

2009

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Running Head: COMFORT LEVELS OF RACIAL GROUPS IN DIALOGUE

Talking About Race:
Comfort Levels of Racial Groups in Dialogue

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CST 411: Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

The topic of race is and has always been a difficult topic for many Americans to discuss amongst members of different races. The social inequalities that exist today as a result of a discriminatory past are the basis for this communication apprehension toward race. Current literature suggests that constructive dialog is the best way to remediate social tensions based on race. This study measures the current communication comfort levels of 86 undergraduate students at a Pacific Northwest University, in regards to dialogs about race. The study reveals that the white majority is more comfortable in communicating about race and racial issues with members of the opposite race more so than minority racial group members.

Talking About Race: Comfort Levels of Racial Groups in Dialogue

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head.

If you talk to a man in his own language, that goes to his heart.

~**Nelson Mandela**

On November 4, 2008, millions of Americans made history by electing the first African American President to office. With the news of Barack Obama's election, celebrations from many members of the racial spectrum from Whites, to Asian, to Hispanic, to Blacks and everyone else in between, ensued. Interviews on primetime news shows displayed people from minority races screaming ecstasies for finally breaking the glass ceiling and singing congratulatory prayers of hope. Those people clearly saw it as a victorious end to a race-tension-filled presidential campaign. Much of Barack Obama's bid for presidency had been blind-sided by his bi-racial origins, such that his policies took a back seat to racial tensions, as remarks made by supporters, objectors, political pundits, and neutral bystanders alike, were interpreted along racial lines. Obama, in an unexpected move, during his campaign delivered a speech commenting on the existing racial tensions in America; addressing the racial controversies surrounding his campaign. On March 18, 2008 Obama addressed the taboo subject of race and shed light on current racial climate in America. He stated,

[T]he comments that have been made and the issues that have surfaced over the last few weeks reflect the complexities of race in this country that we've never really worked through...for black men...the anger is real; and to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between races...And yet to wish away the resentments of white Americans, to label

them as misguided or even racist...too widens the racial divide...It is a racial stalemate that we've been stuck in for years. (Obama, 2008)

Obama with this speech brings to the forefront the tendency to ignore the racial tensions present in America, and to tuck away racial dialogue. And although the New York Times on November 4, 2008 stated, "Obama Elected President as Racial Barriers Falls (New York Times, 2008)," the fact still remains that race, more specifically racial inequalities, continue to exist and be a sticky subject to discuss in the United States.

Race has always been a key player in American society, influencing both state and federal policy and enacting mass movements (Allen, 2004, p.68). And although major advancements toward racial tolerance and understanding have pervaded American society, there still exists a divide between races in America (Allen, 2004). To resolve such disparities regarding race, social scientists contend that meaningful and honest dialog about race is needed (Dalton, 1995; Tatum, 1997; Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). According to Kivel (1996) "talking about racism lessens its power ...and... allows us to do something about it" (p. 95). Yet Ethnic interactions display a reluctance to face racial issues and the parallel social issues such as poverty (Trawalter, & Richeson, 2008).

This study assesses the current racial climate America, using one Pacific Northwest university as a sample population. It specifically looks to unearth racial groups' attitudes toward racial issues and how willing these group members say they are to converse on the subject of race. It is to serve as a basis for how to bridge the communication gap between different racial groups. The paper is divided into three components. The first section assesses the current racial climate in America as perceived through communication literature. The literature examines what is known about how race was (and is) socially constructed in America, defining race and its

surrogate terminologies of racial discrimination, racism, and prejudice. Literature then provides what is known about attitudinal approaches to race from multiple perspectives. The last section of the literature review offers and justifies the study's predictions and hypotheses. The second section of the paper explores the methods and results of the quantitative study involving 86 undergraduate college students. The paper's final section discusses the study's implications for research and practice.

Race: A Social Construction

Social scientists agree that race is a social construction, framing the discussion of race through a social constructionist stance, "Scholars from varying disciplines conceptualize race as a social construction that varies according to social, cultural, political, legal, economic and historical factors within a society" (Allen, 2004, p.67). Race originally was used to classify breeding stock, like horses, but was adopted by English travelers to refer to people who looked different from them. Overtime European scientist used race as way to establish European superiority over the world and to justify the oppression of non-Europeans in the wake of European global expansion (Allen, 2004). Theories on the superiority of the white race rationalized the slave trade here in the United States. In the wake of Social Darwinist theory, which advocated the superiority of the white race (Gandy, 1998), history shows that race "is an artificial artifact of efforts by persons in dominant positions to explain observed differences among human beings, and to establish their superiority over other groups" (Allen, 2004, p.71).

Today race is often the first thing noticed about the individuals people encounter (Allen, 2004, p.68). People typically view race as an aspect of identity and categorize individuals in certain races based on phenotypes, or physiological features like skin color, hair texture, and facial features (Allen, 2004). Race facilitates a sense of identity and provides common

experience for people, especially for those in racial minority groups (Allen, 2004). Race also provides perceptual cues on social interactions with those of other races (Allen, 2004). Though the creation of social groups based on race can create racial empowerment it can also create hostility between groups, as groups may feel the urge to compete with each other for resources and/or recognition (Allen, 2004).

As the use of race to categorize individuals is as pervasive today as it was in the past, so are the practices of white superiority. The power sources of the United States have reinforced the past hierarchies of race, reflecting “an ideology of white supremacy” (Allen, 2004, p. 73). Such intentional or unintentional hierarchies establish the social conditions that determine the distribution of life chances, or the opportunities for growth and the realization of dreams (Gandy, 1998). Thus, memberships in certain racial groups are one of the major determinants that influence ones social location and proximity to life chances (Gandy, 1998).

Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Prejudice

As a consequence of indiscretions involving the hierarchical promotion of race, the ideologies of racism, racial discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping have developed to explain the underlying tensions behind racial interactions. Allen (2004) defines racism as “the systematic subordination of certain racial groups by those groups in power” (as quoted on p. 75). However recent literature makes a distinction between an old and new form of racism. Old racism refers to the belief systems that perpetuated the inferiority of blacks and provided the means for legalized discrimination and segregation (Henry & Sears, 2002). The new form of *modern racism* too is a belief system but is differentiated from old racism by three main forms of racism: (1) *symbolic racism*: denial that discrimination against blacks and other minority races still occurs, (2) *racial resentment*: resentment towards minorities for their gains in the social and political arena, (3)

subtle racism: antagonism toward political and educational programs for social equality (Hogan & Mallot, 2005; Henry & Sears, 2002). If racism refers to a belief system than racial discrimination refers to the racist behavior. The United Nations National Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination states that racial discrimination,

[S]hall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (OHCHR, 1969).

Here prejudice is defined as a set of affective, both positive and negative, reactions towards people as a function of their social categories, including that of race (Schneider, 2004). Racial discrimination and prejudice like modern racism are prominent fixtures in today's society. For example in year 2000 over 36 percent of cases that were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were based on racial discrimination allegations (Allen, 2004).

Conflicts behind Race

Much of the conflict between different racial groups stems from past indiscretions to minority groups that has led to modern forms of institutionalized racism here in the United States. Roots in an active slave trade, Jim Crow laws, and segregation are fixtures of the past that cannot be erased from the African American psyche (Henry & Sears, 2002). The societal effects of such discrimination are evident today in the distribution of opportunities and wealth to minorities; where minorities claim residence in the poor urban areas of America's major cities and sometimes are barred from employment opportunities. In addition residues of past prejudices make ethnic and racial minorities more likely to experience racism, discrimination, violence, and

poverty in their respective environments (Tyson, 2007). In contracts, those of the white race, whether they are conscious of them or not, are subject to unearned entitlements just because they are white (Tyson, 2007). This is referred to as White Privilege (Tyson, 2007). These entitlements and restrictions based on the color of one's skin breed feelings of anger and resentment by minority groups. Federal programs such as affirmative action were put in place to alleviate the affects of past discrimination. It extends to traditionally disenfranchised groups to create racial equality in the workplace, in education, and in training (Allen, 2004). However backlash by whites has made affirmative action policies particularly controversial. The main impetus behind the opposition is that many whites feel that are not responsible for past slavery and mistreatment of ethnic minorities thus they ask why should they be excluded on the premise of being white (Tyson, 2007). Emotions of resentment complement each other in society; such is the emotional climate that pervades race relations in the U.S.

Intergroup Anxiety Model

The tendency for individuals to create identities along racial lines, creating opposing groups, creates anxiety towards the idea of communication across groups. The Intergroup Anxiety Model postulates that people expect four types of negative outcomes when anticipating interactions with people outside their racial groups ((Littlefordm L.N., Wright, M. O., Sayoc-Parial, M., 2005). They expect negative consequences: of a psychological nature such as feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable, of a behavioral nature such as being dominated by members of the out-group, or negative consequences by the out-group members such as being rejected or teased, and/or lastly negative consequences by members of the group to which one belongs. These expectancies can lead to feelings of threat and thus intergroup anxiety (Littlefordm et al., 2005). The amount of anxiety is influenced by prior experiences, stereotypes, conflicts and

difference. (Littlefordm et al., 2005). The literature also suggests that interracial interactions are stressful, especially for members of dominant groups. Whites in particular feel anxious during interracial interactions due to, “negative racial attitudes and/or concerns about appearing prejudiced” (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008, p. 1214). The literature also asserts that racial minorities are concerned with being the target of prejudice in inter-racial encounters as well. (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008).

Historical research on race reveals that race is a social construction, where theories concerning the biological argument which legalized racism and discrimination are no longer socially accepted. However, the effects of such wrong doings have done much to the institutional and emotional climate of race today. Americans create social groups based on race and thus are entitled to the assets and flaws which come with being associated with a particular race. The baggage associated with race relations in the United States have made the interactions between different races particularly strained and/or used as a reason to forego any dialog about race and racial issues.

The present study unpacks the current racial climate by measuring minorities’ and majorities’ attitudes toward discussing race and racial issues. It examined the self-reported comfort levels of individuals regarding their projected involvement in such dialog and whether or not certain races are more comfortable in discussion racial topics. Previous research on the subject of inter-racial communication predicts the following hypothesis:

H1: Members of minority racial groups (i.e. Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics) are more comfortable than member of the majority racial group (Whites) in communicating about race and racial issues with a member of a different race.

Past research indicates that Whites are particularly anxious during interracial contact. They are more hesitant then their black counterparts to mention race during any type of interaction. They

more often fidget, blink excessively, avert their eyes and increase interpersonal distance during inter-racial interactions than in same race interactions (Littlefordm et al., 2005). Research suggests that the fear of being considered prejudiced might lead some whites to treat minority group differently from whites in interactions (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008).

Methods

Procedure

Surveys were administered over a three week period by the investigator to individual classes, club and organization meetings, and/or miscellaneous campus encounters. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary; no type of monetary or other compensation was offered or awarded to the participants. Participants had the option of filling out the survey on the spot or handing/mailing the surveys to the investigator at another time.

Participants

Eighty-six surveys were received from within a Pacific Northwest university's undergraduate community through convenience sampling. Forty-nine of the surveys were filled out by self-identified members of minority racial groups (i.e. Black, Asian, or Hispanic), and 37 surveys were filled out by participants identifying themselves as white. Of the 86 total surveys collected, 28 of the participants were male and 58 of the participants were female. The age ranges of the participants varied from age 18-25, with: four students at the age of 18, ten students at the age of 19, 11 students at the age of 20, 51 students at the age of 21, nine students at the age of 22 and one student was 25 years old.

Instruments

The survey employed the use of three instruments to test the predicted hypothesis: the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension Scale (PRICA), and the Intercultural Willingness to Communicate Scale (IWTC).

Intercultural sensitivity A modified version of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was used to assess the participants “active desire to motivate themselves to understand, appreciate, and accept difference among cultures,” (Chen & Starosta, 2000, p.3). The ISS scale is 24-item Likert instrument developed to measure intercultural sensitivity. Previous studies involving this scale indicated a internal consistency reliability coefficient of .86, showing significant correlations with all seven measures of intercultural sensitivity: Interaction Attentiveness Scale, Impressing Rewarding Scale, Self Esteem Scale, Self-Monitoring Scale, Perspective Taking Scale, Intercultural Effectiveness Scale, Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Modifications to the scale came in the form substituting the phrase culture with race, for example instead a prompt reading as “I enjoy interactions with people from different cultures,” it reads as “I enjoy interactions with people from different races.” Reliability for this modified version of the scale, as determined by the Cronbach’s alpha, was 0.786.

Intercultural communication apprehension. A modified version of the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension Scale also was used. Since individuals who suffer from high levels of apprehension are fearful of communicating with others and those with low apprehensiveness are more comfortable communicating with others, the PRICA focuses on communication apprehension experiences when interacting with members from a different race (Corrigan, Penington, McCroskey, 2006). This 14-point Likert instrument was used to measure the comfort levels of participants when conversing with members of a different race. Previous uses of the scale indicated a reliability coefficient of 0.97 (Corrigan, Penington, & McCroskey,

2006). Modifications to the scale came in the form of changing and substituting the phrase culture with the phrase race. For example instead of the following prompt, “Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different cultures,” the word culture is replaced with the word race to become, “Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different races.” Reliability for this modified version of the scale, as determined by the Cronbach’s alpha was 0.938.

Intercultural willingness to communicate. A modified version of the Intercultural Willingness to Communicate Scale was also used to assess one’s ability to initiate intercultural encounters. The IWTC also can represent one’s level of intercultural communication competence where those with low levels of IWTC would be less willing to deal with the stress that comes with intercultural communication (Kassing, 1997). Previous uses of this six point scale demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.91 (Kassing, 1997). For this survey the modified scale was used to assess comfort levels of individuals when communicating about specific issues regarding race. The survey provided prompts regarding six of the following race related issues: (1) Race in general including racism, and racial discrimination; (2) Affirmative Action; (3) White Privilege; (4) Immigration; (5) Social Class; and (6) Stereotyping. Reliability for each modified version of the scale, as determined by the Cronbach’s alpha, was as followed: Case 1- 0.966; Case 2- 0.963; Case 3- 0.975; Case 4- 0.957; Case 5- 0.963; Case 6- 0.951.

Results

A two-sample t-test was used to measure whether or not nonwhite races are more comfortable communicating about race and racial issues with a member of another race, than whites. Results of the t-test using the data gathered from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) suggested significant differences between white and nonwhite racial groups in terms of

intercultural sensitivity. T-test calculations suggested a standardized mean of 94.04 for nonwhite minority races and 96.48 for the white majority race. Other statistics include, $df = 81$, $t = -1.287$, $p = 0.10$. Standardized means suggests that whites claim to be more interculturally sensitive than whites.

The T-test results of the Personal Report of Intercultural Apprehension Scale (PRICA) suggest significant difference between nonwhite and white racial groups. Minority race groups received a standardized mean of 34.14. Other statistics include $df = 75$, $t = 0.975$, $p = 0.166$. whereas majority race groups received a standardized mean score of 32.108. The PRICAS results indicate that both groups have moderate levels of communication apprehension with majority racial groups claiming to be less apprehensive than whites in communicating with individuals from different races.

T-test calculations regarding the Intercultural willingness to Communicate Scales (ITWC) were varied. For the first ITWC scale involving general race issues: nonwhites received a standardized mean score of 489.71 and whites received a mean score of 541.72. Other statistics include $df = 80$, $t = -2.373$, $p = 0.010$. The second ITWC scale involving affirmative action issues: nonwhites received a standardized mean score of 426.10 and whites received a mean score of 502.35. Other statistics include $df = 80$, $t = -2.82$, $p = 0.002$. The third ITWC scale involving the issue of white privilege issues: nonwhites received a standardized mean score of 423.71 and whites received a mean score of 470.13. Other statistics include $df = 7$, $t = -1.33$, $p = 0.093$. The fourth ITWC scale involving the immigration issues: nonwhites received a standardized mean score of 456.06 and whites received a mean score of 483.48, $df = 82$, $t = -1.01$, $p = 0.156$. The fifth ITWC scale involving the social class issues: nonwhites received a standardized mean score of 466.46 and whites received a mean score of 507.56, $df = 82$, $t = -1.55$, $p = 0.061$. The last

ITWC scale involving the stereotyping: nonwhites received a standardized mean score of 474.77 and whites received a mean score of 493.40, $df = 74$, $t = -0.78$, $p = 0.216$. Results indicate that whites claim they are more willing to communicate more so than nonwhites in all racial issues indicated above.

Discussion

Based on the information gathered, majority racial groups are more comfortable than the minority race group in communicating about race and racial issues based on standardized mean scores. The results reported here are inconsistent with previous research which suggest that Whites are more anxious in race-related interactions. However, p levels and t-scores indicate that the results are replicable or substantial. Regardless of the slight bias which the results reveal, the standardized mean scores of the survey can attest that these undergraduate students, on average, were racially sensitive, un-apprehensive, and willing to communicate about issues involving race regardless of their own racial identities.

Limitations to this study can explain the static nature of the results. The use of a convenience sample limited the sample group to individuals known to the investigator. Thus, many of the participants were individuals who have taken courses in intercultural courses and/or are involved in diversity oriented programs at the University which could explain the similar results between participants. The investigator should have put greater effort towards getting a more random, larger and far reaching sample of the undergraduate populations. Other limitations include the reliability of the participant's responses. Many of the instruments used relied on honest and accurate information. Respondents could not have been answering truthfully or accurately. This could be blamed on the sheer length of the survey, students may have found it difficult to complete the survey in one sitting. Further research on the subject could employ a

faster and more efficient survey. Respondent bias can also be a limitation because respondents may perceive themselves to be more receptive to dialog about race and racial issues than they really are.

Further research on the hypothesis could be done with a larger sample size. Further research on the subject could include general attitudes toward the racial issues explored in this study and/or a qualitative analysis on reasons behind communication discomfort between races. Due to the number of participants involved in some sort of diversity class or initiative here at the university, a new directions for future research could include the impact of diversity education on easing comfort levels of individuals in dialogues about race.

However promising the results of this study, which suggest that members of the majority race are more comfortable and willing to communicate about the topic of race - including several racial issues such as affirmative action and white privilege – than members of minority races, it may not be predicative or representative of the current racial climate in America. General research suggests that apprehension toward racial dialogue still exists from both racial categories. But the election of a bi-racial American to highest office of the nation may be a stepping stone toward multicultural sensitivity. With over 70% of all colleges offering some type of diversity workshop that focuses on race-ethnicity issues (Allen, 2004), perhaps Americans can work through the country's racial stalemate. People just need to start talking about race.

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Appendix 1: Survey

Directions:

Please answer the following questions as honestly and to the best of your ability. There are no right answers to this survey. *Do not put your name or other identifying marks on this survey.* Your responses are strictly confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. Once you are finished with the survey please insert in the brown manila envelope stapled to the back to this survey, seal it and return to the investigator directly. Thank you for participating!

SECTION 1:

Below is a series of statements concerning intercultural communication. There are no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Please put the number corresponding to your answer in the blank before the statement:

5= Strongly Agree

4= Agree

3= Uncertain

2= Disagree

1= Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. I enjoy interaction with people from different races
- _____ 2. I think people from other races are narrow-minded.
- _____ 3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different races.
- _____ 5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 6. I can be sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 7. I don't like to be with people from different races.
- _____ 8. I respect the values of people from different races.
- _____ 9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different races
- _____ 11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of racially-distinct counterparts.
- _____ 12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different races.
- _____ 13. I am open-minded to people from different races.
- _____ 14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 16. I respect the ways people from different races behave.
- _____ 17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different races.
- _____ 18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different races.
- _____ 19. I am sensitive to my racially-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.
- _____ 20. I think my race is better than other races.

- _____ 21. I often give positive responses to my racially different counterpart during our interaction.
- _____ 22. I avoid situations where I will have to deal with racially-distinct persons.
- _____ 23. I often show my racially-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal/nonverbal cues.
- _____ 24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my racially-distinct counterpart and me.

SECTION 2:

Indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling the appropriate term below the item. Again, there are no right or wrong answers; don't be concerned that many of the statements are designed to be similar to other statements. Work quickly and record your first response. The scale is only as valid as you are honest in your responses.

1. **Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different races.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
2. **I am tense and nervous while interacting in group discussions about race with people from different races.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
3. **I like to get involved in group discussions about race with others who are from different races.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
4. **Engaging in group discussion with people from different races about race makes me tense and nervous.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
5. **I am calm and relaxed when interacting with a group of people who are different from me.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
6. **While participating in a conversation about race with a person from a different race, I feel very nervous.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
7. **I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation about race with a person from a different race.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
8. **Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations about race with a person from a different race.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
9. **Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations about race with a person from a different race.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
10. **While conversing with a person from a different race, I feel very relaxed.**
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree
11. **I'm afraid to speak up in conversations about race with a person from a different race.**

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

12. I face the prospect of interacting with people from different races with confidence.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

13. My thoughts become jumbled when interacting with people from different races.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

14. Communicating with people from different race about racial issues makes me feel uncomfortable.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

SECTION 3:

Below are six situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Assume that you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentages of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Keep in mind you are not reporting the likelihood that you would not have the opportunity to talk in these instances, but rather the percentage of times you would talk when the opportunity presented itself. Indicate in the space to the left what percentage of time you would choose to communicate. 0% = never, 100% = always.

Situation 1:

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the instructor breaks up the class into small group to discuss race relations in America. You are asked to discuss the following questions: Is racism and discrimination still prevalent in America today and in what forms? The instructor provides the following definitions of race and racial discrimination on the board:

Racism: is a belief or ideology that all members of each racial group possesses characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as being either superior or inferior to another racial group or racial groups. (From Wikipedia.com)

Racial Discrimination: “shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” (from United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)

Institutional racism: the belief that certain racial groups may be denied rights or benefits, or get preferential treatment.

Considering your knowledge on the subject please indicate how likely you would choose to communicate in this situation in the following:

1. _____% Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me.

2. _____ % Talk with someone from another country.
3. _____ % Talk with someone from a culture I know very little about.
4. _____ % Talk with someone from a different race than mine.
5. _____ % Talk with someone who speaks English as a second language.
6. _____ % Talk with someone who I perceive to be of a similar background (race or culture)

SECTION 3 Cont'd:

Situation 2:

While talking to a group of people about what colleges you applied to and where you were accepted the conversation suddenly moved toward a discussion about affirmative action in the education system and in the work place. One person describes affirmative action as: government policies meant to counter the negative effects of actual or perceived, past and/or current discrimination that is regarded as unfair by relevant legislative bodies and are aimed at a historically socio-politically non-dominant groups intended to promote their access to education or employment (from Wikipedia). Another person suggests that is it a form of reverse discrimination.

Considering your knowledge on the subject please indicate how likely you would choose to communicate in this situation in the following:

1. _____ % Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me.
2. _____ % Talk with someone from another country.
3. _____ % Talk with someone from a culture I know very little about.
4. _____ % Talk with someone from a different race than mine.
5. _____ % Talk with someone who speaks English as a second language.
6. _____ % Talk with someone who I perceive to be of a similar background (race or culture)

Situation 3:

While talking to another group of people about what colleges you applied to and where you were accepted the conversation suddenly moved toward a discussion about “white privilege.” One of people mentions that white privilege is “a sociological concept that describes advantages purportedly enjoyed by white persons beyond that which is commonly experienced by non-white people in those same social, political, and economic spaces (nation, community, workplace, income, etc.) and a person benefiting from white privilege may not necessarily hold racist beliefs or prejudices themselves but are sometimes unaware of such privileges.” (from Wikipedia).

Considering your knowledge on the subject please indicate how likely you would choose to communicate in this situation in the following:

1. _____ % Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me.
2. _____ % Talk with someone from another country.
3. _____ % Talk with someone from a culture I know very little about.
4. _____ % Talk with someone from a different race than mine.
5. _____ % Talk with someone who speaks English as a second language.
6. _____ % Talk with someone who I perceive to be of a similar background (race or culture)

SECTION 3 Cont’d:

Situation 4:

While in class, a discussion about the unemployment rate turns into a discussion about immigration. Some students comment that the immigration laws are too lax and there should be deportation of immigrants and punishment for those who hire them. Other students comment that immigration is not at the heart of the unemployment issue and that these people are simply looking for a better life.

Considering your knowledge on the subject please indicate how likely you would choose to communicate in this situation to the following:

1. _____ % Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me.
2. _____ % Talk with someone from another country.
3. _____ % Talk with someone from a culture I know very little about.
4. _____ % Talk with someone from a different race than mine.
5. _____ % Talk with someone who speaks English as a second language.
6. _____ % Talk with someone who I perceive to be of a similar background (race or culture)

Situation 5:

You are in a business related course and the topic of discussion for the day is luxury items and who can afford them. The professor asks students to raise their hands to identify themselves as lower, working, middle, upper class. Most of the students identify themselves as middle class. The class discussion turns into a discussion about social class and identifiers of social class (how we see and identify individuals from a certain social class). One of the students in an effort to participate mentions that at Nordstorm, employees are trained to differentiate members from different social classes and cater their shopping experience to things they can afford to improve the chances of them making a purchase. The student describes in incident where she misjudged an African American woman, who had 3 children with her and appeared frazzled, as a lower social class member, showing her items that were designated for that income. When helping her to her car, a 2009 BMW, she found out that she was a gynecologist at the Emanuel Hospital and was actually a financially a member of the upper class bracket. The student mentions that she felt horrible about the assessment.

Considering your knowledge on the subject please indicate how likely you would choose to communicate in this situation in the following:

1. _____ % Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me.
2. _____ % Talk with someone from another country.
3. _____ % Talk with someone from a culture I know very little about.
4. _____ % Talk with someone from a different race than mine.
5. _____ % Talk with someone who speaks English as a second language
6. _____ % Talk with someone who I perceive to be of a similar background (race or culture)

SECTION 3 Cont'd:

Situation 6:

While watching part of the 2008 Summer Olympics in a science course, someone comments that virtually all the track runners are black, and that most of all the swimmers are white. Someone else comments that most Asians are smart. Someone else comments that their comments are racist. The class then becomes a discussion about racial/cultural stereotypes and their effects on society.

Considering your knowledge on the subject please indicate how likely you would choose to communicate in this situation in the following:

1. _____ % Talk with someone I perceive to be different than me.
2. _____ % Talk with someone from another country.
3. _____ % Talk with someone from a culture I know very little about.

4. _____ % Talk with someone from a different race than mine.
5. _____ % Talk with someone who speaks English as a second language.
6. _____ % Talk with someone who I perceive to be of a similar background (race or culture)

SECTION 4:

1. What do you identify as your ethnicity?

2. What is your sex? (please circle on)
Male _____ Female _____

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your major? _____

5. Have you taken any courses concerning cultural diversity on Campus? If yes, indicate which ones you taken.

6. What state are you from? _____

If you are not from the United States please indicate what country you are from: _____

This completes the survey. Thank you very much for your participation. Please fold, place, and seal this survey in the manila envelope stapled to the back.

Please return directly to or mail the envelope to Jovelyn Bonilla.