ABSTRACT

This research consists of a sample of 220 adults from six different ethnic groups, including European Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans and Jewish Americans.

The purpose was to examine the feelings, attitudes, perceptions and opinions that each of the six groups had of the others, and to what extent the minority groups “fit in” this rural community and the degree of tolerance they have experienced. The sample, consisting of adults, including students from Humboldt State University, was drawn from the communities in Humboldt County, located in Northern California.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the kind and supportive help of several individuals and organizations. Foremost, we gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai Birth, the Center for Indian Community Development, the Office of the Provost, as well as the Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, currently the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Individual students who have dedicated their time to this research project are Anna LoMascolo, Susan Harper, Etta Martin, Will Tift, Candice Ludlow, Geraldine Goldberg, Anthony Silvaggio, Nicole Frank, Melanie Coddington, and Eric Thomas. Also, many thanks go out to Rocky Waters, who helped us with statistical analysis.

INTRODUCTION

For the last 28 years we have been teaching courses at Humboldt State University about community dynamics, race and ethnic relations from a global perspective, the social psychology of prejudice, and the roots of anti-Semitism and hate groups. Over the years, we have wrestled with our senior and graduate students over the nature of prejudice and intolerance. While the views may vary about the nature of prejudice and intolerance, most of these discussions, based on reviews of research on the topics of prejudice and discrimination, highlight that the prejudiced person represents some of the following trends: s/he tends to be quite ethnocentric; s/he makes a sharp distinction
between his or her in-group and out-groups; s/he is "a social reductionist", as Ashley Montague stated (1997) in his book titled The Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race. His/her reference groups reflect an exclusive, rather than inclusive, emphasis; s/he is unlikely to identify with "humanity", but prefers more exclusive levels of identification; and s/he thrives on selective membership with him or herself on the "inside". Such an attitude provides a sustaining and compensating mechanism for psychological and social security. Additional trends are that s/he borrows prestige and esteem from his or her race and nation; s/he tends to be suspicious, distrustful and extra punitive; s/he attributes evil motives to blacks and other outgroup members in that race problems are due to minorities and the kinds of faults that they possess. A prejudiced person is afraid of contact with minority groups and foresees dire consequences of intergroup interaction. Frequently, segregation is preferred over integration because s/he knows "for sure" that blacks and whites cannot live together peacefully. For the prejudiced person, the world is an unfriendly place filled with conflict, which involves power struggle and competition among groups. Outsiders are not to be trusted and the prejudiced person has a tendency to dichotomize people (into "the good" and "the bad").

The prejudiced person favors obedience to authority, which is reflected in Adorno's authoritarian personality study (1950). S/he is conservative and unsentimental and poorly endowed with imagination, humanitarianism, creativity and compassion. Ashley Montague (1997) maintains that a prejudiced person is fatalistic, pessimistic and has no room for scientific discovery of human behavior. A prejudiced person subscribes to more fundamental, dogmatic, irrational and authoritarian doctrines and beliefs; s/he is anti-modernist and tends to be far less educated.

The tolerant person is more able to perceive and accept variation and diversity in life, and is less likely to subscribe to stereotyping and dogmatic thinking. The tolerant
person is less likely to be rigid, is more optimistic about the future and more "kindhearted". The tolerant person has more education and has experienced a childhood devoid of harsh discipline and authoritarian parental control. These endeavors have sensitized us to the current status of race and ethnic relations in this country, as well as in other countries, and about racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of oppression around the world.

A search of the literature indicates that there is very little written about race relations in rural America. C. Matthew Snipp (1996) suggests that rural sociologists have failed to look into the status of race and ethnic relations in rural areas because they assume that race and ethnic relations in rural America are rather set, peaceful and devoid of conflict. Street (1992), in a work titled Organizing Our Lives: Voices from Rural Communities, addressed the problem that Asian refugees and other migrants are facing in rural America. Among the problems are housing, jobs and toxic racism. Supples and Smith (1995), who studied three communities in the midwest concluded that racism exists and is intrenched.

Today, 50 years after the Holocaust, anti-Semitism still rears its ugly head in virtually every Western country, as well as several non-Western countries. Numerous reports, articles and surveys have recently described incidences of racist and anti-Semitic acts, and biased crimes generally, in the United States, and some even claim that it has reached its highest level in 20 years. A perusal of the World Wide Web reveals a plethora of racist and anti-Semitic pronouncements, such as the vicious pamphlet titled "African Americans and European Americans: 101 Facts".

Racism and anti-Semitism has been well researched over the past 40 years. The dehumanization of minorities, Jews, gays, women and others has many sources. In the case of anti-Semitism, it was rampant in America in the 20s, 30s and 40s, as was racism.
Though both anti-Semitism and racism are meant to hurt, attitudes towards African Americans and people of color differ from attitudes towards Jews, because Jews are considered white. Anti-Semitism and racial prejudice differ substantially in ideological contents and acceptance. Racial prejudice portrays African Americans and other minorities in a particularly derogatory manner, and is more prevalent. Despite these differences, anti-Semitism and racism are similarly distributed in the population at large. Both are common among the less educated and among older Americans, especially in rural areas and in some pockets of the South.

The source of racism/anti-Semitism comes from many different directions; (1) from a variety of hate groups (on the World Wide Web there are over 600) that have access to the media and are able to disseminate negative and distorted images of minorities and Jews; (2) social structural arrangements and factors such as economic frustration, ignorance, miseducation, and modelling contempt for the "other", i.e., minorities and people of color. Examples of this in this country are groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, the John Birch Society, and various neo-Nazi groups, among others; (3) Resentment among ethnic groups, especially between African Americans and Jews, which stems from the perception that Jews are much more interested in their own self-interest than getting involved with human rights and the liberation of African Americans. Jews, on the other hand, perceive some members of the African American community to be hate purveyors, such as Louis Farrakhan, Khalid Abdul Muhammad, and others who regard Jews as the enemy, in part because they view Jews as part of white society.

Racism and anti-Semitism and other dehumanizing processes have existed historically. Father Coughlin in the 1930s, as well as Henry Ford's newspaper called the Dearborn Independent have propounded anti-Semitism and intolerance.
The status of racial and ethnic minorities and Jews in this country have been studied most frequently in urban settings. Some findings seem to be somewhat optimistic and contradictory. The Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and other surveying polls indicate anti-Semitism has declined, as has racism. Yet other surveys point to an increase in prejudice and discrimination and increased instances of biased crimes. The Federal Bureau of Investigation publishes figures which indicate that biased hate crimes are on the rise, as did the California Office of the Attorney General in the 1996 Report on Hate Crime Statistics. The magazine published by the Simon Wiesenthal Center titled Response (1994) points out that Jewish cemeteries are being targeted and desecrated world wide and that Lewis Freeh, Director of the FBI, revealed that there were 7,684 incidences of hate crimes during 1994, and have increased since.

Our study was, in part, inspired by Peter Rose who, in 1959, conducted in upstate New York small town communities a study of mutual perception of Jews and African Americans on the one hand, and European Americans on the other. Our study is broader because we looked at six different groups and their perceptions of each other. Not only were we interested in finding out what European Americans think of the Jews, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans in their midst, but also in knowing what these other five minority groups think of each other, as well as of their European American neighbors.

We are interested in the literature that addresses the issue of pluralistic ignorance which is “the shared false ideas of individuals about sentiments, thoughts, and actions of others” and the “spiral of silence” theory asserting that “publicly expressed and privately held opinions held to be inconsistent when the perceived opinions of the majority counter one’s privately held opinions.” The phenomenon of attitude-behavior discrepancy has been extensively studied by Irwin Deutscher (1993).
In this paper, we will report our research and findings about tolerance and intolerance in rural America, which we feel has not received adequate attention. We will first turn to the literature and research reports in the area of race and ethnic relations.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Studies of the status of race relations in this country have been undertaken periodically and systematically by the Anti-Defamation League (1995), various polling groups, including New York Times, Gallup Poll, Los Angeles Times and others, the intelligence reports put out by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the NAACP, and other academic studies.

Recently in the *New York Times* (December 12, 1997) there was a cartoon by Mike Peters, which showed a crowd of hundreds of white faces, and one individual in the midst of the crowd says, "Gosh, it works! Since we ended affirmative action here on the campus, I never notice anyone's skin anymore." Somehow a large percentage of *European American* society has managed to make ethnic issues and injustices invisible.

On January 19, 1998, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, along with KRON-TV and others, undertook a research study on the status of race relations in the Bay Area, which has a substantial minority population. This project, authorized by Jerry Roberts, Managing Editor, and written by Clarence Johnson, Clinical Staff Writer, have reported on a research survey undertaken by Baldassare Associates, which interviewed a sample of 1,000 Bay Area residents, consisting of *African Americans*, *Latinos* and *Asians*, as well as *European Americans*, and asked them the following questions: "Would you say that tension and prejudice between various racial and ethnic groups in the Bay Area today is a big problem?" Twenty-nine percent of *African Americans* said yes; 13% *Asians* said yes; 13% of *Latinos* said yes; and 18% of *European Americans* said yes. The next question was "Would you say tension and prejudice between various racial and ethnic
groups in the Bay Area is somewhat of a problem?" Forty-eight percent of African Americans said yes; 50% of Asians; 45% of Latinos; and 56% of European Americans said yes. Responding to the question "Would you say tension and prejudice between various racial and ethnic groups in the Bay Area is a small problem?" Eighteen percent of African Americans said yes; 23% of Asians; 14% of Latinos; and 19% of European Americans said yes. The final question "Would you say tension and prejudice between various racial and ethnic groups in the Bay Area is no problem at all?" Three percent of African Americans said yes; 12% Asians; 11% Latinos; and 6% of European Americans said yes.

The New York Times/CBS news poll on affirmative action (December 6-9, 1997) of a sample of 1,258 adults, has come up with predictable results. Namely that African Americans favor affirmative action, while European Americans regard it as imposing quotas, which are seen as discriminatory. The question was asked "Do you believe that where there has been job discrimination against blacks in the past, preferences in hiring and promoting should be given to blacks today?" European Americans said "No" to this question by a margin of 57%. But 62% of African Americans answered "Yes", while 23% said "No". Responding to the question about giving preferential treatment to racial minorities, only 26%, including 21% of European Americans and 51% of African Americans, said that they would favor such a program. Just 19% -- 15% of European Americans and 48% of African Americans -- said they would favor a program that imposed quotas for racial minorities. Another interesting question asked "Should programs make special efforts to help minorities get ahead". Americans of both races seemed vastly more comfortable with this question. Fifty-five percent of respondents, including 51% of European Americans and 80% of African Americans, said that they would favor such a program. Another interesting finding is that European Americans
with college degrees are more likely to favor ending affirmative action, by a margin of 57%, 34%, than those with high school degrees or less, 31% favoring abolishing affirmative action, while 51% oppose it. People with an annual income of about $50,000 are more likely to support ending affirmative action than those who make $38,000 per year or less.

A survey done by GarinHartYang in 1991, sampled more than 750 people, ages 15-24 and found that 54% of young people characterize race relations as good, compared to 42% who characterized them as not good. But young people seem increasingly accepting of the "separate but equal" concept for America. Forty-one percent of youth said that it was okay if the races are basically separate from one another in our country as long as everyone has equal opportunities. The percentage of those who disagree with the "separate but equal" philosophy fell from 57% in 1991 to 31% today. The implication here is that young people are saying in these polls and what young people tell us is that there is still much work to be done, according to Judy McGrath, MTV President, for whom the study was conducted.

Steven A. Holmes of the New York Times (on March 3, 1994) discusses the results of a survey by L & H Research for the National Conference of Christians and Jews, says the majority of African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans agree that European Americans are bigoted, bossy and unwilling to share power. Majorities of non-White groups also say they have less of a chance to gain a good education, secured jobs and decent housing than European Americans have. But European Americans, on the other hand, feel that minority groups are given the same opportunities in these three areas. Participants were asked to respond to statements, some positive and some ugly, about racial groups. For example, 46% of Latinos and 42% of African Americans agree with the statement "Asians are unscrupulous, crafty and devious in business". At the
same time 68% of Asians and 49% of African Americans agreed that Latino Americans "tend to have bigger families than they are able to support". Thirty-one percent of Asian Americans and 26% of Latino Americans agreed with the statement that "Blacks want to live on welfare". In many cases, this survey determined that minorities have more negative views of other minorities than do European Americans. This is explained in part because European Americans are generally more educated and, therefore, are more guarded in their negative expressions.

A national poll conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago and a survey of European Americans and minorities (people of color) in Los Angeles conducted by researchers at the University of California found some positive perceptions. The survey called "Taking America's Pulse" did unearth evidence of positive views of America's big ethnic and racial groups. For example, more than 80% of the survey said that they admired Asian Americans for "placing high values on intellectual and professional achievement" and "having strong family ties". A majority of all groups agreed that Hispanic Americans "take deep pride in their culture and work hard to achieve a better life". A majority said "blacks have made a valuable contribution to American society and will work hard when given a chance". Lawrence D. Bobo, a researcher at University of California at Los Angeles, who has studied minorities' views of one another said it was not surprising to find more willingness among minorities to express negative stereotypes of other minorities. "The sensitivity of not expressing stereotypical beliefs is much higher among European Americans than among other minorities", said Mr. Bobo, Director of his university's Center for Research on Race, Politics and Society. "It is the legacy of the past 30 years of civil rights revolution. European Americans are far more guarded and cautious about expressing stereotypical views." In addition, Mr. Bobo believes that minorities' lack of reticence in voicing
negative opinions of others reflects the fact that members of minority groups are less likely than European Americans to have attended college. As a general rule, those with some degree of college education are much less likely to express stereotypical views of others.

James Aho (1990) in his book *The Politics of Righteousness* discusses the Christian Identity and Patriotism and how they work to dehumanize Jews and other minorities. His later book titled *This Thing of Darkness* (1994) discusses various historical causes of anti-Semitism and racism and how the enemy is socially constructed. Gordon Allport’s (1979) classical work titled *The Nature of Prejudice* addresses the psychological and psycho-pathological reasons for hating others. Leonard Dinnerstein (1994) in his book titled *Anti-Semitism in America* discusses the history and various factors leading to anti-Semitism. In even earlier studies, such as *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) by Adorno et al. and Gertrude J. Selznick and Steven Steinberg’s work (1969), as well as several others point to the tenacity of prejudice in this country. Studies such as Tobin (1988), and Martire and Clark (1982) have revealed the traditional stereotyped traits of Jews still persist but perhaps in different forms, and currently with different levels of intensity depending upon one’s geographical region.

Wade Smith (1985) examined 11 surveys between 1958 and 1978 and found that over the 20 years education mattered in terms of attitudes towards minorities. He stated that there is more tolerance among European Americans, especially when associated with higher education. Linda Foley et al. (1981) found that African American college students also have stereotypes of minorities and the most favorable stereotypes were of Chinese and Jews. Stereotypes of African Americans ranked third in favorableness, followed by Italians and Germans. Inter-racial relations have focused primarily on decreasing European American prejudice and stereotypes of African Americans.
Hirsh and Spiro (1988) speak about anti-Semitism as being one of the most persistent and deadly forms of prejudice of all times. They discuss the various “causes” of anti-Semitism, including religious and ideological expressions of anti-Semitism (the old accusation of the Jews as deicide). The recent video on PBS titled The Longest Hate encapsulates the long history of anti-Semitism.

Leonard Dinnerstein (1995) states that while Jews seem to be "accepted" into American society, there appears to be a rather impressive outburst of African American anti-Semitism in some cities, especially in New York City. Ernst A. Rappaport (1975) gives an in-depth analysis of anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the last 2,000 years. He maintains that his book deals with 2,000 years of anguish of the Jews. His book is about an anti-Jew and his anguish caused by his futile resistance against a sick, irrational behavior pattern which he interjected in the early years of his childhood when he was exposed without protection to the unmitigated influence of his environment, parents and education. He claims that his book is not a false accusation of the Christian world. It is nevertheless set in the Christian world.

Eugene Cornacchia and Dale Nelson (1992) in discussing African American and European American ethnic experiences, maintain that their experiences are not the same. African Americans have a lot of political and economic catch up to do and it's much more of an uphill battle for them. The authors maintain that nearly 125 years after the civil war, African Americans are clearly justified in asserting that their political problems and issues are still unique and therefore warrant continued separate attention in the policy process. The authors' findings in their study lends solid support to Patterson's (1983) contention that the genesis of ethno-racial groups' experiences can have long term consequences for its success or failure. Having once been shut out of the political process, African Americans must continue to be faced with being shut out. There
appears to be a tenaciousness to this problem.

Oliver and Johnson (1984) maintain that antagonism between African Americans and Latinos is not that great, especially when compared to European Americans. European Americans still express considerable antagonism and hostility against both African Americans and Latinos. Traditional race and ethnic hostilities are still important in urban America and should not be overlooked or side tracked by our concern with inter-ethnic conflict. One of the major findings of this paper is that race and ethnic relations in rural America are not harmonious.

African Americans do feel fairly strongly that undocumented Americans take jobs away from them. This sentiment is reflected in other literature as well.

Ginsberg (1981) maintains that there is a similarity between Jewish attitudes towards African Americans, both in Boston and in London. The images of African Americans were negative. African Americans were perceived by most Jews as being aggressive, rough, lazy and dirty. There was a persistent reporting of fear of crime, both in Boston and in London. They have maintained that "nice colored people" do not live in those neighborhoods, it's only the "bad colored people" that live there.

Edward C. Chang (1993) discusses the Jewish-African American and Korean-African American relationships, which reflect the fundamental issues of economic exploitation of African Americans by both Jewish and Korean merchants. Class, he maintains, is also a major element of inter-ethnic relations as it evolves in confrontation between Jewish and Korean middle classes and African American underclasses. Although many Jews struggled together with African Americans for the passage of civil rights in 1964, they were primarily concerned with the elimination of maximum quotas as set then, while African Americans fought for the establishment of minimum quotas in employment, education, housing and political representation. That was a painful issue
between Jewish Americans and African Americans. However, the conflict between Korean Americans and African Americans differed from the conflict between African Americans and Jewish Americans. The dynamics of the Korean-African American conflict occurs within a rapidly changing domestic and international economic context.

Hubert Locke (1994) extensively examined a number of articles on African American-Jewish relations and maintains that there is at least a two-sided story to this issue. Jews have perceived African Americans as not being grateful for their civil rights support, including the help in establishing the NAACP, while African Americans look at Jews as white oppressors and racists.

Tsukashima (1976) addresses the issue of African American-Jewish antagonism. He also perceives that African American anti-Semitism is a reflection of antipathy towards European American society in general. Another purpose for African American anti-Semitism represents something more than a generalized hostility towards European American society. It is claimed that African Americans are special sources of antagonism towards Jews and hence they are more likely to feel greater hostility towards them and towards other European Americans. One of the reasons might be that Jews were middle minorities.

Pinkney (1978-79) says that he does not see that Jewish organizations specifically allied with African American causes, especially since they supported the Bakke case and while there are individual Jews who are very much for civil rights and deeply involved, according to the author, Jewish organizations normally look out for number one.

Recently Howard Epstein published a book (Jews in Small Towns 1997) in which he has asked 140 Jewish individuals who live in different small towns across America how they fit into the community. Seventy-four out of 140 (or 52%) reported that they had negative experiences at times in those communities. In more recent studies, some
surveys find that the problem of minorities, that is, specifically racism and anti-Semitism, has substantially subsided and other studies find that racism and perceptions of discrimination still exists and plagues them.

**History of the Treatment of Minorities in Humboldt County.**

Historically, Native Americans have been slaughtered on several occasions in the 19th century, enslaved, and otherwise humiliated in Eureka and vicinity as well as the Bridge Gulch Massacre of 1852 and a number of others (Norton 1997, 1979; Henry 1970; Heizen 1974; Ward 1992; Forbes 1992).

A disproportionate number of juveniles in detention camps were Native Americans. Humboldt State University, located in the town of Arcata in Northern California, has a minority population of 12%. Though generally well treated at the university, we have been informed by a local police officer and by African American students that there are certain nearby communities where they still now, in 1997, do not want to wander around, especially at night, because of fear of some form of humiliation or violence.

Some historians maintain that European Americans perceive Indians as threatening and therefore this as an excuse for the degradation, discrimination and enslavement of Indian peoples. An article in The Humboldt Times made it clear that labor competition from minorities was perceived as an economic threat. In various editorials from 1860-1870s, the Times printed various statements including:

How can a white laborer support himself and family in competition with the Chinaman?... All the spaces filled by Chinese deprived that many white men of an opportunity to make a living ... It would be a shame and a disgrace for Chinese (to work) while so many white laborers are out of employment. The depression in the lumber market has thrown out ... many worthy and industrious white men.
In 1885, Chinese experienced prejudice, discrimination, harassment, property damage, physical violence and expulsions. *The Humboldt Times* (currently *The Times Standard*) called the Chinese "filthy humanity" and their homes "festering dens." The paper warned citizens to keep their hen coops under lock and key so the Chinese thieves would not steal their chickens. There were a variety of stereotypes of Chinese.

The Asian Americans were not only humiliated in other ways, but also were driven out from the city of Eureka which is the county seat of Humboldt County. In Eureka, the Ordinance Section 190 stated

No Chinese shall ever be employed, either indirectly or directly, on any work of the city or in performance of any contract or subcontract of the city, except in punishment for crime. Nor shall any provisions, supplies, materials or articles of Chinese manufacture or production ever be used or purchased by or furnished to the city.

Like O'Reilly, Brogdan (1971) found that there was strong anti-Chinese sentiments. The land on which the Chinese built was owned by European Americans, but the buildings were built by Chinese themselves out of rough and discarded lumber, for which they paid $6-$8/month. The ground on which the buildings were located was low and swampy. Because of the grading, the slough had been blocked off, so Chinatown was without drainage. The houses were formed by a hollow square in which the slough was the center and collected all the garbage and filth from the households. The newspaper and some leadership encouraged anti-Chinese feelings and violence.

Observers point out that there was something called "racial nativism" which gave the impetus to many of the grievances which the Californians held against the Chinese. This kind of ideology and sentiment reflects the atmosphere of the late 19th century of California generally, which resulted in helping to foster and establish the "yellow peril". This specifically resulted in the Anti-Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (Takaki 1993).
California has long been a state of vigilantism. In every issue of Eureka's papers, there was space devoted to news of the West and the nation. The indelible impression created by the Exclusion Act was also noted. There was great similarity between Eureka's problems and those of the rest of the state, ranging from sanitation to labor competition to other such issues. A business directory of Humboldt County was published in 1890, and in it stated:

There are no Chinamen in Humboldt County except in the mines of the Klamath River, and extreme north portion, and they are there only because of the isolation of these localities ... To those who have experienced the misery of having this degraded and debasing element in their midst, and realizes the futility of redress at the hands of the US Courts, which has so often been demonstrated, this simple fact of itself is no small accommodation in seeking a home as far removed from vicious examples as possible. Nature's benefaction to Humboldt County has been many, but we pride ourselves on having our own effort eradicated our festering putrescent soil from our vitals (Business Directory of Humboldt County, Eureka Daily Humboldt Standard, 1890, page 91).

Of course race relations have improved since these words were printed in the Humboldt County Business Directory, yet our research still points to some intolerance against people of color.

One of the persistent phenomena of race and ethnic relations studies in various communities across the nation, and perhaps globally, is that minorities have one type of experience living in the majority world and the majority population perceive the minorities largely in a different light. Specifically, European Americans feel that ethnic oppression has subsided substantially; after all there has been civil rights, affirmative action and other preferential actions that have alleviated largely the inferior social,
economic and political status that minorities have experienced historically.

In the 1930s, African American athletes who came to Humboldt County experienced some harrassment, especially in the local bars. In 1954, the NAACP was being organized here in Humboldt County. Minority communities in Humboldt County were too small to have any effective political power.

The treatment of African Americans was more moderate in Humboldt County than the treatment of the Chinese, partly because there were so few of them and they did not constitute a threat to European American society. African Americans continued to work in menial jobs since their arrival in the 20th century. Their small number had a minor impact on the labor force in Humboldt County.

Each minority in Humboldt County, especially Indians, Chinese and African Americans were treated differently. Indians were killed for minor causes. Many European Americans thought that Indian difficulties could only be resolved by adopting a policy of extermination and they killed at least 50% of the Indians. Indian children were kidnapped and sold. Indian adults were indentured. In contrast, the Chinese were occassionally beaten and expelled, a prospect that they could accept with little permanent effect, while the treatment of African Americans was characterized by relative neglect.

African American experiences in Humboldt County changed drastically after World War II because of an increase in numbers, and an influx of European Americans with prejudice against African Americans. In 1937, there was a major influx of "dust bowl" refugees, mostly from Oklahoma and Arkansas. Many of them settled in the nearby town of McKinleyville. With the increase in African American population, hostility against African Americans and incidences of discrimination occurred more frequently. Some claim that African Americans caused disturbances in local bars and hence were kept out of bars and restaurants. There was some prejudice in housing as
well. In order to combat prejudice, in March 1954, the NAACP was formed to help stop
discrimination against African Americans. African American athletes at Humboldt State
helped to better intergroup relations. At Humboldt State University, an African
American football player named Bill Richardson, became Student Body President in
1970 and was re-elected Student Body President for the 1971 school year. Attempts were
made to recruit more African American students to Humboldt State University.

Kellogg (1972) states that each of the ethnic groups experience somewhat
different treatment. According to Kellogg, "The treatment afforded a minority group is
directly related to the degree to which dominant society sees itself as threatened by that
group" (page 2).

METHOD

The research described in this paper was conducted in the small, rural
communities of Humboldt County in Northern California. The Humboldt County
Economic and Demographic Almanac (1996) indicates that the population breakdown of
the county is 88% European American, 4% Hispanic, 1% African American, 5% Native
American, and 2% Asian Pacific. The sample consisted of 220 adult respondents from
the following ethnic groups: 84 European Americans (Europeans Americans exclusive of
Jewish Americans), 30 African Americans, 22 Latino Americans, 29 Native Americans,
28 Jewish Americans and 27 Asian Americans, which roughly represents the percentage
of the population in Humboldt County. The sample is representative of the population in
general as well as Humboldt State University students.

The main thrust of this research was to examine the perceptions, attitudes, images
and relationships between these six groups and how they feel that they have integrated
themselves into the small community, as well as their attitudes towards each other. In
other words, do the minority groups feel that they "fit in" and have been accepted as
welcome neighbors, or have they personally experienced racism, anti-Semitism or other forms of discrimination.

The sample was selected in two different ways: (1) randomly from the telephone book; and (2) from lists of organizations representing the various ethnic groups. Thus, from the NAACP list we chose African Americans, from Latino Association we chose Latino Americans, from the Native American tribal list we chose the Native American respondents, and from the Jewish Congregation membership we chose the sample of Jewish respondents. **European Americans** were selected randomly from the Humboldt County telephone book. We tried to get a representative sample of the population from the community including community college and university students (from College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University). We sent trained interviewers to the respondent's home to interview them and tape record them. Subsequently, those interviews were transcribed. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Besides getting the general background of the respondents, including their education, income, occupation of parents, and religion/religiosity, we also asked them questions about the most important things they had learned about American life from their parents, what their parents told them about **Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, Jewish Americans and Latino Americans**, and what ethnic groups they attended elementary school, high school, and college with. Additionally, we asked them questions about the ethnicity of their closest friends and whether they experienced feelings of similarity or commonness to a variety of different ethnic groups in their community, whether they had any strong feelings about any of the various ethnic groups, and what would be the most important message they would want to leave to young people if they were asked to give a speech. We also wanted to know how they felt about the Rodney King incident and California’s
Proposition 187 (which dealt with illegal immigrants). The closed-ended parts of the questionnaire consisted of several validated scales, such as social status/position in the community, perceptions of what groups are lazy or hard-working, which groups were more or less violent, which groups were more or less intelligent, which groups they perceived as wanting to be self-supporting as opposed to living off of welfare, the extent of each groups’ sense of patriotism, and the degree of power/influence each group has in society. We also administered the Social Distance Scale and, finally, a set of other scales which dealt with locus of control, social responsibility, anti-Semitism, self-esteem, and empathy. Based upon this methodological approach, what follows is the analysis of our research, and some concluding observations.

ANALYSIS

In our sample, when we asked the question "Would you please tell me which group(s) you have strong feelings about and what your feelings are about them?" we found that 31% of European Americans responded that they had negative feelings towards other groups; 36% of African American had negative feelings towards other groups; 24% of Latino Americans said they had negative feelings towards others; 68% of Asian Americans said that they had negative feelings about others; 70% of Native Americans reported negative feelings towards others; and 40% of Jewish Americans said they had negative feelings about others.

When we asked the question about experiences, "Have you had any experiences with a member of the following ethnic groups (positive or negative)?" Fifty-eight percent of European Americans said that they had had negative experiences; 144% of African Americans said they had negative experiences; 76% of Latino Americans said they had negative experiences; 136% of Asian Americans reported negative experiences; 96% of Native Americans had some negative experiences; and 75% of Jewish Americans
reported some negative experiences. Naturally, the percentages reflect more than one negative experience per respondent (that is, percentage may exceed 100%). Regarding negative experiences, one African American states:

... you know how a lot of Japanese newspapers in Hawaii are bold talking about blacks saying how blacks, and this is me stereotyping blacks, that they are lazy, I mean they went down a list of things, that all they were interested in is sports, and this is an article explaining why Japanese will not hire blacks (R 004).

A European American states:

... my daughter, when she was in high school, she was going with a black American, and the negative was his intense black Americanness, and he was a jive ass, and crafty, inconstant, and lazy, and he would not help around here, downtrodden in a way that was hard for me to take, and hard for me to take from a high school kid (R 136).

Another comment from a European American respondent:
whites, I have worked with a lot which I have personally dealt with and worked with and that they did not want to work for it (R 186).
In terms of violence, one European American respondent states:
I have always considered blacks to be kind of a short tempered and violent group of individuals (R 134).

With regards to welfare, here too we find serious distortions. One African-American respondent states:
I have a white friend of mine who was not prejudice but they think the average person on welfare is black, but it is not true (R 256).

One Jewish respondent stated:
I had a tough time in school later on in life, academically I wasn't doing too well and I
remember hearing: "Aren't you Jewish? What's the matter? Something is not right here." Then I also experienced getting into a school through athletics, and I got comments like: "Jews don't play football". So my identity has caused conflict in my life (R 010).

Another respondent, who is Native American, recounted a negative experience in Humboldt County with an African American. He states:

I remember I was walking home with a girlfriend of mine and we were walking through Eureka and a car pulls up at a stop sign ... and this big black guy comes out and looks at me and says "you want to say something about niggers?" and whacks me up side the head with a sawed off pool cue. I have no idea what provoked the attack ... I had five stitches in my head. What the hell did I do? (R 023)

An Asian American respondent discussed another negative experience which happened in Humboldt County:

One time I went shopping and I came to the cash register line and in my line I was the second person ... and there were three or four persons behind me and they happened to be Caucasiats ... [Another register line opened] and she said "Can I help the next person?". I went over there and she closed it and said "I'm sorry, I can't help you." I came back and she took the next person ... the white lady over there (R 233).

A Latino American respondent said:

I went to school with a lot of White European Americans and there was a lot of prejudice there. They didn't like you because of what color your are. I mean they were friends to my face, but behind my back they said stuff about different Latinos and stuff like that. Like, "you're okay, but that group as a whole..." That type of thing (R 236).
With regards to the question, "which group do you have strong feelings about?", a European American respondent speaking about African Americans states:

When I see them driving around in nice cars, standing in the food stamps and welfare lines, it makes me mad.

The respondent added, however:

You see just as many other groups standing on line as you do blacks, including Mexican, you know (R 118).

Responding to the same question, a Native American respondent stated:

Here lately coming to classrooms in multicultural education I have to see all of these kids making Indian headdress feathers, see the Indian dressed as a clown with the headdress and all of these great things that the Indians did for Thanksgiving. They don't have a clue (R 006).

An African American respondent, when asked which groups he has strong feelings about, replied:

Mexican American people for one. I feel that they are in the same situation financially, socially, and mentally of Blacks. Lots of them lack education, they lack the ability to get jobs and school. They migrate from the poor area to try to get to the richer area, just like the Black migrated from the South to the North hoping to find better jobs. That is a reason there. They hate blacks very, very strongly hate blacks (R 071)

One Jewish respondent commented about African Americans:

I think that I have really strong feelings that [blacks] have been dealt a terrible hand and people just expect them to, you know, do something that is impossible like pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. Those people that expect it don't realize that's impossible. They make those cruel jokes like the Million Man March and how
only four people missed time off work. They don't realize the situation of blacks. They can't get work (R 097).

A Latino respondent commented:

I have strong feelings toward Native Americans because I think they've been gypped.

Also about African Americans because they really are a minority up here. I know people who have had racial slurs happen to them and that whole hypocrisy that happens to them up here that's not necessarily overt racism (R 205).

Finally, an Asian American respondent asserted strong feelings about Latino Americans and African Americans by stating:

And Hispanics. This is a tough one because a lot of Hispanics don't like Asians, this is just something that I have noticed, and also sometimes it happens that African Americans don't like Asians. There is just all of those racial tensions that go on (R 242).

We asked the question: "How often have you personally experienced racial tension or prejudice?" The possible responses were: often/sometimes and rarely/or never. Fifty-five percent of African Americans said "Often", 43% of Asians; 53% of Latinos; and 28% of European Americans said "Often". Forty-five percent of African Americans said "Rarely/Never"; 47% of Asians; 47% Latinos; and 72% of European Americans said "Rarely/Never".

The Jewish sample respondents, we asked if they had experienced anti-Semitism, while the rest of the population, along with the Jewish respondents, were asked what negative experiences they had with other groups. Other open-ended questions were respondents' views on Proposition 187 (which is an anti-illegal immigration proposition), the Rodney King beating, the ethnicity of their best friend. We consistently found that our results seem to reflect other major surveys done in the last 20 years.
We will now interpret Tables 1-7. (What should be noted at the onset is that the percentages do not add up to 100% due to missing data, which includes questions that respondents did not answer or had no opinion.) These tables are derived from the following questions (taken from General Social Surveys, 1972-1993: Cumulative Codebook, August, 1993):

1) There are many people who believe that some ethnic groups enjoy different amounts of social status (or social position) in this community. What is your opinion about the following groups and their social status;

2) In your opinion, which of the following groups tend to be hard working or lazy?

3) Do you think that some groups are particularly violent or not violent at all? In your opinion, how do you judge the following groups?

4) Some people say that some groups are more intelligent than others. What are your opinions about the following groups?

5) Do people in these groups tend to prefer to be self-supporting or do they tend to prefer to live off welfare?

6) In your opinion, do people in these groups tend to be patriotic or do they tend to be unpatriotic?

7) Some people think that certain groups have too much influence in American life and politics, while other people feel that certain groups don't have as much influence as they deserve. For each group I read to you, please tell me the statement that best expresses how you feel.

The above seven tables indicate a clear contrast among the different groups and their perceptions of their own groups and the five other groups in the sample.

African-Americans on social status indicated that only 3.6% of African-Americans have social status "above average"; 26.9% have "average"; and 59.4 have
"below average". With regards to living on social welfare, 32.9% of the sample said that African Americans were "above average" in their likelihood to live off of social welfare; 27.9% "average"; and 23.3% below average. On the variable of violence, 38.4% saw African Americans as "above average" in the likelihood of participating in violence; 33.8% "average"; and only 12.4% "below average".

In contrast, European Americans, with respect to social status, 67.2% of the sample perceived as "above average" and only 22.7% "below average". Consistently these figures indicate that African Americans have more negative labels, while European Americans and Jews have more positive labels. This trend is reflected in all the tables. That is, not only on the issue of social status, living off of welfare and disposition towards violence, but also regarding power, intelligence, work ethic and patriotism. European Americans and Jews were perceived as having more influence and intelligence, and believing in a strong work ethic. Interestingly, Table 6 indicates that 52.6% of Asian Americans had an "above average" work ethic.

Minority populations in this sample perceive themselves often more as victims of unequal treatment, while European Americans, on the other hand, felt that minorities have made much more progress, and any negative treatment they experience is because of "the type of people they are" and "the kind of character they have." The minority groups feel that European Americans have privilege, and that race and ethnic relations have not improved much and that injustice exists. Jews are perceived as having too much influence and power in American society. These are stereotypes of the Jewish population. In respect to Jews, 22.8% strongly agree with the statement that Jews have too much power, while 47.5% agreed; 9.1% disagreed; and 2.3% strongly disagreed.

Humboldt County's economic makeup is a combination of merchants/shopkeepers, fishing industries and lumber industries. In addition, a center of
the intellectual, liberal part of the community is Humboldt State University. There is also a clash of paradigms between environmentalists and those who want to cut more lumber. At the heart of one of the major controversies, which has drawn national attention, is the Pacific Lumber Company and outside corporate raiders who took over the ownership of the company and who insist on cutting more lumber. Environmentalists object, thus the community is divided on the continuum of liberals (which we also call egalitarians, which include students and the younger generation in general, as well as better educated individuals) and the more conservative groups (i.e., the elderly who have resided here much longer than the newly arrived citizens, including students and faculty).

The Town of Arcata, as reported by the magazine Utne Reader, is one of the most delightful communities to live in. Yet, our discussion above indicates that perhaps not all is well with respect to minority populations. It is our belief that this rural community may reflect the national attitudes and perceptions of ethnic groups. It is also clear that people of color support other people of color, there is also an indication of resentment of other groups. Thus, members of the ethnic groups, such as Asian Americans, African Americans and Native Americans in our sample expressed some negative evaluation of not just European Americans but also African Americans, Latinos, etc.

The following observations can be extracted from our data:
* Older citizens tend to have a more conservative attitude which could be considered as bordering on intolerance;
* More educated people exhibit more tolerance for diversity and different ethnic groups (as can also be seen in other surveys);
* Older minority members have more negative experiences residing in predominantly European American communities in American society. This is also true in Humboldt County with a population of 128,000, consisting of 83% European
Americans, 9% Latinos, 2% African Americans, 3% Asian Americans, and 8% Native Americans.;

* Most minority groups have reported having negative experiences with the dominant group i.e., European Americans. Other minorities, and European Americans report as having negative experiences with other people of color;

* Minority groups have reported having negative experiences with other minority groups;

* Most minorities have reported some incidences of negative treatment at the hands of European Americans in Humboldt County;

* This stage of analysis generally indicates that Caucasians have the most favorable attitudes and experiences, and African Americans, as well as Native Americans, Asian Americans and Latino Americans have the least favorable experiences (see Tables 1-7);

* A preliminary factor analysis of data indicates that there is a significant group of individuals in this sample who could be called egalitarian, thus more tolerant of other groups, while another group of individuals in our sample exhibited hierarchical perspectives and perceive themselves as having power and being the "real Americans"; and

* Younger, shorter-term residents and minority groups tend to supportive the alternative, that is egalitarian, model more frequently and are more empathic and have more positive perceptions of other people of colors' plight and social status.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

* (PROPOSITION 187: ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS)

* Native Americans: 12% were for Prop. 187; 36% had mixed feelings; 48% were against Prop. 187, which indicates a form of empathy with immigrants.

* Asian Americans: 11% had mixed feelings; 41% were against Prop. 187.
* African Americans: 24% had mixed feelings; 52% were against it. Here it is clear that immigrants present a bigger threat to African American jobs.

* European Americans: 39% were for Prop. 187; 26% had mixed feelings; and 32% were against it.

* Latino Americans: 35% were for Prop. 187; 18% had mixed feelings; and 47% were against it.

* Jewish Americans: 13% were for the Proposition; 13% had mixed feelings; and 74% were against it. This indicates a traditional perception of Jewish groups as being more tolerant.

*(HAVING STRONG NEGATIVE FEELINGS ABOUT OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS)*

* European Americans: 31% had negative feelings.

* African Americans: 36% had negative feelings.

* Latino Americans: 24% had negative feelings.

* Asian Americans: 68% had negative feelings (that is of interest because the points that Asian Americans have negative feelings against other ethnic groups).

* Native Americans: 70% had negative feelings.

* Jewish Americans: 40% had negative feelings.

*(HAVING NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS)*

* European Americans: 58% had negative experiences.

* African Americans: 144% had negative experiences (which means that they had more than one negative experience during their life).

* Latino Americans: 76% had negative experiences.

* Asian Americans: 136% had negative experiences.

* Native Americans: 96% had negative experiences.

* Jewish Americans: 75% had negative experiences.
* Here we see that African Americans and Asians had the largest amount of negative experiences, followed by Latinos, Jews and then European Americans.

* PERCEPTIONS THAT PEOPLE HAVE OF EACH OTHER (TABLES 1-7)

* With regards to social status/social position in the community, African Americans are perceived as having 3.6% above average status, while 59.4% were perceived as below average. With respect to living off of welfare, here too we find an interesting figure -- 32.9% were thought of as having above-average use of welfare, while 23.3% were thought of as having below-average use of welfare. With respect to violence, 38% saw that African Americans had an above average likelihood of being involved in violence, while 12% saw them as having a below average likelihood of doing the same. In regards to influence, African Americans were perceived as having very little influence, only 9.5%; 65.3% perceived them as having too little influence. In regards to intelligence, here too the stereotypes were maintained. 32.5% considered African Americans as having above average intelligence, while 44% considered them of average intelligence, while 50.5% considered them as having below-average intelligence. With respect to work ethic, 28.8% saw African Americans as having an above-average work ethic, 42.9% as average, and 13.1 as below average. Finally, in regards to patriotism, 32% considered them as more patriotic than the average and 46.6% saw them as less than patriotic.

* 23.7% saw Asians as having an above-average social status and, interestingly, 41.1% saw them as having below average. Regarding welfare, fewer Asians lived off of welfare, that is 5%, while 62.% had below average likelihood of living on welfare. Regarding violence, 18.7% perceived them as having an above average likelihood of engaging in violence and 31% below average. Regarding influence, only 3.2% consider them to have too much influence, while 52.5% viewed them as having too little influence. In terms of intelligence, here we see a negative stereotype, where 58.5% considered
Asians as having above-average intelligence, while 27.9% considered them to be of average intelligence, and only 1.4% considered them to have below average intelligence.

In regards to work ethic, again we see stereotypical results, where 52.6% view Asians as having an above average ethnic, and only 7.3% percent consider their work ethic to be below average. Finally, regarding patriotism, 38.4% considered them to have above average patriotism and only 36.4% as having less patriotism.

* **European Americans**, in terms of social status, here too is reflected the national sample where 62.7% perceive European Americans as having above average social status, while only 22.7% consider them as below average. Regarding the perception of living off of welfare, 38.9% perceived European Americans as having an above average likelihood of living on welfare, and only 7.8% saw them as having a below average likelihood. Regarding violence, 33.3% perceived them as having an above average likelihood of violence, 37% as average, and only 16.4% as below average. **European Americans**, with respect to influence, 68% perceived them as having too much influence, 18% as the right amount, and 0% perceived them as having too little influence. In terms of intelligence, 42.9% consider European Americans as having above average intelligence, 30% as average, and only 3.7% as below average. In terms of work ethic, 40.6% see them as having an above average work ethic, 33.3% average, and only 5% as below average. Regarding patriotism, 61.2% considered European Americans as having above average patriotism, and 21.6% less patriotic than others.

* **Jewish Americans**, 38.3% were considered as having above average, 38% average, and 5.9% below average. What is interesting here is that Jews have the largest score on above average social status in the community. In regards to living off welfare, .9% above average, 11% average and 69.9% below average. In terms of being violence prone, 2.7% above average, 28.2% average and 38.8% below average. Regarding influence, 20.1%
were perceived as having too much power or influence, 40% the right amount, and 14.6% as having too little influence. Here, too, we see that Jews scored as the second largest amount in terms of influence after European Americans. In terms of intelligence, the usual stereotypes pertain: 59.1% of Jews have above average intelligence, 23.7% average, and only .5 below average. Regarding work ethic, Jews scored 53% above average, 23% average and only 1.8% below average. In regards to patriotism, 43.4% are above average, or more patriotic, and 26.5% are less patriotic.
* Latino Americans, only 3.7% are seen as having above average social status, 26.5% average, and 59.4% below average. With regards to welfare, 43.3% are perceived as having an above-average likelihood on being on welfare, 36.5% average and 13.8% below average. Regarding violence, 31.1% are perceived as having an above average proneness to violence, 38.8% average, and 38.7% below average. With influence, here, too, the usual perceptions: 5.0% as having too much influence; 16% the right amount; and 66.7% too little influence. In terms of intelligence, 30.6% above average, 40.6% average, and 1.5% below average. Regarding work ethic, 39% above average, 37.4% average, and 7.8% below average. Finally, in regards to patriotism, 33.3% above average, and 46% are perceived as below average.
* Native Americans, here we see a similar picture to African Americans. Social status, when it comes to Native Americans, only 5.5% are viewed as having above average status, 22.8% average, and 63.0 as below average. In regards to welfare, 35.2% are perceived as above average, 26% on average, and only 18.3% below average likelihood of living on welfare. Regarding proneness to violence, 26.5% above average, 33.8% average and 23.3% below average. In terms of influence, here we see a marked difference. Only 1.8% perceive them as having too much power/influence, 10% the right amount, and 76.6% too little. In regards to intelligence, 34.6% above average, 37.4%
average, and 12.8 below average. Regarding work ethic, 11.4% above average, 30.4% average, and 18.3% below average. Finally, in regards to patriotism, 32.9% are perceived as having more patriotism and 46.2% are perceived as being less patriotic.

* On the question of anti-Semitism, which is a different table (Table 8), when asked if Jews have too much power, which is different than the social status and social position, 22.8% strongly agreed with the statement, 45.7% agreed, and 9.1% disagreed, while only 2.3% strongly disagreed.
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