Measuring Racial and Ethnic Discrimination

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Introduction

Both conceptually and operationally, measuring intergroup discrimination presents a challenge to the social sciences. Many different studies have used various techniques to determine the magnitude and nature of racial and ethnic discrimination.[1] First, this paper reviews the many different methods for measuring racial discrimination and briefly considers their pluses and minuses. Second, the paper focuses on direct, survey-based procedures for ascertaining racial discrimination and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches. Third, the survey-based, direct measures of racial discrimination are considered and substantive findings on the extent and nature of discrimination are examined. Finally, recommendations on a program for assessing racial discrimination are offered.

Methods for Measuring Racial Discrimination

First, there are official counts of reported incidents of discrimination. These would include both governmental and non-governmental complaints. Governmental reports would include a) complaints filed with local, state, and federal agencies such as local, fair-housing commissions and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Jaynes and Williams, 1989; US EEOC, 2002) that are responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws and regulations, b) anti-discrimination suits filed in state and/or federal courts (Garrett, 2001; Jaynes and Williams, 1989; Romero, 2000; Shivley, 2001), and c) hate crimes (Evans, 2001; Strom, 2001). Non-governmental reports would include complaints made as part of a) formal, internal, organizational grievance-procedures - most often with an employer and/or labor union and b) those registered with an independent group interested in promoting fair and equal treatment such as the Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents compiled annually by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL, 2001).

Official government reports have the advantages of representing significant events, being publicly accessible, and inexpensive to use (since information-collection costs are borne by the enforcing agencies). But using government enforcement reports has various serious limitations. First, they are collected in response to legal requirements and not for scientific purposes. What they cover is defined by law and the information collected is largely for administrative purposes and not to assist social science research. Second, people's inclination to report will depend largely on many bureaucratic and enforcement factors such as how easy it is to report incidents and how vigorous agencies deal with complaints and not just the level of discrimination that prevails (Lucas, 1994). Moreover, these enforcement efforts and

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[1]This paper deals with discrimination based on race or ethnicity. For brevity this is referred to as racial discrimination.

therefore levels of reporting can vary over time (Shivley, 2001). A good example of the limitation of such systems in the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation from law enforcement agencies. While considerable resources are devoted to the UCR, they are known to greatly undercount the total level of crime and for the last twenty-some years the Criminal Victimization Surveys have been conducted annually to better assess the level of crime as well as provide individual-level information not available from the aggregated UCR statistics. Third, not all discriminatory practices may be prohibited by law. For example, the ADL's Audit counts legal acts of anti-Semitic free speech. And of course many acts of discrimination that are now illegal were not so several decades ago (Romero, 2000).

Internal reports to organizations have similar limitations. Companies set up procedures for legal and business reasons, not to further a scientific research agenda. In addition, such organizational reports are not typically made public and the nature and specifics of such reports would vary notably across organizations.

Reports to non-governmental third-parties (usually advocacy associations for some targeted group) have the advantage of being public and often spanning the country as a whole and many different types and venues of discrimination. But they are compiled by highly self-interested organizations, are not scientific data collections,[2] and, as with government and internal organizational reports, rely on the aggrieved knowing where and how to report mistreatment and being motivated to do so.

Second, there are matched or paired studies which have test subjects of different races, but equivalent non-racial characteristics, apply for various preferments or considerations such as employment, housing, college admissions, and service in restaurants (Dion, 2001; Esmail and Everington, 1993; Fix and Struyk, 1992; Jaynes and Williams, 1989; Schuman, et al., 1983; Turner, Fix, and Struyk, 1991; Yinger, 1995).

Matched studies have the power of using a quasi-experimental design in natural settings and using what would appear to be real outcomes to access the occurrence and prevalence of discrimination. But they also have certain drawbacks. First, while these studies can be done under scientific direction and control, often they are instead carried out in whole or in part by groups with anti-discrimination agendas or used in legal enforcement efforts. Under such auspices results have to be considered suspect and possibly subject to intentional or unintentional biases.[3] Second, even when

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[2]As the ADL (1999) says about its Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, "It is not and does not claim to be a scientific measure of anti-Semitism in all its forms."

[3]Possible bias increases when testers have the right to sue for experiences of discrimination (Dion, 2001; Spognardi and Ketay, 2001).

matched studies are scientifically directed, there are notable difficulties in implementing the ideal design. Particularly when actual people are used, as is typical in studies of housing and restaurant service, the design calls for testers being matched on all characteristics except race. Strictly speaking, this is nearly unachievable since the pairs would have to follow equivalent scripts and also not vary meaningfully on attributes like accent, height, body language and "attitude", and physical attractiveness (all of which have been documented to make significant differences in non-racial experiments on interpersonal interactions and judgments). Also, because of the difficulties in organizing the matched studies, they are almost always limited to a local area and single target (e.g. rental and real estate agents or local restaurants). This limitation does not apply however to studies that use written applications, such as examinations of college admissions. In addition, matched studies can not be used in all situations. For example, in studies of employment discrimination, they are suitable for examining initial hirings, but not for on-the-job discrimination. Other objections are ethical. Some have argued that even testers should not be placed in situations that expose them to discriminatory experiences (Essed, 1991). From the other side, some courts and other groups have found that deceptive practices by journalists and researchers (e.g. applying for jobs without any intent of taking an offered position) are unethical and legally questionable (Esmail, 1993; Esmail and Everington, 1993). Finally, while in many cases the outcome criteria are clear and objective (e.g. whether a person was offered a job or an apartment), in other cases evaluation of the outcome is subjective (e.g. whether service was "poor" or an applicant was discouraged to pursue certain apartment listings).

Third, there are residual studies that examine unexplained racial differences in outcomes, most often stratification variables such as earnings or income, occupational status, and education (Baldwin and Johnson, 1996; Grodsky and Pager, 2001; Jaynes and Williams, 1989; McCall, 2001).

Residual studies have the advantages of being based on large-scale, high-quality data sources such as the Census and Current Population Survey collected for other purposes that unobtrusively search for the signature of discrimination. However, like all residual methods, they depend on the adequacy of the models used to explain the outcome in question (typically stratification variables like earnings or income, occupational status, employment status, etc.). These models are always imperfect and continually being refined and thus from the same data set estimates of the residual, discriminatory effect change across different models. For example, wage-discrimination models have recently been improved by the addition of aggregate, labor-market characteristics (Grodsky and Pager, 2001; McCall, 2001). Second, discrimination may be undetectable because it is hidden within the independent variables. For example, controlling for differences in years-of-schooling completed may explain some of the racial differences in wages, but does not adequately deal with either the reasons for why

educational differences exist (is it racial discrimination or other factors?) or racial difference in quality of education within educational level such as those created by discriminatory tracking practices (Jaynes and Williams, 1989; Lucas, 2001). Third, at best residual models only capture the results of "successful" discrimination, that is the disadvantages in terms of such outcomes such as more unemployment, lower wages, and less education that may result from discrimination, not the acts of discrimination themselves. This means that a group that suffers discrimination, but overcomes the barriers (say through greater individual and collective efforts) would, in the residual approach, show no evidence of discrimination. Finally, the residuals associated with race can not definitively be linked to racial discrimination, only to something closely related to race and not explained by other variables in the model. Cultural attributes and historical experiences strongly or even uniquely linked to groups could be the explanation for racial differences rather than discrimination. Residual models by their nature can not explain the basis for an unexplained difference.[4]

Fourth, there are observational studies under which occurrences of racial discrimination are measured in real-world settings. One type are ethnographic and participant observer studies in which the researcher blends into the natural setting and tries to unobtrusively monitor the occurrence of discrimination (Aranda, 1997; Deyhle, 1995; Fenelon, 1998; Halliday, 2000). A second type are field experiments in which confederates of a researcher of different races initiate interactions with the unrecruited test subjects, such in various helping behavior studies (Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe, 1980).

Among observational studies, ethnographic and participant observer investigations have the advantages of in-depth investigation, neutral, third-party evaluation, and assessment of events in a real-world setting. However, by their very nature such studies are small-scale and typically limited to a few venues of unknown representativeness. What can be recorded is limited to what can be directly observed and much discrimination is covert (e.g. the reason why a minority employee gets a poor job review)(Essed, 1991). Moreover, results hinge on the perceptive and unbiased nature of usually a single investigator's observations.

Observational studies based on field experiments have the strength of experimental designs and the advantage of operating in natural settings, even though the investigator manipulates what occurs. They are usually very limited in circumstances (involving

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[4]One way that models to explain racial disparities in outcomes can include discrimination as an factor is to introduce measures of either discriminatory policies and laws or of measures designed to combat discrimination as Lucas (1994) did in his study of state-level policies. A similar approach has been used to look at how the success of minorities varies by company practices (Braddock and McPartland, 1987).

often a single site and only a few dozen subjects), but some larger-scale studies have been conducted. They also sometimes suffer from the same difficulty of matched studies in that when people of different races are used, it is hard to insure that race is the only factor that differentiates between the testers. This variability has however been reduced in studies that rely only on photographs to racially distinguish cases (as in lost application studies). Such studies are however not suitable for studying many types of discrimination.

Fifth, there are a range of laboratory studies that use various often non-directive and even subliminal techniques to measure racial discrimination and preferment. These include assessments of both direct and indirect measures (e.g. measurements of non-verbal reactions and response latencies) and run the gamut from word association tasks to staged aggression studies (Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe, 1980; Dovidio, 1993; Dovidio, et al., 1996; Linville, Fischer, and Salovey, 1989).

Laboratory studies have some decided advantages. They usually use experimental designs, can control for extraneous factors, and often employ unobtrusive measures such as evaluations of body language, response times, and subliminal associations. But they suffer from major problems of external validity. First, the subject pool is small and unrepresentative of society in general (most often being students in psychology classes). Second, it is hard to relate what is demonstrated in laboratory experiments to the real world. For example, studies show that White subjects are quicker to select positive characteristics after subliminally being exposed to "whites" than when "blacks" is flashed (Dovidio, 1993). But does this mean that Whites are more likely to discriminate against Blacks in hiring or promotions? In addition, investigator effects can occur in such studies.

Sixth, there are in-depth interviews in which a researcher engages in extensive conversations with a small number of subjects usually in semi-structured interviews and often with the discussion being audio recorded (Essed, 1991 and 1997; Feagin, 1991; Feagin and Sikes, 1994; St. Jean and Feagin, 1998 and 1999; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 1991).

In-depth interviews about experiences of racial discrimination have the pluses of asking real people about real experiences and collecting descriptions rich in details and emotions. Essed (1991) argues that unstructured, in-depth interviews can draw out both "more vague descriptions and elaborate stories" than could be collected by "highly structured interviews" and her subjects "could verbalize intuitively felt racism that they might find hard to pinpoint accurately" and could report events that might be considered by others as "exaggerated" or "the result of being 'oversensitive'."

But these studies are based on small, unrepresentative samples (often of particularly upscale and articulate subjects - Feagin, 1991; Essed, 1991; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 1991). Moreover, they depend on self-reports and encourage respondents to think in racial terms and probe for reports of discrimination. As such they are

open to criticisms of investigator effects, i.e. that respondents tell the researcher the kinds of stories that he or she are obviously seeking. Furthermore, the accounts that Essed describes as "vague descriptions," as intuitively felt events that might be hard to accurately detail or as seen as exaggerated by others, might alternatively be seen as unreliable and even dubious.

Seventh, there are miscellaneous other types of studies such as medical, case-control studies (Collins, et al., 2000) and various studies using convenience and snowball samples (Gomez and Trierweiler, 2001; Landrine and Klonoff, 1996).

Finally, there are survey-based studies in which a representative sample of some defined population is chosen and interviewed. This would include national polls (Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999; Newport, 1999; Newport, Ludwig, and Kearney, 2001; Sigelman and Welch, 1991; Smith, 2000; Weitzer and Tuch, 1999), community-level surveys (Bobo and Suh, 2000; Brown, 2001; Gary, 1995; Smith, 1993; Suh, 2000), and studies of employees/employers, members of professions, and other target populations (Braddock and McPartland, 1987; Preston, 1998; Supphellen, Kvitastein, and Johansen, 1997; Yen, et al., 1999). Surveys differ from in-depth interviews in that they utilize samples drawn to statistically generalize to specified populations, involve many more subjects, collect data with general interviewers or questionnaires, rather than from a single investigator or very small research team of specialists on the topic, and use structured interviews. Surveys may focus on personal experiences of discrimination, assessments of the level of discrimination experienced by some narrow group (e.g. friends, classmates, or co-workers) or some general group (e.g. Blacks or Whites), or less commonly, on committing acts of discrimination. Surveys of discriminators are generally restricted to studies of employers or other decision makers rather than the general public (e.g. Kirschenman and Neckerman, 1991; Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991; Supphellen, Kvitastein, and Johansen, 1997).

In sum, the various methods not using surveys focusing on racial discrimination all have various strengths and weaknesses. In the next section survey-based studies of discrimination are introduced and their pluses and minuses are considered.

Surveys of Intergroup Relations and Racial Discrimination

Over the years surveys have asked thousands of items about intergroup relations and these have formed the basis for numerous studies of the state and nature of intergroup relations in America (Bobo, 1997; Bobo and Kluegel, 1997; Jackman, 1994; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Newport, Ludwig, and Kearney, 2001; Schuman, et al., 1997; Sears, et al., 1997; Sears and Jessor, 1996; Smith, 1998, 2000, and 2001; Sniderman and Piazza, 1993; Steeh and Krysan, 1996). A compilation of the holdings of the Roper Center archives in 1982 (Roper, 1982) listed approximately 4850 questions dealing with race relations. Since 1995 the IPOLL database of national polls maintained by the Roper center has listed 2453 questions

under the topics Blacks or Minorities. Among these there were at least 359 items dealing with discrimination.[5] Of these 113 concerned the level of discrimination that specific groups in general suffered (e.g. "Would you say there is a great deal of discrimination, some discrimination, only a little discrimination, or none at all against blacks?" and "For each of the following groups, please tell me whether you think job discrimination is a major problem for them or not a major problem. How about Asian men and women?"). Another 113 concerned public policies dealing with discrimination (e.g. "Because of past discrimination, should qualified minorities receive preference over equally qualified whites in such matters as getting into college or getting jobs?" and "Some people think that African Americans have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to African Americans. Where would you place yourself or this scale or haven't you made up your mind on this?"). Personal experiences of discrimination were tapped by 51 items (listed in Table 1). Causes of discrimination were covered by 25 questions (e.g. "As I read each pair, tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right. Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days. Blacks who don't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition. (AFTER CHOICE IS MADE ASK: Do you feel strongly about that, or not?"). Finally, 57 items covered a wide range of other types of items (e.g. "Some people say that since the 1960s there has been a lot of progress in getting rid of racial discrimination. Others say that there hasn't been much real progress for blacks over that time. Which would you agree with more? Would you say there's been a lot of progress in getting rid of racial discrimination or hasn't there been much real progress?", "In 1948, the United Nations proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that all human beings are entitled to human rights, irrespective of race, color, sex, languages, religion, or political opinion. Please tell me for each of the following whether discrimination is taking place frequently, sometimes, rarely, or whether such discrimination never takes place in the United States...Discrimination on the basis of color.", and "How close do you think we are to eliminating discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities in America once and for all: are we very close, fairly close, not too close, or not

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[5]Numerous keywords such as "discrimination," "opportunity," "treatment," "insults," "slurs," etc. were searched for. As the later discussion of wordings will show, there are numerous ways that discrimination questions can be phrased and some undoubtedly have escaped detection.

close at all?").[6]

Similarly, the General Social Survey (GSS) of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) (Davis, Smith, and Marsden, 2001) has devoted a major portion of its content to studying intergroup relations.[7] It has asked 359 different items a total of 836 times from 1972 to 2000 (and the 2002 GSS is currently in the field collecting more information). There are time series for 69 items. Besides the items in the replicating core, there have been (and will be) a series of special modules focusing on intergroup relations as listed below:

1982: Status of Black Americans (with Black oversample)

1987: Social and Political Participation (with Black oversample)

1990: Intergroup Relations

1994: Multiculturalism

1996: National Identity (part of International Social Survey Program - ISSP)

2000: Multi-Ethnic United States

2002: Intergroup Prejudice

2004: National Identity II (ISSP)

GSS intergroup relations items cover a wide range of topics. Appendix 2 lists the 14 categories in which the items fall. There are 13 on assimilation, 11 on bilingualism, 12 on group contributions, 28 on discrimination and opportunity, 22 on immigration, 13 on national identity, 18 on national pride, 61 on intergroup contact, 11 on policies to assist groups, 31 on political issues including group influence and civil liberties, 20 on population size and change, 12 miscellaneous items, 57 on social distance and integration, and 50 on stereotypes and images.

Of the discrimination/opportunity questions, 3 deal with personal/family experiences with either standard or reverse discrimination, 7 with the group discrimination towards Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics in housing and jobs, 4 with opportunities for Blacks (asked of Blacks only), 10 on various reverse discrimination matters beyond personal experience, and 4 on the causes of racial inequality (discrimination and 3 other reasons being covered)(see

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[6]A list of these items is available from the author.

[7]An Access database has been created to hold information of GSS intergroup relation items. A print-out from that database appears as Appendix 1 to this paper.

Appendix 1).

Many of the intergroup relations questions in the holdings of the Roper Center or in the GSS provide important information on the state of intergroup relations and help one to understand the context and causes of discrimination, public support for policies to combat discrimination, and related matters. But relatively few directly measure discrimination either at the individual or collective level. Given that only a moderate correlation exists between intergroup beliefs and attitudes (e.g. stereotypes and prejudice) and discriminatory actions (Dovidio, 1993; Dovidio et al., 1996; Fiske, 2000; Patchen, 1994), studying the former is not the same as measuring the latter.

Similarly, among items directly dealing with racial discrimination, only a segment actually measures the occurrence of unequal treatment. These consist mainly of three types: indicators of 1) the overall level of discrimination, 2) the level of discrimination for particular groups and/or venues, and 3) the level of discrimination experienced by individuals overall or within particular venues.

As will be elaborated below, items that measure the specific experiences of individuals overall or within venues are the most valuable indicators since they are concrete reports of personal experiences. Those that measure discrimination by particular groups in general or within particular venues are also useful. They can capture measures of collective rather than individual discrimination, serve somewhat as projective measures, and provide in- and out-group perspectives (when analyzed by race/ethnicity). Those measuring the overall level of discrimination without mentioning groups, venues, or other specifics are too general to be of much use.

Given the comparative value of these three types of discrimination items, attention will focus on the discrimination questions that involve personal experiences of unfair treatment. First, consideration will be given to general advantages and disadvantages of direct survey-based measures. Second, the substantive and methodological variability in estimates is examined. Finally, further research and methodological work to improve these measures is suggested.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Direct, Survey-Based Measures

As with other methods, survey-based measures in general and direct measures of personal experiences in particular have both strengths and weaknesses. First, there are various definitional issues as to what should be counted as racial discrimination. Some issues concern how discrimination should be conceptualized, whether it should be based on reports of individual discrimination, group or collective discrimination, structural discrimination, something else, or some combination. Others have to do with how the particular items should be operationalized to obtain accurate measurement of what they are intended to capture.

Self-reports depend on a person being aware of being treated

unfairly, but discrimination may be completely unnoticed. Someone may be unaware of being treated unfairly (e.g. passed over for a promotion or favorable assignment that they did not even realized existed). This is especially true of discrimination involving being ignored or avoided since such actions are often not blatant and obvious. Also, one might include racist structural impediments that create a barrier to equal treatment even though a particular individual never was directly exposed to the enforcement of the practice. For example, residential segregation may force minorities to live in less favorable neighborhoods where there is less access to such things as public services and jobs for the residents. If a particular resident never sought housing outside "their" core area and thus was never turned down as a renter because of race or steered away from non-minority neighborhoods by rental agents and realtors, then it is highly unlikely that such a person would report housing discrimination even though structurally and collectively this was the case. As Lucas (1994) has argued, "Even if one could learn of every discriminatory act in the last fifty years, and know the persons directly discriminated against..., one would have found only part of what is needed to uncover discrimination effects. Discrimination effects transcend those directly involved, precisely because discrimination strikes at classes of persons rather than individuals." For example, racial lynchings in the South were acts designed to sustain White supremacy that murdered some Blacks in order to terrorize and subjugate all Blacks.

However, it can also be argued that structural barriers should not be reported. If structural racial inequality exists, but no specific discriminatory action was taken against a particular individual, one may not want to count any discriminatory incident as having occurred. Including such structural conditions would mean that experiences of discrimination would be continuous and emanating from each and every barrier that existed (e.g. segregated neighborhoods, poor schools, political underrepresentation) and it would effectively be impossible to count them. One might also argue that various perceived barriers (e.g. the belief that certain employers would not hire minorities or that a particular neighborhood would not welcome minorities) would have to be actually tested by an individual and found to be true before an incident of discrimination would be reportable. But what if a person had good, current information about employer discrimination or neighborhood hostility based on accounts in the media or the direct experience of friends? Could someone then say that they were discriminated against because they would have applied for a job or looked for an apartment, but did not because they knew that they would be treated unfairly?[8]

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[8]One could capture some of the not-personally-experienced discrimination with items on group discrimination. However, the idea that collective reports are generally better than individual reports is questionable. Sigelman and Welch (1991) argue that

Another definitional issue is what types of negative events should be counted as discrimination as opposed to some other category of mistreatment. Should racial epithets, racist jokes, and related verbal assaults with no other behavioral components be counted as discriminatory incidents? What about racially-motivated, physical attacks and other hate crimes? Given the clear racial aspect of such actions, their negative impact, and how such actions have traditionally been used to maintain systems of racial suppression (e.g. think about the role and function of lynchings in the South - Brundage, 1993; Tolnay, Deane, and Beck, 1996; Stovel, 2001), these would certainly seem to constitute discrimination (Essed, 1997; Feagin, 1991; Schneider, Hitlan, and Radhakrishnan, 2000; Williams, 1994). In addition, current law recognizes that such actions may create a "hostile environment" and thus legally constitute harassment and unfair treatment even in the absence of other mistreatment. However, if it is accepted that such actions should be counted as discriminatory events, it is still uncertain that such would commonly be mentioned by people when asked a general question about "being a victim of discrimination because of your race" or even of having been "treated unfairly" at work. It seems plausible that some people would cognitively categorize these as different types of incidents and either not think of them or, if recalling them, decide not to report them as not what is being asked about. Some studies have tried to deal with this by including separate measures of verbal and/or physical abuse (Bobo and Suh, 2000).

There appears to be limited national data on racial insults and attacks. Table 2 indicates that 60% of Blacks have ever been

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"Blacks are consistently more likely to perceive widespread discrimination against blacks as a group than against themselves in particular" and conclude on the basis of this that "blacks tend to downplay the extent of discrimination against themselves as compared to discrimination against blacks in general." But this is probably a misreading of these differentials. Take the case of 100 Blacks among whom 10 had experienced discrimination and another 40 knew of the mistreatment of the 10. In a survey, only 10% could report personal discrimination, but 50% would have a basis for saying that Blacks as a group were discriminated against. Only in cases in which all experiences of racial discrimination were kept private might one expect personal reports to equal the level of group reports. This can also be illustrated by an item from the GSS on reverse discrimination. About 25% say it is "very likely" "these days that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead." But just 11% of them felt that way because of something that happened to them personally, 18% because of something that happened to a relative, family member, or close friend, 30% to seeing it occur at work, 39% to hearing about in the media, and 34% from some other source. (These total more than 100% because people could mention more than one source.)

"insulted" because of their race and that 30% of Blacks and 18% of all are at least sometimes "called names or insulted" because of their race in their "day-to-day life." Table 2 also shows that 11% of all and 17% of Blacks have ever been "physically threatened or attacked" because of their race. The national rates for non-Blacks appear to be substantially lower, since racial/ethnic insults are experienced by 18% of the general population vs. 30% among Blacks and racial threats/attacks by 11% of the general public vs. 17% of Blacks. This pattern also showed up in New York in 1992 with 15% of Whites and 21% of Blacks reporting that "in the last year or so...someone of a different race or ethnic group called you an insulting racial or ethnic term to your face" (Smith, 1993; 1996). But in New Orleans in 1993 the usual relationship was reversed with 16% of Whites and 6% of Blacks reporting being called an insulting racial term (Smith, 1993).[9] Both the national data (Table 2) and data from New Orleans (Smith, 1993) indicate that insults and name calling are more frequent than physical threats and attacks.

It is not known to what extent insults and attacks are counted as sub-sets of discrimination and/or unfair treatment or as part of separate sets. References to "discrimination," "unfair treatment," or the type of similar terms used in discrimination questions may not activate memories of insults and/or attacks or even if accessed may not be considered as fitting the general discrimination category and therefore not mentioned.

Second, measures of personal experiences of racial discrimination may be distorted by intentional over- or under-reporting. Purposive over-reporting may occur if respondents are trying to sustain a personal conviction that America is a racist society or to explain unfavorable situations and outcomes in their own lives (what is sometimes referred to as "playing the race card" Harrell, 2000). As Lucas (1994) argues, "we should expect persons to attribute their circumstances to situational factors, and the disadvantaged to use structural explanations rather than personal ones, regardless of the actually occurring circumstances." A related concern is that direct questions about racial discrimination create demand and cognitive pressures that lead to the over-reporting of racial discrimination. This race-priming hypothesis argues that people will search their memory for negative events and try to assign a racial gloss to them either to fulfill the question's request for such incidents or because the cognitive focusing on race will color how uncertain or ambiguous events are seen. The alternative would be to ask people only about unfair treatment or discrimination and then later determine whether race was involved. These direct and indirect alternatives are discussed further below.

Conversely, a sense of shame or distress at having been a

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[9]Bobo and Suh (2000) also show a reversal with 11.5% of Whites and 8% of Blacks having heard their boss/supervisor use a racial slur. But, as they note, the item did not stipulate that the insult was directed against the respondent and therefore is ambiguous.

victim of discrimination or a desire not to be labeled a victim may lead to under-reports (Bobo and Suh, 2000; Feagin, 1991; Suh, 2000). People may also be discouraged from reporting or even thinking of incidents as discrimination by others such as employers, co-workers, friends, and family (Suh, 2000). Such under-reporting is offered as an explanation for lower levels of personal discrimination than group discrimination (Siegelman and Welch, 1991; Dion, 2001).

Despite these possible over- and under-reports many researchers who have used such items have found survey-based self-reports to be accurate and reliable (Bobo and Suh, 2000; Essed, 1991; Landrine and Klonoff, 1996). For example, Bobo and Suh (2000) noted, "We take any claim of having experienced discrimination seriously." In particular, recent studies that have used open-ended, follow-up questions after closed questions about whether incidents of racial discrimination occurred have helped to substantiate the value and validity of direct self-reports. First, the open-ended descriptions of the discriminatory incidents have provided rich detail about the nature and circumstances of the discriminatory acts. As their use by Bobo and Suh (Bobo and Suh, 2000; Suh, 2000) and Smith (2001) demonstrate, they greatly expand our understanding of discrimination by illuminating the causes, particulars, and consequences of discrimination. Adding open-ended questions combines some of the best strengths of surveys (e.g. generalizability and systematic data collection) and of in-depth interviews (narrative richness and details). Second, they help to validate self-reports. Asking for a detailed description of episodes will either provide evidence to substantiate the self-reports or indicate that there may not be a concrete and appropriate basis for them.

On one national survey and one local survey, the racially-explicit, discrimination items have been followed up by open-ended probes asking people to describe the mistreatment they experienced. Besides providing important details on the nature and circumstances of the episodes of discrimination, the open-ended follow-up substantiated the validity of the self-reports. On the 2000 NCCJ Intergroup Relations Study (Smith, 2000) across all races and ethnicities only 2.6% failed to mention an experience that involved personal, racial discrimination (usually mentioning some other basis such as gender, age, or disability, sometimes involving only the experiences of others, or not falling within the prescribed time period). Another 2.1% are suspect because no concrete event was mentioned (e.g. "Some place, I can't think, but I know sometime, I have to think." and "Generally, people are awful."). The other 95.3% represent specific, appropriate, and credible mentions of discrimination. Similarly, in the 1994 Los Angeles Study of Urban Inequality, non-racial mentions in the follow-ups were higher (19.3% for Whites, 13.2% for Asians, 7.7% for Blacks, and 2.4% for Hispanics), but from 80-98% of all reports of racial and ethnic discrimination were sustained by the detailed accounts (Bobo and Suh, 2000).

Third, misinterpretations or misattributions may also either

inflate or deflate reports of racial discrimination. Unfair treatment may be wrongly credited to a racial motivation or a racist-basis may be missed. Interpreting the cause of a mistreatment is often difficult and subjective. As one of Feagin's (1991) interviewees noted "You have to decide whether things are done or slights that are made are made because you are black or they are made because the person is just rude, or unconcerned and uncaring. So it's kind of a situation where you're always kind of looking to see with a second eye or a second antenna just what's going on." Feagin then observes that "blacks look at white-black interaction through a lens colored by personal and group experience with...discrimination....What many whites see as black 'paranoia'... is simply a realistic sensitivity to white-black interaction created and constantly reenforced..."

Examples of the difficult of defining discriminatory incidents are considered in the ADL's description of its Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents (ADL, 1999). For example, whether acts of vandalism against synagogues and Jewish property should be counted when no motivation is manifest.

Of course for some purposes the self-perception of experiencing racial discrimination may be important to measure even when that judgment is wrong. For example, studies of stress from racism or linking the birth-weight of babies to mothers' reports of discrimination rest on people's self-assessment of their experiences as much as on the objective basis of incidents. In cases, the factual basis of the perceived discriminatory incidents are of primary importance.

Attribution is further complicated when people believe that two or more traits are the basis for the discrimination (e.g. being Asian and female or being old and an immigrant). Moreover, people may not be consistent in assigning attribution. The national NCCJ study of intergroup relations (Smith, 2000) and a Los Angeles study (Bobo and Suh, 2000) both found that some initial reports of racial discrimination were contradicted by open-ended, follow-up questions that mentioned other causes (see above).

Fourth, incidents of racial discrimination may be forgotten or events that occurred before the reference period may be telescoped and reported as occurring in the period of interest. Minor incidents would tend to be forgotten and major events are more likely to be both remembered and telescoped. Of course for the "ever" questions only forgetting is a possibility. None of the studies conducted to date have used bounded or aided recall techniques to assess and minimize these problems.

Fifth, studies of personal experiences of racial discrimination regularly find higher reported levels among the better educated (Bobo and Suh, 2000; Brown, 2001; Gomez and Trierweiler, 2001; Suh, 2000)[10] and those with greater racial consciousness or identity (Bobo and Suh, 2000; Gary, 1995; Sigelman

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[10]But Bobo and Suh, 2000 do not find more discrimination reported among better educated Whites.

and Welch, 1991; Suh, 2000). For example, Suh (2000) found that better educated women reported more discrimination because they are more likely to work with other racial and ethnic groups and more likely to "know their rights in relation to discrimination in general and thus be in a better position to report it." Likewise, Gary (1995) found that reports of discrimination were higher among those with greater racial consciousness. He believes this is due to their greater awareness and sensitivity to the existence of discrimination. Suh (2000) also found that "if one is aware of racial discrimination against her racial group as a whole, she is more likely to be aware of it in her own individual life." Similarly, Bobo and Suh (2000) reported that reports of personal discrimination were higher when people had a strong collective racial/ethnic identity. These researchers also accept these results as real and reflecting either 1) greater exposure to discrimination by the better educated and racially conscious or 2) greater recognition of the existence of racial discrimination. But the counter argument could be made that the better educated and racially sensitive are over-reporting, seeing racial discrimination where it does not exist or even manufacturing reports consistent with their ideological perspectives. Even if the greater recognition (but not the greater expose) argument is accepted as the explanation for the educational differential, there is a serious measurement problem, since this explanation means that the true level of discrimination is being under-reported by the less educated and racially unaware.

Sixth, existing studies of race-related behaviors demonstrate that considerable inconsistency exists in their measurement. Smith (1996) showed that Black and White reports of inter-racial visits are not consistent in the aggregate. The total number of home visits by Blacks to non-Blacks and of non-Blacks to Blacks reported by non-Blacks exceeds those reported by Blacks by ratios of 1.5 to 1.7. Likewise, Smith (forthcoming) found that the proportion with inter-racial friendships varied by a factor of 4-7 across methods. In this light one needs to examine how robust and consistent reports of racial discrimination are.

Direct, survey-based, self-reports of experiences of racial discrimination have great utility, but a number of difficult issues on the definition and conceptualization of racial discrimination and on optimal methods for measuring same exist and are unsettled by the best existing research to date.

Variability in Reported Levels of Racial Discrimination

Reported levels of discrimination naturally vary greatly due to the characteristics of the questions. This is due to both substantive differences in questions (e.g. the race/ethnicity of the subject of discrimination and the venue) and methodological differences (e.g. race of interviewer, question wording). The former is important for understanding the distribution of racial discrimination and the latter to help assess the robustness and reliability of its measurement. The discussion of variability draws

on comparisons across the 56 items in national polls that explicitly asked about personal experiences of racial discrimination (Table 1) as well as other research. The variability in measures is outlined below:

1. Target Group: Reported discrimination is always highest for Blacks and lowest for Whites and usually intermediate for Hispanics and Asians (Table 1B, 1C, 1G, 1H, 1I).

2. Venue: Reports of discrimination are most frequent at stores (22-30% and always first on the lists). Next, come three closely grouped venues - police (15-21% and an average rank of 2.6), work (14-21% and also ranked 2.6), and restaurants (12-21% and ranked 2.9). In fourth place is public transportation (5-7%) and places of worship are last with just 1% (Table 1A).

3. Time: There are not very many over time comparisons and most have few data points. What time series there are indicate that levels of discrimination are stable (Table 1A, 1E, 1G). On the time series for unfair treatment in the last 30 days (Table 1A), the 2000 data point is an outlier. It was conducted by PSRA rather than Gallup and the deviation probably reflects house or possibly context effects.

4. Time frame: As one would expect, reports of discrimination increase as the reference period extends from 30 days to ever. For example, incidents with the police are 15-21% over 30 days and 37-44% for ever (Table 1A, 1G).

5. Wording - Direct Questions: There are considerable difference in the phrasing of questions, both in how racial discrimination is described and what response options are offered. Most frequently used terms refer to "unfair" treatment (30), followed by mentions of "discrimination" (17), lack of "opportunity" (4), and other wordings (5). While it is likely that these different wordings would trigger somewhat different results, this can not be readily ascertained from available data.

There are also differences in whether the items focus on feelings or actions. There is some evidence that items that ask whether one "felt" they were discriminated against may get higher reports than items asking whether discrimination occurred. Literally, such items are asking about the occurrence of feelings rather than actions. The former may also encourage people to report more uncertain incidents (e.g. As one person remarked, "I felt that I was being watched in the store as I was walking through...", Feagin, 1991)(Table 1I).

It also appears that people are more inclined to say that racial discrimination did not "never" happen than it "ever" happened. Reports of Blacks ever experiencing discrimination are in the 68-76% range for the "never" wording and 46-66% range for the "ever" versions. People are probably less inclined to state that such an experience "never" occurred rather than happening rarely

("less than once a year" or "once in a while"), than they are to say "yes" to items on "ever" being discriminated against. In the former questions there are three or four categories that equal "yes" on an "ever" question. This both makes experiencing discrimination seem more normal and makes "never" seem as a more extreme category (Table 1I).[11]

6. Wording - Direct vs. Indirect Questions - A number of studies have used discrimination items that were in whole or in part not racially explicit (Brown, 2001; Gomez and Trierweiler, 2001; Preston, 1998; Sigelman and Welch, 1991; Weitzer and Tuch, 1991). Several studies have compared the explicit and not-explicit approaches.

Brown (2001), using the 1995 Detroit Area Study, asked Blacks both an explicit, global, item about ever having experienced racial discrimination ("Thinking over your whole life, do you think that you have ever been treated unfairly or badly because of your race or ethnicity?") and six, not-racially explicit items about unfair treatment in jobs, from the police, in education, or in housing which were followed up by items asking what was the "main reason" for the mistreatment. Ethnicity and race were two of the nine offered reasons. They found that 67% reported unfair treatment to the racially explicit, global item and 50% to the six, not-racially explicit items.

Gomez and Trierweiler (2001) conducted an experiment that compared measures of racial discrimination that either explicitly asked about experiences of "racism and race discrimination" at college or first asked about college experiences and then why the students thought they were mistreated and race/ethnicity was one of nine offered reasons. They showed that Black students made significantly more reports of mistreatment under the racially explicit version. They also found similar results on a gender discrimination experiment among White women.

Table 3 presents some more evidence regarding the idea that non-racial discrimination items might produce different results than explicitly racial measures. The non-racial items both show levels of discrimination that are similar to those reported on explicitly racial items and much higher levels of discrimination among Blacks than Whites consistent with the differences on explicitly racial items. However, these items actually provide a very weak and limited test of the idea that levels and racial differentials are likely to be smaller on non-racial measures than on explicitly racial items. First, the degree to which these items are truly race free is limited. One set of items uses a phrase "reverse discrimination" that is typically associated with race and affirmative action. Even more importantly, these measures all appeared on surveys in which the majority of prior items dealt with racial issues and often specifically with racial discrimination.

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[11]Since none of these findings are based on experiments, these observations about wording effects are only tentative.

Thus, these items were answered in a highly racialized context despite not themselves directly mentioning race or ethnicity. Second, while the racial differentials on the non-racial items are appreciable, they are generally smaller than on the racially explicit items. As shown in Table 3, on the two racially-explicit items about ever being stopped by the police Black reports exceed those of Whites by 6.6:1 while on the five non-racial police items the Black to White ratio is 3.5:1. Similarly, a racially explicit item on promotions showed a Black-to-White disadvantage of 6.3:1, while a non-racial items on promotions had only a 2.3:1 ratio.[12] Thus, the evidence suggests that racially-explicit questions do garner more reports, but, as discussed below, weaknesses in the studies to date limit what conclusions can be drawn.

7. Race of Interviewer: One community study (Suh, 2000) shows that reports of racial discrimination among women is greatest when the interviewer is a women of another race. This is however counter to what would be expected from the general race-of-respondent/race-of-interviewer literature.

7. Context: While context effects are well known is the survey research field and some have been reported regarding inter-racial behaviors (Smith, 1991), there appears to be no evidence on whether context effects influence reports of racial discrimination.

8. Mode: The general survey research literature indicates more truthful reporting occurs in self-completion modes, but there is no specific evidence regarding racial discrimination.

Reports of experiences of racial discrimination vary along various substantive dimensions (race of target, venue, time frame, etc.) in ways that both make sense and are consistent with other research on stereotypes and intergroup contact. Reports also appear sensitive to a number of methodological factors: question wording, response options, race of interviewer/respondent, and perhaps other features. The variability does not seem to be either so large or capricious as to invalidate this approach, but not enough information is available to fully assess the robustness and accuracy of statistics generated by the approach.

Further Methodological Work

Much methodological work is needed on improving survey-based measures of personal discrimination. As Fiske (2000) has noted regarding studies of discrimination, "we are not yet doing enough." Among the chief issues that should be pursued are the following:

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[12]These items are not identical and are not experimental comparisons, so factors other that racial explicitness affect these differences.

a. The differences in the volume and nature of self-reports when racially explicit vs. racially mute wordings are employed should be compared with survey-based experiments. The studies to date on the impact of racially explicit vs. not-explicit items have been of limited usefulness because a) even the non-explicit items often appeared in a racialized context, b) most did not rely on experiential designs (Brown, 2001), and c) the items compared sometimes differ in other regards than on the mentioning of race and ethnicity (Brown, 2001). Below a more rigorous experimental design for testing the race-priming hypothesis is presented.

There are three versions:

Simple, Closed, Racially Explicit: Can you think of any occasion in the last 30 days you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places because you were RACE/ETHNICITY? How about at work?

Two-Step, Closed, Racially Explicit: Can you think of any occasion in the last 30 days you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places? How about at work?
IF YES: Were you treated unfairly because you were RACE/ETHNICITY?

Two-Step, Open, Not Racially Explicit: Can you think of any occasion in the last 30 days you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places? How about at work?
IF YES: Why were you treated unfairly? PROBE AS NEEDED: What was the reason you were treated unfairly? Were you treated unfairly because of any personal characteristics?[13]

Based on similar, experimental work on inter-racial friendships (Smith, forthcoming), one would expect that the Simple, Closed, Racially Explicit approach would garner the highest level of reports, the Two-Step, Closed, Racially Explicit version would collect fewer mentions, and that the Two-Step, Open, Not Racially Explicit item would tally the smallest count of incidents.[14]

If the predicted differences in levels of discrimination appeared in experiments, additional work would have to done to establish why the levels vary and which were more accurate (see the point on validation below).[15]

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[13]Other venues besides work could of course be examined.

[14]For a similar discussion of studying inter-racial conflicts using explicit and non-explicit questions, see Smith, 1996.

[15]Besides determining differences in the level of reports and the relative accuracy of the reported levels, the two approaches also differ in what else they collect. The racially explicit approach is both more limited and economical in that it collects information only on the topic of interest, racial discrimination. The not-racially explicit approach collects information on

b. Panel surveys using bounded and aided recall techniques should be employed to see how much cross-sectional reports are distorted by both forgetting and telescoping.

c. Cognitive research on the meaning and understanding of terms and specifically what is included and excluded when terms like "discrimination" and "unfair treatment" are used is needed. This can be done through the use of focus groups and cognitive pretesting. In particular, research should consider whether additional questions asking specifically about verbal and/or physical abuse should be utilized in addition to the more general items.

d. A fruitful synthesis of existing approaches would be adopting elements of factorial vignette studies. In surveys vignettes about people being questioned by the police, applying for a job, running for political office, and in other situations could be presented to respondents and across subjects the race/ethnicity and other relevant factors (age, work experience, criminal history, endorsements, etc.) of the people in the vignettes could be varied to see if race/ethnicity influences respondents' evaluations. Similarly, factorial vignette approaches could be used to expand matched studies. In situations involving written submissions such as college admissions, applications could be systematically varied by race/ethnicity and other factors (GPA, class rank, advanced placement course, recommendations, etc.) to measure the impact of race/ethnicity controlling for other factors.

e. Validation studies are needed to verify what approaches are most accurate. One possible way of validating self-reports is to collect information about both committing and suffering acts of racial discrimination. This aggregate, cross-validation approach has been used to compare reports of number of heterosexual sex partners from men and women (Smith, 1992) and the number of inter-racial home visits by Blacks and Whites (Smith, 1996). In this instance it would involve members of groups being asked about being discriminated against by members of other groups and about discriminating against members of other groups. This approach might not be very practical since may discriminators may not perceive their actions as either unfair treatment or as racially based (Dovidio, 1993; Essed, 1991)[16] and because self-recognized acts of

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discrimination/mistreatment in general. The reports on non-racial discrimination can be seen either as valuable information that place racial discrimination in context and perspective or as extraneous data, not directly addressing experiences of racial discrimination.

[16]Research (Dovidio et al., 1996; Schneider, 1996) finds that what amounts to discrimination is often caused by in-group favoritism rather than out-group rejection. Thus, if we give a

discrimination would probably be under-reported because the action might generally be seen as illegal and/or morally wrong. Despite this serious concern, the approach has some merit. Incidents of reported discrimination have both perpetrators and targets and it would be desirable to see the events from both perspectives. Moreover, studies of employers find that it is certainly possible to collect self-reports of prejudiced attitudes and biased actions against minority job applicants (Kirschenman and Neckerman, 1991; Neckerman and Kirschenman, 1991; Supphellen, Kvitastein, and Johansen, 1997).

Another form of cross-validation studies would use multiple methods to measure discrimination. For example, employment discrimination at a company could be studied by a) examining grievances filed, b) carrying out surveys of employees and bosses, c) conducting observational studies, and d) analyzing employee records on wages, education, seniority, promotion history, job evaluations, and other relevant variables.

While validation studies would be useful for many purposes, they would be especially valuable to sort out differences in the reported incidence of discrimination across educational and racial consciousness groups and between racially explicit and not racially explicit question wordings.

General Recommendations

Even without carrying out the specific methodological work outlined above, certain desirable courses can be suggested:

1. Studies should cover more groups. In most surveys statistically reliable results are only available for Whites and Blacks. Hispanics and Asians are rarely covered in national surveys and other groups such as American Indians and Arabs have been totally ignored. Samples should be drawn and oversamples used when needed to cover all major racial and ethnic minorities. Particularly innovative, and a model to follow, was the Washington Post's special survey on bi-racial couples. However, surveys should not only cover minorities, as has sometimes been the case, but include Whites as well, since evidence clearly shows that they too experience discrimination.

2. Large-scale surveys need to elaborate and extend their measures. In some cases, surveys have utilized only a single measure. The measures need not only to be methodologically refined, but expanded as well. Surveys can draw on a growing set of studies especially in epidemiology that have proposed more reliable scales (Gomez and Trierweiler, 2001; Harrell, 2000; Landrine and Klonoff, 1996; Loo, et al., 2001; McNeilly, et al., 1996; Smith, 2001; Utsey and Ponterotto, 1996). The refined measures need to be able to capture

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friend a perk, we see ourselves as "helping a friend" and not as disadvantaging non-friends.

subtle and not just blatant discrimination (Dovidio, 1993; Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Sears, et al., 1997).

Also, since Supphellen, Kvitastein, and Johansen (1997) found that projective measures of employment discrimination were more valid measures than direct self-reports, such items should be among those considered.

Likewise, studies should inquire about discrimination within multiple venues and not rely on global questions on whether racial discrimination in general has occurred. Past studies have often asked about 4-5 venues (Brown, 2001; Collins, et al., 2000; Gary, 1995; Newport, Ludwig, and Kearney, 2001; Smith, 2000). Venues covered (and their frequency of use) include: work/jobs (5), restaurants and/or stores (4), police (3), school/education (3), housing/residence (2), public transportation (1), health (1), government agencies (1), banks (1), places of worship (1), and other (1). Some set of these would be adequate although other venues (e.g. on the street/in public) could also be covered. An "any other" category should also be used to capture incidents not covered by the specific, named venues (Smith, 2000).

Also, it would be useful to measure occurrences of incidents of racial advantage or preferment as well as discrimination. As the items on employment indicate (Table 1H), people in general and even minorities report both being hindered and helped because of their race/ethnicity. For example, on the 1991 GSS 38% of Blacks reported that their promotion opportunities were worse because of their race, but 18% indicated that their chances were improved for a net disadvantage of - 20 percentage points (compared to a net White advantage of + 19 percentage points).

3. While questions about whether racial discrimination has "ever" occurred are useful for some purposes (e.g. measuring life-time exposure), they are not ideal because a) they rely on recall over extend periods of time which is cognitively difficult and certain to lead to under-reporting and b) they muddy monitoring and time-series analysis since some people will be reporting on events that only occurred in the distant past. Moreover, acts of discrimination are unfortunately not such rare events (Table 1) that "ever" questions must be used to gather in enough reports to be usefully analyzed.

In addition, even with shorter time frames, it would be valuable to ask not only about the occurrence of racial discrimination, but also about its frequency. Otherwise the true magnitude of the events will be systematically underestimated (Suh, 2000).

4. Open-ended questions asking about the specifics of discriminatory incidents should routinely be asked. These items not only add greater richness and depth, but also help to validate the occurrence reports.

5. Once the methodological and design matters are settled, a time series should be started to monitor the magnitude and nature of

racial discrimination by group and venue.

6. Even the best survey-based approach as discussed above is not optimal for studying all forms of discrimination or for answering all questions about discrimination. Within surveys questions about the perceived level of discrimination experienced by ones own group or groups in general are useful adjuncts to the personal reports of discrimination. Moreover, they can be combined with personal-experience measures as multi-level indicators (Gee, 2002). Among other things, they can help to detect structural discrimination. Beyond surveys focusing on the direct measurement of discrimination, other approaches are valuable. For example, residual studies, especially as models are further refined, provide information on whether racial disparities in important outcomes are changing. Laboratory and field experiments can help to unlock the social and psychological conditions that encourage or suppress discriminatory acts. Ethnographic and other extended observational studies are best equipped for understanding the culture of discrimination.

Multi-methods can also be used to cross-validate findings. Within surveys this can be done by having different people report on the same events (e.g. Blacks and Whites or employers and employees). It can also be done by comparing survey results to those obtained from other approaches. These may involve designs to specifically check on respondent reports (Smith, 1999) such as comparing observational studies of a company with surveys of the company's employees. Even when direct, incident-specific validation is not possible, multiple methods could, in a general way, cross-check each other. For example, in-depth interviews, observational studies, and surveys should all show that discrimination is higher for the same social groups and more likely to occur in the same venues.

Conclusion

Racial discrimination is not a simple construct to measure. There are many ways of measuring racial discrimination and each approach has particular strengths and decided limitations. In terms of collecting representative information on the level, nature, targets, and loci of racial discrimination, survey-based measures of personal experiences of racial discrimination are probably the single, most valuable approach. Much methodological work is needed to refine and validate this approach, but results to date suggest that valid and reliable data on racial discrimination can be gathered by this method. Coupled with studies using other methodologies, survey-based measures of personal experiences of unfair treatment on the basis of race and ethnicity can gather important data on the state of intergroup relations in general and on the practice of racial discrimination in particular.

Table 1

Personal Experiences of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

% reporting discrimination/unfair treatment

A. Last 30 Days by Venue: Trends

	Blacks				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
In a store where you were shopping	30	26	27	22	27
At your place of work	21	18	19	14	19
In a restaurant, bar, theater or other entertainment place	21	16	19	12	20
While using public transportation	6	6	7	--	5
In dealings with the police, such as traffic incidents	15	16	20	--	21
In your place of worship	--	--	--	1	--
In any other situation/What other situation	10	--	--	7	--
	1269	996	1001	709	1003

Source: PSRA/NCCJ=2000; Gallup=other years

Questions Wording:
Can you think of any occasion in the last 30 days when you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places because you were black? How about...?

Table 1 (continued)

B. Last 30 Days by Venue: Race/Ethnicity, 2000

	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics	Asians
In a store where you were shopping	5	22	8	16
At your place of work	4	14	6	8
In a restaurant, bar, theater or other entertainment place	3	12	3	12
In your place of worship	*	1	*	0
In any other situation	2	7	2	5
	995	709	572	198

Source: PSRA/NCCJ

Questions Wording:
Can you think of any occasion in the last 30 days when you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places because you were RACE/ETHNICITY? How about...?

C. Last Few Years, Health

	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
Judged unfairly/Treated with disrespect due to race/ ethnicity	1	12	15
Treated Unfairly due to race/ ethnicity			
Self	1	14	13
Family Member	4	18	21
	1479	1189	983

Source: PSRA, 1999

Question Wordings: Thinking about all of the experiences you have had with health care visits in the last few years, have you ever felt the doctor or health provider you saw or any other staff members judged you unfairly or treated you with disrespect because of your race or ethnic background?
Over the past few years have you/a family member been treated unfairly specifically because of race or ethnic background when seeking medical care?

Table 1 (continued)

D. Last Five Years, Employment, All Employed

1994 17 (939)

Source: LAT

Question Wording: In the past five years, have you, yourself, ever been discriminated against because of your race or ethnic background when you were seeking a job, promotion, or employment opportunity, or have you not been discriminated against because of race?

E. Last Ten Years, General, All

	Self	Family Member	Close Friend	
1995	23	24	37	(1970)
2001	25	---	---	(1709)
2001	17	---	---	(1008)

Source: Washington Post

Question Wording: During the last 10 years, have you/has a family member/has a close friend experienced discrimination because of your/their racial or ethnic background, or not?

F. Ever by Situation, 1995

	Blacks and Hispanics
Not offered a job that went to a white	33
Passed over for a promotion which went to a white	31
Not admitted to a school	6

(220 blacks; circa 60-80 Hispanics)

Source: Gallup
Question Wording: Please tell me if you believe that any of the following things have ever happened to you because of racial discrimination. As a result of discrimination you were...

Table 1 (continued)

G. Ever, Police:	All	Whites	Blacks
Have you personally ever felt treated unfairly by the police or by a police officer specially because you are white/black?			
1995	12 (1225)	--	--
Have you ever felt you were stopped by police just because of your race or ethnic background?			
1999	11 (2006)	6 (934)	42 (1001)
2001	13 (2004)	7 (895)	44 (1003)
Have you ever felt that you were stopped by the police just because of your race or ethnic background?			
2000	10 (1499)	--	--
Have you ever been unfairly stopped by police because of your racial and ethnic background?			
2001	--	--	37 (323)

Source: 1995 - Gallup; 1999 - Gallup; 2000 - CBS; Gallup - 2001

H. Ever and Unspecified, Jobs and Related

	All	Whites	Blacks	
1991A: Promotion Worse	11	6	38	
Promotion Better	24	25	18	
	(923)	(777)	(110)	
1991B: Discriminated in Job/Education	26	---	---	(1623)
1995: Discriminated in Getting Job/ education	25	---	---	(1285)
Affirmative Action Assist in Getting Job/Education	7	---	---	(1285)

Table 1 (continued)

	All	Whites	Blacks

1997:	Lost Job/Promotion	18	---	---	(900)
	Got Job/Promotion	8	---	---	(900)
2001:	Not Hired/Promoted	14	---	---	(1709)

Source: 1991=GSS/NORC; 1995=LAT; 1997=Opinion Dynamics (registered voters); 2001=WP

Question Wordings: 1991A: Do you think your race or ethnic background makes your promotion opportunities better or worse?
1991B - Have you, yourself, ever been discriminated against because of your race or ethnic background when you were seeking a job or educational opportunity, or have you never been discriminated against?
1995 - Have you, yourself, ever been discriminated against because of your race or ethnic background when you were seeking a job or educational opportunity, or have you never been discriminated against?
1995 - Have you, yourself, ever received a job or educational opportunity as part of an affirmative action program designed to help minorities or women get ahead or haven't you ever received such an opportunity?
1997 - Do you think you've ever lost a job opportunity or a promotion because of your race or ethnic background? Do you think you've ever received a job opportunity or promotion because of your race or ethnic background?
2001 - Have you ever not been hired or promoted for a job because of your race or ethnic background?

Table 1 (continued)

I. Ever, General

	All	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
1989	18 (1000)	--	--	--
1994	28 (1255)	21 (est. 900)	54 (250)	--
1996	17 (2047)	10 (est. 1640)	46 (est. 245)	37 (est. 200)
1997	--	20 (est.1000)	53 (251)	--
2000	--	--	66 (est.150)	--
2001A	--	--	68 (323)	--
2001B	--	--	76 (1004 combined for both)	64

Source: 1989 - Decima Research; 1994 - NBC/WSJ; 1996 - Gallup; 1997 - Yankelovich; 2000 - CBS; a - WP; b - Gallup

Question Wordings: 1989 - Have you ever been a victim of racial or ethnic discrimination?
1994 - Have you personally ever been a victim of racial or ethnic discrimination?
1996 - Do you feel that you, yourself, have ever been the victim of racial discrimination?
1997 - Have you yourself ever been a victim of discrimination because you are white/black/African American?
2000 - Was there ever a specific instance when you felt discriminated against because of your race?
2001A - In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you because of your racial or ethnic background? You are treated with less respect than other people. Would you say very often, fairly often, once in a while, or never?
2001B - We have a question about your own experiences as a black/ an Hispanic. How often do you feel discriminated against in public life or employment because you are black/Hispanic...every day, every week, about once a month, a few times a year, less than once a year, or never?

Table 2

Attacks and Insults Due to Race/Ethnicity

	All	Whites	Blacks
1987			
Insulted	---	---	60 (est. 112)
2001			
Called Names/Insulted	---	---	30 (323)
Called Names/Insulted	18 (1008)	---	---
Physically Threatened	11 (1008)	---	---
Physically Threatened	---	---	17 (323)

Source: 1987=Yankelovich; 2001(Called Names-30)=WP; 2001 (Threatened-17)=WP; 2001(Called Names-18)=WP; 2001(Threatened-11)=WP

Questions Wordings: 1987=Have you ever been insulted because of your race?
2001(Called Names)=In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you because of your racial or ethnic background? You are called names or insulted? Would you say very often, fairly often, once in a while, or never?
2001(Threatened)=Have you ever been physically threatened or attacked because of your racial and ethnic background?

Table 3

Discrimination by Race/Ethnicity in Items
With No Explicit Mention of a Racial/Ethnic Basis
(% reporting unfair treatment/discrimination)

A. Misc.

	Whites	Blacks
Getting an education	6	18
Getting a job	17	37
Getting a promotion	16	36
Getting a place to live	7	24
	(619)	(305)

Source: Gallup, 1991
Question Wording: Have you ever been a victim of discrimination or reverse discrimination in...

B. Police (Not Fairly Treated)

The state police or state troopers in your state		
1999	4	17
	(934)	(1001)
2001	6	30
	(895)	(1003)
The local police in your area		
1999	10	27
	(934)	(1001)
2001	7	35
	(895)	(1003)
The state police or state troopers in other states you travel through		
1999	11	24
	(934)	(1001)

Source: Gallup
Question Wording: Do you feel you are treated fairly by each of the following or not?

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Appendix 1: Intergroup Relations Items on General Social Survey

<Access database in separate file.>

Appendix 2: Classification of GSS Intergroup Relations Items

A. Assimilation

B. Bilingualism

C. Contributions

D. Discrimination - Experience/Level
   1. Personal
   2. Group
      a. Opportunity
   3. Reverse
   4. Causes

E. Immigrants
   1. Level
   2. Input of Immigration
   3. Legal Status

F. National Identity

G. National Pride
   1. General
   2. Domain Specific

H. Personal Contact
   1. Friends
   2. Church
   3. Dinner
   4. Residence
   5. School/Education
   6. Work
   7. Relatives
   8. Closeness/Feelings
   9. General

I. Policies to Assist Minorities
   1. Affirmative Action
   2. Spending

J. Political
   1. Activism
   2. Influence
   3. Civil Liberties
   4. Other

K. Population

Appendix 2 (continued)

   1. Community
   2. United States

3. Change In

L. Other/Miscellaneous

M. Social Distance/Integration
   1. Marriage
   2. Dinner
   3. Residence
   4. School/Education
   5. Work
   6. Social Clubs
   7. General/Overall
   8. Military

N. Stereotypes
   1. Patriotism
   2. Welfare
   3. Wealth
   4. Work
   5. Violence
   6. Intelligence
   7. Family
   8. Intergroup Relations