., unfair, prejudiced, close-minded), the less they expected to enjoy an interracial interaction and the more they expected to have negative feelings during the interaction. Moreover, research suggests that Whites' perceptions regarding how they will be viewed in an interracial interaction can even have negative implications for their mental health. Specifically, the more Whites believed that their First Nations interaction partner perceived them in a stereotypical manner, the lower their self-esteem and self-concept clarity after the interaction

(Vorauer et al., 1998, Study 3). Together, these findings illustrate that Whites' beliefs that they might be viewed negatively by their interaction partners can have deleterious consequences for their affective experiences both in anticipation of, during, as well as after, interracial interactions.

B. WHITES' PREJUDICE CONCERNS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTNER

Given our relational approach to studying interracial interactions, it was important for us also to explore how Whites' concerns about appearing prejudiced might impact ethnic minorities during interracial interactions. How might Whites' concerns with prejudice influence their ethnic minority partner's experiences during an interracial interaction? If the negative affect and cognitive disruption resulting from Whites' preoccupation with how they are being perceived is apparent in the interaction, then it is easy to imagine that ethnic minorities are likely to have a negative experience. It is also possible, however, that under certain conditions Whites who are concerned with appearing prejudiced will engage in strategies to facilitate a smooth interaction. Indeed, research finds that when individuals are aware that an interaction partner might perceive them negatively, they often pursue compensatory strategies designed to elicit more favorable responses from their interaction partners (Hilton & Darley, 1985; Ickes, Patterson, Rajecski, & Tanford, 1982; Swann, 1987; Swann & Ely, 1984; Swann & Read, 1981). Ickes et al. (1982), for example, illustrated that perceivers who were led to believe that a target who they would interact with was unfriendly, compared to perceivers without any expectations about the target, engaged in more affiliative behaviors (e.g., directed eye gaze, smiling, and laughing) during the interaction. More pertinent to this discussion, targets rated perceivers who had the unfriendly expectation as more trustworthy and sincere, as well as friendlier than perceivers who did not have any expectations. In addition, targets displayed more affiliative behaviors with perceivers who had the unfriendly expectations than perceivers without any expectations.

Whites who are concerned about appearing prejudiced during interracial interactions face an analogous predicament. Essentially, Whites who are concerned with appearing prejudiced have a negative expectation—they expect ethnic minorities to perceive them negatively. As a result, Whites may engage in compensatory strategies to counter those expectations, which, in turn, could result in their ethnic minority interaction partners having relatively positive perceptions and experiences. We tested the prediction that ethnic minorities would have more favorable impressions of Whites who are concerned with appearing prejudiced than Whites who are not concerned. In

the Shelton (2003) study described previously, Whites and Blacks engaged in a “get-to-know-you” interaction with one another in which they discussed four neutral and four racially sensitive topics. Recall that prior to the interaction half of the White participants were explicitly told to try not to be prejudiced. In addition to completing the anxiety measure noted before, participants indicated how much they liked their partner. Consistent with previous research on compensatory strategies, the Black participants in this study liked White partners who were instructed not to be prejudiced more than Whites who were not told to avoid prejudice (see also Wetzel, Blalock, & Bolger, 2004 for similar results).

1. Summary

Whites' concerns with prejudice can result in paradoxical findings for their own and ethnic minorities' experiences during interracial interactions. The evidence is clear that Whites' concerns with prejudice usurp their cognitive resources and negatively influence their affective states during interracial interactions. However, it may be necessary for Whites to be concerned with appearing prejudiced, to a certain level, because this concern can create a more pleasant atmosphere for ethnic minorities, at least as indicated by ethnic minorities' impressions of Whites. Moreover, these divergent experiences—that is, negative outcomes for Whites, but relatively positive outcomes for Blacks—could have only been revealed by a relational approach to the study of interracial contact.

C. ETHNIC MINORITIES' PREJUDICE CONCERNS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SELF

Ethnic minorities' concerns that others harbor prejudices against their group are likely to influence their affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes during interracial interactions. Indeed, recent research finds that placing ethnic minorities in a situation in which there is a heightened threat that they could be the target of prejudice negatively influences their affective reactions about an anticipated interaction, and their feelings about future interethnic interactions. Tropp (2003) led Latino and Asian-American participants to believe that they had been “randomly” assigned to have an interaction with a White student (confederate). Prior to the ostensible interaction, participants overheard a scripted conversation between the confederate and experimenter. Half of the participants heard the confederate tell the experimenter that he would prefer to switch partners because he would rather not interact with a Latino/Asian person. The other half heard the

confederate ask the experimenter about the length of the study because he did want to be late for class. Immediately after overhearing the conversation, participants completed an affective measure regarding the anticipated interaction and a questionnaire regarding their expectations about future interactions with outgroup members. Results revealed that ethnic minorities who overheard the confederate say he would rather not interact with a Latino/Asian person reported feeling more hostile and anxious about the anticipated interaction, and marginally less positive about interacting with outgroup members in general, compared to those who overheard the confederate make the race-neutral comment. Thus, these results suggest that the expectation that one could be the target of prejudice has negative implications for individuals' experiences in anticipation of interracial interactions.

In our research, we extended these findings to actual interactions, as well as to the behavioral consequences of being concerned that others harbor prejudice against one's group (Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005). With respect to affective outcomes, we expected to find results similar to Tropp (2003). With respect to behavioral outcomes, however, we expected to find a different pattern of findings. Similar to Whites who harbor concerns about appearing prejudiced during interracial interactions, we predicted that ethnic minorities who expect to be the target of prejudice would engage in compensatory strategies to deflect the negative expectancy. Specifically, we expected ethnic minorities who are concerned about being the target of prejudice to display more positive, socially engaging behaviors than those who are not concerned. Consistent with this idea, Miller and Meyers (1998) reasoned that stigmatized individuals are able to reduce the threat posed by prejudice by engaging in behaviors that enable them to achieve desired outcomes in spite of their stigma. Specifically, Miller and her colleagues found that obese women who were visible to their interaction partners (and, thus, vulnerable to prejudice) behaved in a more socially skillful manner, compared to obese women who were not visible, during interactions with normal weight individuals in order to prevent the interaction from being negative (Miller, Rothblum, Barbour, Brand, & Felicio, 1990; Miller, Rothblum, Felicio, & Brand, 1995). Thus, we predicted that although ethnic minorities who expect to be the target of prejudice will have negative affective experiences during interethnic interactions, this would occur in tandem with an increase in socially engaging behaviors, perhaps as a means to reduce the threat posed by the prejudiced tainted situation.

In our first study (Shelton et al., 2005), we examined how ethnic minorities' concerns with being the target of prejudice influence their affect during daily interactions with a White or an ethnic minority roommate. During the first week of the academic year, we invited ethnic minority freshmen to participate in a study on freshmen roommates and their college

experiences. Approximately half of our participants had a White roommate whereas the other half had an ethnic minority roommate, though we did not inform them that the study was about interethnic roommate interactions. The students attended an orientation session in which they completed a variety of questionnaires, including the Stigma Consciousness Scale-Race (Pinel, 1999), which assesses the extent to which individuals expect to be stereotyped because of their ethnicity. During the next 3 weeks, participants completed a daily questionnaire regarding the dynamics of their roommate interactions. On each questionnaire, participants responded to items that tapped into how much they liked their roommate (e.g., I feel less close/more negative toward my roommate today) and the extent to which they experienced negative affect (e.g., tense, anxious, frustrated) during their interactions and/or when they thought about their roommate.

We were also interested in how authentic ethnic minorities felt during their interactions with their roommate. Ethnic minorities who expect to be the target of prejudice are likely to be concerned that their behaviors are being perceived through the lenses of stereotypes. For example, the Black student who listens to rap music or the Mexican student who misses class may fear that his or her behaviors may be seen as stereotypical of their racial groups, rather than indicative of a personal preference. In essence, expecting others to harbor prejudiced beliefs about one's group may inhibit ethnic minorities from feeling comfortable presenting their true self during social interactions. In fact, one compensatory strategy may be to change oneself to fit in with one's White roommate so as not to be perceived in a stereotypical manner. To test this prediction, participants answered questions regarding how authentic they felt with their roommate each day (e.g., I felt I had to change myself to fit in with my roommate today).

Finally, based on previous research on compensatory strategies, we surmised that self-disclosure might be used by ethnic minorities who expect to be the target of prejudice as a means to facilitate harmony in social interactions. Indeed, self-disclosure has been found to promote relational harmony and positive affect within close relationships (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Ethnic minorities who expect to be the target of prejudice may use self-disclosure to facilitate smooth interactions with their White roommates. To test this idea, participants answered questions regarding how much they self-disclosed to their roommate each day (e.g., How much personal information about yourself did you disclose to your roommate today?). Disclosing information may also foster feelings of inauthenticity because individuals may feel that they can only select information that counteracts the stereotypes about their group.

As a whole, the results from this study were consistent with our predictions. We found that the more ethnic minorities expected to be the target of

prejudice, the more negative affect they experienced during interactions with a White roommate. However, the more ethnic minorities expected to be the target of prejudice, the less negative affect they experienced during interactions with an ethnic minority roommate. In addition, the more ethnic minorities expected to be the target of prejudice, the less authentic they felt during interactions with a White roommate but not with an ethnic minority roommate. Finally, the more ethnic minorities expected to be the target of prejudice, the more they self-disclosed during interactions with White, but not ethnic minority, roommates, reflecting, perhaps, the strategic employment of compensatory strategies. Unfortunately, inconsistent with our predictions, prejudice expectations were unrelated to how much participants liked their roommate, regardless of the roommate's ethnicity. Nevertheless, taken together, these findings suggest that ethnic minorities' prejudice concerns have negative implications for their affective experiences and views of the self during interracial interactions.

Conclusions drawn from this first study are tentative because of the limitations associated with correlational designs. In addition, the findings were limited to ethnic minorities who are dispositionally high in prejudice expectations. In a second study (Shelton et al., 2005, Study 2), we created a situation in which most ethnic minorities, regardless of their dispositional tendency, would expect to be the target of prejudice, then examined their behavior during, and affect after, an interracial interaction.

Specifically, we told participants that they would participate in two (ostensibly) unrelated studies. In the first study, participants read three short newspaper articles and answered questions about them. For half of the ethnic minority participants, two articles were prejudice-neutral and one article discussed pervasive prejudice and discrimination directed toward ethnic minorities. For the other half (i.e., control participants), two articles were prejudice-neutral and one article discussed pervasive prejudice and discrimination directed toward elderly individuals. After reading and answering questions about the articles, we asked participants if they would help us out with another study. We explained that the study was on first impressions and they would have a brief (10 minute) interaction with another participant who was down the hall and then complete some questionnaires about the interaction. After participants signed a new consent form, we took them to a new location where they met a White participant. The White participant had also read three newspaper articles prior to this interaction—the two neutral articles and the article about elderly prejudice. Immediately following the interaction, participants were taken to different rooms, where they completed several questionnaires.

Similar to the first study, participants indicated how much they liked their partner, how much negative affect they experienced, how much they enjoyed