Princeton-Educated Blacks and the Black Community

by

Michelle LaVaughn Robinson

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CONTENTS

DEDICATION

To Mom, Dad, Craig, and all of my special friends:

Thank-you for loving me and always making me feel good about myself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine various attitudes of Black Princeton alumni in their present state and as they are perceived by the alumni to have changed over time. This study tries to examine the following attitudes of alumni: the extent to which they are comfortable interacting with Black and with White individuals in various activities; the extent to which they are motivated to benefit the Black community in comparison to other entities such as themselves, their families, God, etc.; the ideologies they hold with respects to race relations between the Black and White communities; and feelings they have toward the Black lower class such as a feeling of obligation that they should help improve the lives of this particular group of Blacks.

As a future Black alumnus, this study is particularly interesting because often times I take my own attitudes about such issues for granted; never pausing to reflect upon how my experiences at Princeton may somehow have caused my attitudes to change. This is important for Blacks in contemporary society because as more Blacks begin attending predominately White universities it will be helpful to know how their experiences in these universities affect their future

attitudes. In years to come if their attitudes do change, is it possible, for example, that they will become more comfortable interacting with Blacks or with Whites in various activities? Will they become more or less motivated to benefit the Black community? If there is a change in their attitudes to what might it be attributed? Will they feel any obligation as a member of the Black community to help other Blacks in particular who are less fortunate than themselves?

Earlier in my college career, there was no doubt in my mind that as a member of the Black community I was somehow obligated to this community and would utilize all of my present and future resources to benefit this community first and foremost. My experiences at Princeton have made me far more aware of my "Blackness" than ever before. I have found that at Princeton no matter how liberal and open-minded some of my White professors and classmates try to be toward me, I sometimes feel like a visitor on campus; as if I really don't belong. Regardless of the circumstances underwhich I interact with Whites at Princeton, it often seems as if, to them, I will always be Black first and a student second.

These experiences have made it apparent to me that the path I have chosen to follow by attending Princeton will likely lead to my further integration and/or assimilation into a White cultural and social structure that will only allow me to remain on the periphery of society; never becom-

ing a full participant. This realization has presently, made my goals to actively utilize my resources to benefit the Black community more desirable.

At the same time , however, it is conceivable that my four years of exposure to a predominately White, Ivy League University has instilled within me certain conservative values. For example, as I enter my final year at Princeton, I find myself striving for many of the same goals as my White classmates--acceptance to a prestigious graduate or professional school or a high paying position in a successful corporation. Thus, my goals after Princeton are not as clear as before.

Is it possible that other Black alumni share these feelings? Do most alumni experience a change in their attitudes; and, if so, how are they likely to change? This study will try to provide some answers to these questions. However, before discussing the findings, it will be necessary to define the variables of the study and explain the methods used to measure these variables.

Chapter II

HYPOTHESIS

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

This study focuses on four dependent variables which may be divided into two attitude categories: 1) the extent to which respondents to the questionnaire feel personally and ideologically comfortable interacting with Blacks and with Whites; and 2) the relative degree of motivation these respondents have to benefit various entities--including the Black community, themselves, their families, and the American community at large (which is, of course, predominately White). Let us call these two categories "Interaction Attitudes" and "Benefit Attitudes".

Interaction Attitudes

There are two basic variables in this category. By inquiring about the relative comfort that the respondents feel when interacting with both Blacks and Whites in various activities, the study tries to provide some idea of the respondents' personal preferences when interacting with Blacks and with Whites, and thus measures their degree of attach-

ment to individuals of different races. In addition, the study also inquires about respondents' ideological preferences regarding relations between the Black and White communities. Let us consider these two variables more closely.

Comfort and its Relationship to Interaction Attitudes

Webster's Dictionary of English offers several key synonyms for "comfort", some of which are ease, pleasure, and enjoyment. When one speaks of being "comfortable with" someone or something, one often thinks of environments which promote feelings of ease and with which one is familiar, such as being in one's own home or with one's family and close friends. More often than not, one finds comfort in things with which one is familiar rather than in unfamiliar things. It is also more likely that one is more attached to to things with which one is familiar than to things with which one is unfamiliar. Therefore, in the case of the respondents, I argue that the relative sense of comfort they may feel when interacting with Blacks in comparison to Whites (and vice versa) in various activities reflects the relative ease and familiarity the respondents feel with Blacks in comparison to Whites which, in turn, indicates the extent to which the respondents are personally attached to Blacks as individuals in comparison to Whites as individuals.

It is important to point out that one's attitudes about race relations on an individual level have an important degree of logical independence from one's attitudes about race relations on a community level. An individual who is more personally comfortable with Blacks than with Whites on an individual level need not hold political ideologies which support the separation of Blacks and Whites on a community level. Likewise, an individual who is personally more comfortable with individual Whites than with individual Blacks may or may not hold ideologies which support the integration of Blacks and Whites on a community level. Therefore, it is necessary to measure attitudes towards relations between Blacks and Whites on a community level (to be referred to as "ideologies") independently from personal attitudes towards relations between Blacks and Whites on an individual level. The variable to be discussed next tries to accomplish this by mesauring the extent to which the respondents are separationist and/or pluralist or integrationist and/or assimiliationist (to be referred to as sep/plur and int/assim).

Separationism/Pluralism and Integrationism/Assimilationism

Unlike the discussion of "comfort" in the previous section, literature defining concepts of sep/plur and int/assim was found. Therefore, in order to demonstrate the role of

these concepts in this study, the following section will draw on the writings of such authors as van den Berghe, Billingsley, and Carmichael and Hamilton, to name a few, whose writings utilize these concepts.

van den Berghe (1967), discusses the possibility of two types of pluralism: 1)cultural structural pluralism in which one finds different ethnic groups with their own languages, values, etc., but participating in a common social structure (things people do together); and 2)social structural pluralism in which one finds shared languages and values across different ethnic groups each participating in its own separate social structure.[1] These definitions of pluralism utilized by van den Berghe serve as a basis for using the term "pluralism" as a measure of the respondents's attitudes about race relations between Blacks and Whites on a community level.

The idea of separationism and pluralism (both cultural structural and social structural) is also discussed by Billingsley (1968) who believes there is a need for Blacks to build up their own communities; define themselves by new "Black" standards different from the old White standards; and exercise power and control over their own institutions and services within the Black community.

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[1] Pierre van den Berghe, Race and Racism, (New York: Wiley), 1967: p. 35.

Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's (1967) developed definitions of separationism in their discussion of Black Power which guided me in the formulation and use of this concept in the study.

> The concept of Black Power rests on the fundamental premise: Before a group can enter the open society, it must close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.[2]

Thus, Carmichael and Hamilton define separationism as a necessary stage for the development of the Black community before this group integrates into the "open society".

The idea of creating separate social structure and cultural structures as suggested by these authors serves to clarify definitions of separationism/pluralism as they function in the dependent variable which tries to measure the respondents' ideologies concerning political and economic relations between the Black and White communities.

Conyers and Wallace (1976) embody the idea of Blacks working with Whites as a plausible political and economic ideology about relations between the Black and White communities. Their discussion focuses on representative integration which is the integration of Black official into various aspects of politics. They discuss problems which face these Black officials who must persuade the White community that they are above issues of race and that they are representing

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[2] Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, (New York: Vintage Books), 1967: p. 44.

all people and not just Black people. The idea of working with Whites to form a common social structure and cultural structure as opposed to creating two separate social structures and cultural structures discussed in the writings of Conyers and Wallace have aided in the development of concepts of integrationism and assimilationism as they function in this study.

Benefit Attitudes

The second set of dependent variables in this study tries especially to measure the extent to which the respondents were motivated to benefit various social groups. The first variable was designed to provide some idea of how interested the respondents are in positively contributing to the Black community relative to other social groups such as the White community, their families, their occupations. The second variable in this category was designed to measure the nature of the respondents' attitudes not toward the Black community as an undifferentiated whole, but specifically toward members of the lower class in that community. Let us consider these variables a little more closely.

The study examines the respondents' motivations to benefit various individuals and groups of individuals, thereby,

measuring their value priorities. The study inquires about the respondents' motivations to benefit him/herself, and the following social groups: the family, the Black community, the White community, God and church, the U.S. society, the non-White races of the world, and the human species as a whole.

In an individual's lifetime, it is necessary that the individual focus his/her interests on benefiting a limited number of things at a time because it is impossible to help everyone and everything equally at the same time. Therefore, the individual must create a motivational hierachy from which the individual can determine which social groups are most important to benefit. Some individuals may place the highest value on benefiting themselves or their families. Others may value their occupational fields most highly. Others may place God before everything else. In still other instances, one's motivation to benefit either the U.S. society, the non-White races of the world or the human species as a whole could be most powerful.

The desire to benifit the Black community as previously mentioned, is also included in the list of subjective motivations. However, this dependent variable did not differentiate the Black community in any way because it tries to measure the level of interest the respondents have in the Black community as a whole in comparison to other possible social groups as a whole. The variable discussed next tries to make up for that.

The second benefit variable examines the respondents' desire to benefit specifically the Black lower class rather than examining attitudes towards the Black community as a whole. This identification is useful because there is a large segment of the Black community that is lower class and as a result of the strong likelihood that respondents now belong to classes higher and more powerful, politically and economically, than the lower class largely because they have graduated from Princeton University, it is interesting to see what their attitudes are towards a large majority of Blacks unlike themselves. Feelings of obligation to improve the life of the Black lower class, feelings of guilt for betraying the Black lower class, as well as feelings of shame or envy toward the Black lower class are investigated in this study.

CHANGE OVER TIME IN THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES

By adding a measure for change over time the dependent variables may be studied both in their present perceived state and as they are perceived by the respondents to have changed over time. The study accomlishes this measure of change by dividing the respondents' lives into three periods: "Pre-Princeton" (years before entering college), "Princeton" (years in college), and "Post-Princeton" (years

after graduating from college).[3]

It is important to realize that the change measured is that which is perceived by the individual; an introspective measure of change. For example, the individual answering the question may believe that he/she has changed in no way at all, however, if someone else, possibly a family member, were asked the same question about the individual, it is possible that they would believe that the individual has drastically changed over time.

The measure for change over time is focused around Princeton because the study attempts to examine the effects of a Princeton education on Blacks. Respondents are representative of a small number of Blacks who attend predominately White universities and they also represent an even smaller portion of Blacks attending Ivy League universities. Unversities such as Princeton only began admitting Blacks in the 1960's and presently Blacks comprise only about 10% of total enrollment. Due to the small number of Blacks in attendance, the University does not often meet the social and academic needs of its Black population because these univer-

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[3] For this study, change was computed for first, the Pre-Princeton to Princeton period (to be referred to as "Pre-to-Prin") and then for the Princeton to Post-Princeton period (to be referred to as "Prin-to-Post"). By calculating the difference between the number indicated by respondents for Pre-Princeton point and the number indicated by respondents for the Princeton point, it was possible to estimate the change during the Pre-to-Prin period. Likewise the difference between the number indicated by the respondents for Princeton point and the number indicated for the Post-Princeton point shows the change during the Princeton to Post-Princeton period.

sities focus their attentions on accommodating the White students who comprise the majority of their enrollments.

Dejoie discusses the claims of the negative effects of predominately White universities on the Black students attending those universities. Although I was unable to find empirical support for Dejoie's essay, I feel the ideas she expressed are worth some discussion.

Dejoie believes that "Institutional policies of predominately White universities have established practices which favor the prefered groups and have ranked priorities which are meant to facilitate the tasks and improve the conditions of White students while ignoring the needs of the Black students".[4] Dr. Dejoie goes on in her study to discuss the effects of biased curricula which does not encourage,"...The contribution of Blacks, the study of Blacks, as a group".[5] She states that Departments of Black Studies are kept very separate from White university curricula. Dejoie also discusses the negative aspects of social and non-academic activites at these schools: "Fraternities, sororities, homecoming activities and student government maintain the White status-quo. As in academic areas, the social aspects of university life systematically follow the interests of the White students--the majority group".[6]

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[4] Dr. Carolyn Dejoie, "Low Morale in Higher Education: Blacks in Predominately White Universities", (source of article unknown).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

As a result of such biases, both academic and non-academic, it is often difficult for some Black students to adjust to Princeton's environment; and unfortunately there are very few adequate support groups which provide some form of guidance and counsel for Black students having difficulty making the transition from their home environments to Princeton's environment. Most students are dependent upon the use of their own faculties to carry them through Princeton. Therefore, it is important to understand exactly what kinds of changes Black students undergo, if any, while in Princeton.

For this study, the Pre-Princeton measure provides a rough idea of what kinds of beliefs respondents held with respects to the dependent variables before entering college and the Post-Princeton measure provides some idea of what respondents' beliefs are after college. Thus, if findings show consistency between the two periods (Pre-Princeton and Post-Princeton), it may be possible that no change occured as a result of their Princeton education, or possibly in this case, Princeton's effect on the respondents' beliefs lasted for a short time and then no longer effected their attitudes, thus making these effects temporary. If findings show some change through the periods, it may be possible that their Princeton education influenced these changes.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

By measuring a number of independent variables, this study will try to determine some correlates of the respondents' interest in interacting with Blacks and Whites on an individual and a community level, as well as their interest to benefit various social groups; the Black community in particular. The independent variables of this study include the following: the actual time the respondents spent interacting with Blacks and Whites (to be referred to as "time"); and the racial make-up of the individual's primary and secondary schools, in addition to the racial make-up of the individual's neighborhood; the race of the person whom the individual most admired throughout his/her lifetime; the individual's image of God; the number of books in the individual's home while growing up and presently; and the age and sex of the individual. Therefore, although this study examines several independent variables, as will be shown in a later chapter, only a few independent variables were found to have strong relationships to the dependent variables. This section will discuss the independent variables found to have the strongest relationship to the dependent variables first, and will discuss the independent variables of the study which are found to have no relationship to the dependent variables last.

As will be demonstrated, the independent variables which measure the actual time the indivdual spent with Blacks in

comparison to Whites throughout Pre-Princeton, Princeton, and Post-Princeton years will be used as an independent variable. This variable is related to several other independent variables which measure the racial make-up of the individual's neighborhood in which he/she grew up as well as the individual's primary and secondary schools.

The individual's past and present socio-economic status is measured by the independent variable which asks for the economic class in which the individual's family belonged when growing up, in addition to the individual's career mobility in comparison to the individual's parents' socio-economic status.

Another independent variable measured in this study is the race of the person whom the individual most admired thoughout his/her lifetime. This variable enables one to examine the influence of the race of the individual's role models on their attitudes with respect to the dependent variables of the study.

A rough measure of literateness (tendency for an individual to include reading and writing as a major part of his/her life) is attempted by the variable examining the number of books in the individuals home while growing up and presently; and finally, age and sex of the individual will also be measured.

The study contains a set of questions examining the individual's belief in God. This measure has been used in place
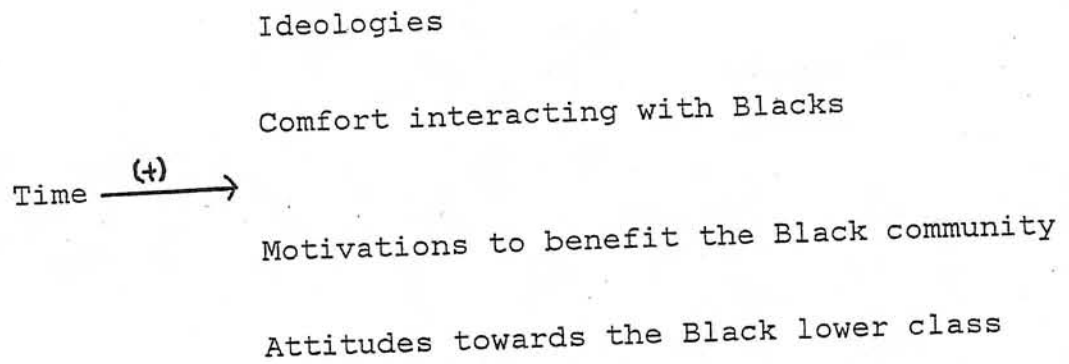
of the traditional measure which asks simply, "Do you be-
lieve in God? "requiring a "yes" or "no" response or "Which
bests describes your religious beliefs? Check one: Protes-
tant, Catholic, Jewish, Athiest, none of the above, other."
Instead of examining whether or not the individual believes
in God, Piazza and Glock (1979) demonstrated that examining
the specific content of the individual's beliefs as opposed
to measuring whether or not the individual believes in God
provides greater insight into the individual's ideas about
God. The study found that when people answer "yes" or "no"
to the traditional measure of Belief in God, they do not all
mean the same thing; their conception of God varies. "Most
Americans Believe in a God, but this does not necessarily
imply that they have the same thing in mind".[7]

In order to obtain a clearer idea of the content of the
individual's religious beliefs, Piazza and Glock developed a
question that depends on three interrelated measures: the
extent to which the individual does or does not believe in a
God, the degree to which the individual believes God influ-
ences the way society is organized, and the degree to which
the individual believes God influences the individual's own
life.

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[7] Piazza and Glock, "Images of God and Their Social Mean-
ing", Religious Dimensions, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall,
Inc.), 1979: p. 69.

CAUSAL MODEL

The diagram below represents the original hypothesized relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

Ideologies

Comfort interacting with Blacks

Time $\xrightarrow{(+)}$

Motivations to benefit the Black community

Attitudes towards the Black lower class

(Diagram 1)

HYPOTHESES

It is my belief, as seen by the above causal model, that the independent variable which measures the actual time the respondents have spent throughout the three periods of their lifetime with Blacks and with Whites will have a strong effect on the dependent variables of the study because the more the individual spends time with a group of people, the more the individual will be familiar with that particular group of people. For example, if the study shows that more respondents spend time with Blacks than with Whites during each period of his/her lifetime, the study is likely to show more respondents tend to be comfortable with Blacks than with Whites when interacting in various activities.