

**Counterproductive Aims?**

**The Effects of Segregated Student Support Programs on Black College Students**

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THESIS

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This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends who had faith in my strength and ability to persevere in the face of adversity, and who offered me encouraging words on Facebook when I needed them.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AAAN</b>	African American Academic Network
<b>BSO</b>	Black Student Organization
<b>PWI</b>	Predominantly White Institutions
<b>SSSP</b>	Student Support Service Programs

## **SUMMARY**

Through a survey 49 Black students attending the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), this study examined whether student involvement in segregated student support programs (SSSP) and/or Black student organizations (BSO), is related to higher racial centrality, higher intergroup anxiety, and the perception of more negative metastereotypes. Additionally, this research explored whether involvement in SSSP and BSO on a college campus limited the amount of social interaction between Black students and members of other racial groups. Similar to past research, this study finds that Black students at UIC, regardless of current, past, or no involvement in SSSP and/or BSO hold more negative perceptions about the beliefs that Whites have about them. There are several other significant findings, including that there is a positive relationship between Black students' metastereotypes and academic performance anxiety, as well as a positive relationship between Black students' overall assessment of what Whites think about Blacks and their intergroup anxiety. Finally, students reported that SSSP and/or BSO do not provide them with opportunities to interact with students from different racial groups, and students that have never participated in these organizations tend to have significantly more Asian and White friends in their social networks. Limitations and directions for future research are discussed.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 **Background**

As colleges and universities across the United States increase enrollment of racial minorities, particularly those from disadvantaged urban centers, they are often faced with a distinct challenge: how to best serve these students while not adding fuel to the “race issue” that plagued higher education upon implementation of affirmative action policies. The solution has often been to firmly establish a commitment to diversity through college and university mission statements, and through design of objectives that address issues of academic advancement and retention of historically disenfranchised groups. Other objectives of colleges and universities have been to increase cultural/racial/ethnic awareness, foster positive relations, and create an environment that prepares students to be empathetic citizens (Antonio, 2001). Despite the declaration of these goals there appears to be competing factors working against the fulfillment of these goals—mainly organizational segregation, resulting from institutionalized programs, voluntary student organizations, and balkanization.

African-Americans, or Blacks, often have a difficult time adjusting both socially and academically at predominantly White institutions (PWI) (Cole & Arriola, 2007). One of the ways in which they cope socially is to join Black Student Organizations (BSO), like Black sororities and fraternities. These organizations provide opportunities for Black students to come together on predominantly White campuses and establish their own communities for the purpose of support, service work, etc. Additionally, schools have established voluntary specialized support programs that provide tutoring, academic counseling, and other services as mentioned earlier, to meet the need of a growing minority population that enter colleges and universities under-prepared for college level work, etc. Although programs such as TRIO, a federally funded

Student Support Service program, do not have an explicit racial requirement—students must be either low-income, first generation college students or disabled—other programs are sometimes racially segregated. These programs provide students with much needed support, and in some cases help to maintain retention of Black students.

## 1.2 **Statement of the Problem**

The concern over whether these programs are effective in helping students achieve academic objectives is not the focus of this research, but rather whether these programs potentially heighten students' anxiety about their academic performance, and limit opportunities for social interactions with members of other racial groups. Research continues to indicate that Black college students often struggle with the perception that others view them as lacking intellectual ability (Steele, 1992; Torres & Charles, 2004). So, how might participation in segregated support service programs or SSSP, enhance Black students perceptions that other students view them negatively? Additionally, does participation, or utilization of such services have implications beyond just the academic? For instance, is it possible that intergroup interactions are impacted as well?

## 1.3 **Purpose of the Study**

This thesis has two purposes. First, it seeks to understand how segregated student support programs (SSSP), and other Black oriented student groups like Black sororities, and fraternities, strengthen Black students' racial identity. Additionally, this thesis aims to discover whether students that participate in these aforementioned programs, organizations and groups hold more negative meta-stereotypes—beliefs about what others think about their ingroup—that impact their academic performance and social interactions with Whites.

#### 1.4 **Significance of the Problem**

A growing contention among scholars is whether racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses results in more cross-race or interracial relationships. Moody (2001) found that despite the increase in racial diversity on college and university campuses, the lived experience of students is in not one of integration, but racial division. Antonio (2001) surveyed students at the University of California, Los Angeles and found that in students' personal friendship networks there was a relatively high degree of racial diversity, but overall students perceived that there was little interaction between racial groups on campus. Though in this instance students' perceptions led them to believe that there was racial division on campus, Fischer (2008) found that racial and ethnic diversity does lead to cross-race friendships. It is possible, and more than likely, that the outcomes of these studies are the result of the differences amongst the campuses in which students were surveyed, but it does not make the relevance of the question involving the link between diversity and interracial interaction any less important for researchers. Scholars have suggested that the effectiveness of diversity on college campuses is often conditional and based on students' willingness to interact with those who are racially different, and on opportunities for engagement in sustained and meaningful ways (Chang et al., 2006). In light of the earlier discussion of SSSP and BSO it is important to determine the extent to which they impact 1) Black students' willingness to interact with outgroup members and 2) limit opportunities for engagement in sustained and meaningful ways.

Researchers have long argued that organizational components within institutions like schools have a significant impact on the relationships that individuals form. For instance, Hallinan and Teixeira (1987a; 1987b) found that organizational characteristics like class size, racial proportion of the students, and the presence of different races in the same ability group

impact the likelihood of interracial friendship formation in secondary schools. Additionally, academic status hierarchy in schools can dramatically influence the friendship choices of students (Hallinan & Smith, 1985; Kunitschek & Hallinan, 1998). Stearns (2004) found that when the academic status hierarchy becomes institutionalized in the form of tracking programs that divide students into groups or classes based on academic ability, interracial ties are more difficult to form. At the forefront of this research is discovering how institutional components like segregated student support programs indirectly and/or directly work against college and university aims of creating an environment that fosters positive intergroup interaction.

### 1.5 **Significance of the Study**

This research draws on literature and theory from scholars within the discipline of social psychology with the purpose of demonstrating its value and relevance within the field of communication, and intergroup communication as a subfield. Intergroup communication is an emerging area of research for scholars and invites theoretical and empirical exploration (Hardwood, Giles, & Palomares, 2005). Examining how organizational, cognitive, and social factors potentially serve as barriers to communication and the formation of interracial relationships is a valid and important area of study in the communication discipline. My thesis aims to contribute to the expansion of the existing body of literature.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Despite increasingly civil race-relations in today's society, scholars have come to find that in certain contexts, like in institutions of higher learning, race continues to play a significant role in the lives of Blacks. Fischer and Hartmann (1995) administered open-ended questionnaires to 240 Black and White undergraduate students in order to determine the impact of race on their social experiences at a PWI. The researchers discovered that while students felt it was important to form interracial friendships as a means of learning about others and building a sense of understanding between groups, they also felt that race largely impacted their ability to establish friendships outside their racial group. One of the primary reasons offered was the tendency of Black and White students to form cliques and segregate themselves from each other. Additionally, both Black and White students believe that the two groups lacked common ground on which to build friendships. Furthermore, some Blacks explicitly stated their preference to "hang with their own" because they wanted social acceptance from peers, distrusted White students, and did not want to be victimized by racial prejudice.

The latter responses tell a lot about the social dilemmas faced by Black students at PWI. They recognize the benefits of cross-race interaction, but because of the tumultuous historical relations between White Americans and Black Americans, Blacks have a general mistrust of Whites and attempt to avoid them in personal relationships. Other elements, including the desire to "hang with one's own" and fear of peer ostracism can likely be attributed to the strength of Black students' social identification.

### **2.1 Social Identity**

A wide body of literature shows that one's social identity can be an influential factor in initiating communication and forming relational ties. Tajfel and Turner (1986) introduced the

social identity theory of intergroup behavior, which posits that individuals have both personal and social or group identities. Personal identities involve personal characteristics that define a person as a unique individual and differentiate them from other members of their ingroup (Gudykunst & Shapiro, 1996). Social identities can be based on roles individuals play, demographic categories like race or ethnicity, membership in organizations, etc. An individual's social identity is essentially a particular group identity. Group identity is a matter of collective identification demonstrated through the use of collective terms like “we,” “us,” and “them” (Hogg et al., 2004). Social identity is anchored by social comparisons; members are clearly differentiated from non-members. This is why there is an “ingroup” composed of members who share the same social identity and an “outgroup” who are viewed as such because they lack similar identification.

According to Hogg and colleagues (2004), social identity is guided by two basic motivations: self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction. Individuals “strive to promote or protect the prestige and status of their own groups because group evaluation is self-evaluation” (p. 256). In other words, positive group evaluation means positive self-evaluation. Additionally individuals, “strive to reduce subjective uncertainty about their social world and about their place within it—they like to know who they are and how to behave, and who others are and how they might behave” (p. 256). The salience, strength or importance, of one's social or group identity can change given the context of a situation or environment. Scholars have found that racial identity can play a significant role in Blacks' friendship patterns and adjustment to college life at PWI's.

## 2.2 **Racial Identity**

Helms (1990) defined racial identity as “a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (p. 4). Racial identity salience is the extent to which individuals hold their race to be the most important part of their self-concept at any given moment in time (Sellers et al., 1998). When racial identification is high individuals are more prone to form relationships with individuals from their ingroup. Attraction to one’s own group is often called homophily, or similarity attraction (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970). Homophily has often been a primary interest of scholars trying to understand the formation of interpersonal and intergroup ties (McCroskey, Richmond, and Daly, 1975; McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001; Doyle & Kao, 2007). Racial homophily, which can result from a strong racial identification with one’s ingroup, can have an interesting effect in integrated settings where opportunities for interactions between ingroup and outgroup members would be expected to flourish.

In a study conducted by Mollica, Gray, and Trevino (2003), the researchers placed incoming MBA students into diverse work groups to examine whether homophily developed early in their social networks. The researchers discovered that even with the low availability of same-race relationships, Blacks had more homophily in their networks than Whites. Black students reached out to other available work-groups in order to form homophilous ties. Race was the most salient social identity for those individuals with homophilous networks. Mollica et al.’s findings mirror those of other scholars when it comes to the relationships of Blacks and the influence of racial identity salience in their social networks (Ibarra, 1995).

Black students often cope with social segregation on predominantly White campuses by forming or joining groups that are predominantly Black (Fisher & Hartmann, 1995; Torres &

Charles, 2004). These racially segregated groups and organizations increase Black students' sense of belonging to their ingroup, help to maintain their collective history, and help them battle feelings of isolation at PWI's. In focus groups with Black students at a northeastern university, Guiffrida (2003) sought to understand the role of Black organizations in students' social integration on a college campus. He found that while there were a number of benefits, like giving back to the community and building professional contacts, student comfort was the most strongly emphasized reason for valuing participation in such groups. Student respondents said that they chose to attend a PWI because they wanted to diversify themselves through interaction with students from different races, and cultures; however, this goal proved to be difficult because they continually felt isolated on campus. When students did attempt to join or participate in integrated student organizations they indicated that they often felt uncomfortable. Guiffrida notes that these students were sensitive to being treated differently and were "attuned to subtle signs of alienation or discomfort on the part of their White peers in the organizations" (p. 309). By joining Black groups and organizations on campus students were able to interact with peers whom they perceived as like them.

To some extent, the Black students' outlook on their experiences when interacting with Whites in integrated settings can be understood in terms of the differences in their perspectives on race. According to Maquail et al. (2009) Blacks tend to be "color-conscious" or aware of their racial difference and display pride in such difference. In contrast Whites are often "color-blind" or perceive individuals as similar and not members of differentiated racial groups. Both perspectives require a different set of tools when interacting in intergroup situations as Black students are forced to confront their feelings of alienation, while White students are left unable to understand why Black students feel isolated amongst them.



Guiffrida's research demonstrates the gravity of conflicting emotions that some Blacks face when attending PWI's; they often have the desire to form more diverse relationships, but get overwhelmed when they begin to feel like anomalies on campus. Is it significant that Black students at PWIs do not look to some other social identity through which they can build relationships with diverse others? Is the experience different at more racially diverse campuses? It is difficult to say, since the research has not addressed either of these questions. It appears logical that Black students would look to their ingroup to decrease uncertainty and anxiety since within the confines of their group they can address feelings of alienation and let down their guards (Guiffrida, 2003). At least in the context of PWIs, Black students' racial identity acts as a defense mechanism for coping with uncertainty and anxiety.

Communication scholars have identified both uncertainty and anxiety as significant emotions that individuals face in encounters with strangers, or those that are considered "others" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Gudykunst, 1985, 1993, 1995). Anxiety management theory (AUM) (Gudykunst, 1993) posits that social identities are more likely to be activated in intercultural (intergroup) encounters than in interpersonal (intragroup) ones, which are more likely to call up personal identities. For individuals who place high importance on their racial identity it can be difficult to form relationships with those outside the ingroup. Add in the fact that race relations between groups is often full of conflict and misperception, and it is easy to see why individuals try to avoid those who they perceive are the source of those problems. Theoretical and empirical research suggests that much of the gravitation towards one's own racial group is often the result of misunderstandings that are the product of negative meta-stereotypes, stereotype threat, intergroup anxiety, and a lack of sustained intergroup contact.

### 2.3 **Meta-stereotypes**

Misunderstandings are often at the core of intergroup encounters and can severely impact whether ingroup members avoid contact with outgroup members. Yzerbyt, Judd and Muller (2009) contend that in intergroup contexts two set of beliefs affect the way individuals approach outgroup members: stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. Stereotypes are based on what people think about the “others,” while meta-stereotypes, a term coined by Vorauer, Main, and O’Connell (1998), describe a person’s beliefs about stereotypes held by outgroup members regarding their ingroup. Stereotypes are important because they can “trigger affective reactions and shape behavior toward members of other groups” orienting “not only the initial moments of an interactions but also long-term relationships” (p. 64). Yzerbyt and colleagues argue that meta-stereotypes are as important as stereotypes because they “affect the early moments of an encounter and probably much of the ensuing interactions” (p. 64). If individuals think others view them more negatively than they actually do, what impact does that have on how they interact with those “others”? Yzerbyt, Judd and Muller argue that pessimism sets the groundwork for unnecessary distrust at the early stage of interaction.

### 2.4 **Stereotype Threat**

Few scholars have explicitly examined the impact of meta-stereotypes on intergroup interaction in the United States. Yzerbyt, Judd and Muller’s (2009) research examined how meta-stereotypes play a role in misunderstandings in intergroup contexts in Belgium, but they did not specifically look at its impact on intergroup interaction per se. Canadian scholars Vorauer, Main and O’Connell (1998) conducted three experiments with White Canadians in order to demonstrate how their perception of how Aboriginal Canadians viewed their group impacted intergroup relations. The scholars found that perceptions of negative stereotypes

resulted in respondents feeling some discomfort about intergroup interactions. Research on meta-stereotypes in the U.S. has dealt specifically with two potential outcomes of negative stereotype perception: stereotype threat and intergroup anxiety.

Stereotype threat refers to “the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype” (Steele, 1999, p. 46). Stereotype threat can have a profound impact on the academic performance of minority students. In an experiment conducted by Steele and Aronson (1995) both African American and White college sophomores were given a verbal test. In the first instance Black students were told that the verbal test measured their intellectual ability, and even though the two groups had been matched statistically in ability level there was a dramatic difference in the performance of Black students compared to Whites. The researchers contend that because the students perceived that others viewed them as having limited ability, they internalized that stereotype to the point that it had an effect on their performance. In the second study students were not told that the test measured intellectual ability and Black students’ performance matched that of White students.

Scholars Torres and Charles (2004) contend that meta-stereotypes are one manifestation of Blacks’ “double-consciousness,” or awareness of self/group in their own eyes and the eyes of Whites (p. 116). In their research Torres and Charles examined meta-stereotypes held by Black students at the University of Pennsylvania and utilized stereotype threat to understand the impact of students’ perceptions on their academic performance. They found that Black students held largely negative meta-stereotypes about what Whites thought of them. Their responses, however, were not far off base; interviews and focus groups with White students confirmed many of the perceptions that Blacks had anticipated. These stereotypes were that Blacks are lazy, poor,

violent, criminal, and less intelligent than Whites. White students did not perceive Black students as their intellectual or social equals and these was clearly internalized by a number of Black respondents. Not only did these negative meta-stereotypes impact Black students' interactions with White students on campus, they also severely affected their academic confidence. Students reported that they felt extreme pressure to disprove White students assumptions that they did not deserve to attend the University of Pennsylvania, and to combat stereotypes pertaining to their intellectual ability.

Torres and Charles' findings, that Blacks believe that Whites hold negative views of them, supports those of other scholars. Sigelman and Tuch (1997) found that a large majority of Blacks perceive that most Whites view them as "violent, unintelligent, immoral, lazy, undisciplined whiners who use drugs and alcohol and would rather live off welfare than work" (p. 89). Additionally, most Blacks perceive that Whites view them as religious and athletic, but it wasn't clear from the responses whether Blacks attributed these attributes as complimentary. As with Torres and Charles's findings, Whites affirmed many of the stereotypes Blacks' thought Whites' had attributed to them. Drawing upon Allport's contact hypothesis, Sigleman and Tuch anticipated that contact would shape Blacks' tendencies to attribute positive stereotypes of Blacks; however, this was not the case in all instances. Black women, younger Blacks, and (surprisingly), higher-income Blacks, all of whom reported having more contact with Whites reported less positive perceptions of Whites beliefs about Blacks. In contrast, male, older, and lower-income Blacks, who had less contact with Whites, reported less negative metastereotypes. As it pertains to Black women, younger Blacks, and higher-income Blacks, it is likely that these responses could be the result of negative experiences with Whites or an awareness and internalization of what other Blacks perceive that Whites think about Blacks. Either way,

Sigleman and Tuchs' findings are particularly disheartening for researchers who have touted sustained intergroup contact as the solution to altering negative attitudes and enhancing intergroup relations.

## 2.5 **Intergroup Anxiety**

One of the consequences of anticipating that outgroup members hold negative stereotypes of ingroup members is intergroup anxiety. Stephan and Stephan (1985) define intergroup anxiety as a reaction that people experience as a result of feeling personally threatened in intergroup interactions, often including feelings of rejection and embarrassment. When intergroup anxiety is high, people display exaggerated responses, rely on stereotypes, and express polarized emotions and evaluations (Stephan, Stephan and Gudykunst, 1999). Expanding on the intergroup anxiety model, Stephan and Stephan developed the integrated threat theory of prejudice (ITT) and incorporated three additional types of threat: realistic threats, symbolic threats, and negative stereotypes.

Realistic threats refer to any perceived threat to the welfare of a group or its members. For example, in college contexts, Whites often view affirmative action policies, at least those that use race or ethnicity as a factor in college admissions, as real threats to their advancement (Stephen et al., 2002). The perception of a threat can lead to prejudice whether or not the threat is "real" (Stephen et al, 1999). Symbolic threats are threats to the worldview of the ingroup. These threats are the result of perceived difference in morals, values, standards, ideology, and attitudes. Negative stereotypes are threats that result because of the anticipation or expectation of conflict or unpleasant interactions with outgroup members. All four types of threat can have a profound impact in interactions between both groups and individuals.

Research demonstrates that different social groups perceive different types of threats when faced with intergroup encounters. Stephan, Diaz-Long, and Duran (2000) examined Americans' and Mexicans' attitudes toward one another and found that Americans' anxiety about interacting with Mexicans had less to do with realistic threats and negative stereotypes than with the quality of previous contact. The more favorable the contact the more Americans liked Mexicans. From their perspective Mexicans' attitudes were related to anxiety about interacting with Americans as well as fears of negative stereotypes. In a similar study that examined Whites' and Blacks' attitudes towards each other Stephan and colleagues (2002) found that Black college students' perceptions of realistic threats, symbolic threats, and negative stereotypes were significant predictors of negative racial attitudes towards Whites. For Whites, realistic threats were a stronger predictor of their attitudes towards Blacks. For example, according to Stephan et al., "Whites who felt that Blacks posed a threat to their power and wealth disliked them" (p. 1250). Many of the complaints and outrage over race-based affirmative action policies have been the result of Whites interpreting minority admissions as threats to their own opportunities for advancement (Smith, 1998). Intergroup anxiety and perceived threat are just two cognitive challenges that scholars have hoped could be overcome with increased interaction between racial groups.

## 2.6 **Intergroup Contact Theory**

Social psychologists have long-suggested that through increased contact between racial groups, particularly between Blacks and Whites, more positive attitudes will result and prejudice and stereotypes can be reduced (Allport, 1954). In order for such a transformation to take place, a set of conditions must be met. These include, sustained, rather than episodic contact, equal status, authoritative support, and shared goals. Critics have determined that such conditions are

rarely all met (Jackman & Crane, 1986). Additionally, scholars have debated whether contact *per se* promotes positive intergroup attitudes and hence, positive interpersonal relations (Ting-Toomey, 1986; Powers and Ellison, 1995). Scholars have found that negative contact, specifically between Blacks and Whites, can result in the perception of more realistic threats, symbolic threats and intergroup anxiety (Stephan et al., 2002).

Pettigrew (1998) has provided the most recent reformulation of what has now come to be known as intergroup contact theory. Pettigrew's re-conceptualization of intergroup contact theory builds on both theoretical and empirical literature that has addressed the role of intergroup anxiety, perceived threat, social institutions, and norms in shaping intergroup attitudes and encounters. Pettigrew conceptualized four interrelated processes through which attitudes and behavior change with contact: learning about the outgroup, changing behavior, generating effective ties, and ingroup reprisal (p. 70).

Learning about outgroup members can correct negative perceptions and should reduce prejudice, but the results are inconclusive as to its overall effect. Pettigrew states that changing behavior is "often the precursor to attitude change," but as this is dependent on the first process, and results have been inconclusive, it is unclear as to how behavioral changes can be initiated. Another process is generating affective ties through the reduction of anxiety. Anxiety can spark negative reactions without the presence of intergroup prejudice. The emotion that Pettigrew identifies as important in intergroup contact is empathy because empathy toward a stigmatized outgroup member can improve attitudes towards the whole group. Essentially, positive interpersonal interaction leads to positive intergroup relations. Lastly, ingroup reappraisal refers to having less contact with the ingroup as a result of contact with the out-group.

Pettigrew also offers a fifth condition to Allport's contact hypothesis: "the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends" (p. 76). According to Pettigrew, "such opportunity implies close interaction that would make self-disclosure and other friendship-developing mechanisms possible. It also implies that the potential for extensive and repeated contact in a variety of social contexts" (p. 74). Pettigrew's contribution to contact theory is significant because it actually suggests a means through which behavior can be changed.

Research addressing the issue of contact remains relevant mainly due to the rapid transition of neighborhoods from moderately diverse to highly segregated communities. Sociologists explain racial and ethnic segregation in residential areas as either the result of socioeconomic differences and/or prejudice and discrimination (Iceland and Wilkes, 2006). Whatever the cause, segregation in one's neighborhood often means that the primary and secondary schools in that neighborhood are also segregated, thereby limiting individuals' early opportunities for intergroup interactions. Mouw and Entwistle (2006) analyzed the effect of residential segregation on friendship patterns of middle and high schools students and found that students were more likely to select friends who were of the same race and lived within the boundaries of their own neighborhoods. As in other research, Mouw and Entwistle's study lends credence to the idea that spatial proximity, or propinquity, plays a large role in the friendship selection process. It is clear that residential segregation limits or restricts opportunities for interracial contact, which could potentially lead to interracial ties. With little to no sustained contact, how can intergroup misunderstandings and misperceptions be remedied?

In summary, research literature indicates that Black students' racial identification, academic performance, and intergroup interactions in the college setting are framed by multiple



cognitive and social factors that can influence their adjustment to college life. What is missing from the literature is an examination of how these psychological, and social components combine with organizational factors that potentially enhance students' ingroup ties and increase anxiety around academic performance and intergroup interaction. This thesis aims to fill in this gap in the research literature.

### 3. FOCUS OF THE STUDY

#### 3.1 Summary

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between Black college students' participation in segregated student support programs and/or in Black student organizations, and their perception of negative meta-stereotypes, which may affect students' academic performance and social interactions with Whites. Additionally, this study examines centrality of race for the students in these programs and organizations, which may affect their social interactions with Whites.

#### 3.2 Conceptual Definitions

##### 3.2.1 Negative Meta-stereotypes

*Negative meta-stereotypes* are defined as negative attributes that Blacks' perceive that Whites attribute to them as a group. These include, but are not limited to, the assumptions that all or most Blacks are violent, criminals, lack intelligence, lazy, etc. These and other negative stereotypes have been found to be recurring responses in previous research (e.g. Sigleman & Tuch, 1997; Torres & Charles, 2004).

##### 3.2.2 Social Interaction

For the purpose of this study, *social interaction* refers to opportunities for Black students to communicate and interact with Whites socially in an environment outside of the classroom. The sole purpose of this interaction is to build relationship ties.

##### 3.2.3 Racial Centrality

Sellers and his colleagues (1998) define *racial centrality* as the “significance that individuals attach to race in defining themselves” (p. 24). The difference from racial identity salience, discussed earlier in the review of the literature, is that racial centrality is stable across

situations; it is the degree to which individuals hold their race to be the foremost definition of their identity above all other social identities.

### 3.3 **Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Rationale**

#### 3.3.1 **Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1**

At an early age, Blacks “are socialized to understand how others perceive ‘people like them’ and how they may expect to be treated as a result” (Torres and Charles, 2004, p. 116). As such, Black students enter college with a pre-existing set of meta-stereotypes, which originate from sources like family, peers, mass media, life experience, etc. There has been limited research on Blacks’ meta-stereotypes thus far. The research of Sigelman and Tuch (1997) and Torres and Charles (2004)—which both found that Blacks’ meta-stereotypes are mostly negative and include beliefs about Blacks as unintelligent, lazy, and violent—provide valuable insight into Blacks’ beliefs of what Whites think about members of their racial group. However, there is still more to that can be understood about the content of Blacks’ meta-stereotypes, therefore the following general research questions and hypothesis are put forward.

RQ<sub>1a</sub>: What are Black students’ meta-stereotypes?

RQ<sub>1b</sub>: Are Black students’ meta-stereotypes negative or positive?

H<sub>1</sub>: Black students’ meta-stereotypes are likely to be more negative than positive.

#### 3.3.2 **Research Question 2 Hypothesis 2**

Previous research indicates that race is often a significant factor in the friendship choices of Blacks, especially when racial identity salience is high, even in contexts where there are opportunities for diverse interactions (Mollica, et al., 2003). Additionally, students who participate in predominantly Black student organizations are more likely to experience a higher

degree of racial centrality than Black students who do not participate in these organizations.

Thus, the following research question and hypothesis are posed.

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Do students who participate in SSSP and/or BSO have a higher degree of racial centrality than current non-participants in either?

H<sub>2</sub>: Students who participate in SSSP and/or BSO have a higher degree of racial centrality than Black students who currently do not participate in either.

### 3.3.3 **Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3**

Students are likely to join BSO in order to feel more connected to other Black students on campus (Guiffrida, 2003; Torres & Charles, 2004). Students who participate in these organizations are likely to have more racially homogenous friendship networks. Although segregated student support programs have not been studied in the same depth as BSO, they too are voluntary organizations that provide Black students with opportunities to interact on multiple fronts: academically, socially, and culturally. The following general question and hypothesis are posited:

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Do students who participate in SSSP and/or BSO have more racially homogeneous friendship networks than Black students who do not currently participate in either?

H<sub>3</sub>: Students who participate in SSSP's and/or BSO will have more racially homogeneous friendship networks than Black students who do not currently participate in either.

### 3.3.4 **Research Question 4**

Research on BSO demonstrates that one the primary reasons for joining such groups is for comfort (Guiffrida, 2003). Essentially these organizations, (and I argue SSSP as well) provide participants with opportunities to meet and form relationships. Simply based on proximity, individuals are more likely to form friendships with those with whom they have close contact. Additionally, the more frequently students participate in Black-oriented programs and

organizations, the less opportunities to they have to interact with non-Black students. The following questions are posed.

RQ<sub>4a</sub>: To what extent do current and past participants in SSSP and/or BSO agree that these organizations or groups limit their opportunities to interact socially with students from different racial groups?

RQ<sub>4b</sub>: To what extent do current and past participants in SSSP and/or BSO agree that these organizations or groups increase the number of Black students in their circle of friends?

### 3.3.5 **Research Question 5 and Hypothesis 4**

As stated earlier, Black students, and Blacks in general, are largely aware of negative stereotypes that have been attributed to them by Whites (Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Torres & Charles, 2004). The accuracy of these beliefs or perceptions has been supported by research on the stereotypes that Whites hold of Blacks. For this reason it is reasonable to assume that students' pre-college experience with contact with Whites, or lack there of, will have an impact on Black students' meta-stereotypes. Thus, the following research question is put forward:

RQ<sub>5</sub>: Do Black students with less pre-college intergroup contact have more negative meta-stereotypes than those with more pre-college intergroup contact?

H<sub>4</sub>: There will be no significant difference in reported negative meta-stereotypes between Black students who have had less pre-college intergroup contact and those who have had more pre-college intergroup contact.

### 3.3.6 **Research Question 6 Hypothesis 5**

As noted in the review of the literature, Black college students experience various levels of anxiety resulting from their perception that Whites have stereotyped them as unintelligent. Some students internalize this stereotype and it negatively impacts their academic performance, or their anxiety about their academic performance. It is theorized that students in SSSP may feel self-conscious about requiring additional academic support on campus, and this may heighten their thinking that other students view their academic ability as inadequate—even if other

students, particularly Whites, are not aware of their receiving additional support. It is for this reason that the following question and hypothesis are offered:

RQ<sub>6</sub>: Is there a relationship between Black students' perception of what Whites think of Blacks' intellectual ability and academic performance anxiety?

H<sub>5</sub>: There will be a positive relationship between Black students' perception of what Whites think of Blacks intellectual ability and academic performance anxiety.

### 3.3.7 **Research Question 7 and Hypothesis 6**

As noted by researchers, intergroup interactions are often met with some level of anxiety (Gudykunst, 1993; Gudykunst and Shapiro, 1996). This anxiety is often rooted in an inability to predict communication outcomes due to uncertainty. When faced with preconceived notions of what individual outgroup members perceive to be true about an individual's ingroup it is likely that intergroup anxiety is affected. Stephen et al., (2002) have stated that "when outgroup members are stereotyped as aggressive, untrustworthy, or unintelligent, ingroup members may feel threatened by the prospect of interacting with them" (p. 1244). However, it is also likely that when Blacks are negatively stereotyped their consciousness of those stereotypes impact their own willingness to interact with Whites. The following question and hypothesis are posited:

RQ<sub>7</sub>: Is there a relationship between Black students perception of negative stereotypes held by Whites about Blacks and intergroup anxiety?

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a positive relationship between Black students perception of negative stereotypes held by Whites about Blacks and intergroup anxiety.

## **4. METHOD**

### **4.1 Design**

An online survey, hosted by Surveygizmo.com, was used to collect responses for this study. [See APPENDIX A]

### **4.2 Setting**

The University of Illinois, at Chicago (UIC) is a public institution located in a large urban center. The university has defined itself as one of the most diverse campuses in the nation. In the fall of 2008 it had an undergraduate population of 15,648. African American, or Black students comprised of 8.6 percent (n= 1,343) of the total population. The largest racial/ethnic minority groups are Asian students (22.8%), followed closely by Hispanic students (17.1%).

### **4.3 Sample**

#### **4.3.1 Selection Criteria**

Because this research was primarily focused on the beliefs and social and academic experiences of Black students, Black undergraduates at UIC were selected as the target group. The only requirements given to the potential participants were that they be at least 18 years or older, currently enrolled at UIC, and African American.

#### **4.3.2 Selection Strategy**

Using a snowball method of recruitment, an email [APPENDIX B] was sent to Black students by the researcher asking them to participate and pass along the email. Additionally, contacts and peers who taught classes were asked to disperse the email to their students. To provide an incentive for participation in the research, participants were offered an opportunity to enter to win one of four \$25 Target gift cards.

#### 4.4 **Instrumentation**

##### 4.4.1 **Meta-stereotypes**

In order to gather information on participants' metastereotypes, two techniques were used. First, participants were asked to respond to one open-ended that prompted respondents to indicate words or short phrases associated with what Whites think of Blacks. The purpose of this question was to understand what comes to mind for Blacks without being prompted by specific words or phrases. This technique avoids cuing either positive or negative responses. A variation of this technique was used in Torres and Charles's (2004) research within the context of focus groups. Secondly, three questions were asked that required respondents to express their attitudes, on a 7-point Likert scale, about their overall impression of Whites perception of Blacks (1= Extremely Negative to 7= Extremely Positive), and the degree to which they felt that Whites think of Blacks as unintelligent or intelligent (1= Strongly Disagree to 7= Strongly Agree).

##### 4.4.2 **Racial Centrality**

The centrality subscale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) (Sellers et al., 1997) was used to assess respondents' racial centrality. The MIBI was derived from the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) (Seller et al., 1998). The centrality scale consists of 10 items that evaluate the extent to which being Black is central to the respondents' self-definition. Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements using a 7-point scale. The subscales of the MIBI have had an adequate internal consistency in samples of Black college students with alpha coefficients ranging from .67 to .81 (Chavous, 2000). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .81.



#### 4.4.3 Intergroup anxiety

A modified Intergroup Anxiety Scale developed by Stephen et al. (2002) was adapted for this study. The measure consisted of 12 items that asked respondents how they would feel when interacting with members of other racial groups. Due to the specific interest in the nature of Black students' anxiety towards interactions with White students, the prompt was "For each of the items listed below, indicate, how you would feel when interacting with White students on campus in social situations outside of a classroom environment (e.g. at a party, or other social gathering)." The anxiety-related terms used are: uncertain, worried, awkward, anxious, threatened, nervous, comfortable, trusting, friendly, confident, safe, and at ease. Responses were set to a 10-point scale ranging from "not at all" to "extremely." In this study, the intergroup anxiety inventory was found to have high reliability ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

#### 4.4.4 Friendship networks

A measure was developed to measure the amount of racial diversity in respondents' social networks. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of closest friends from four racial groups: Blacks, Whites, Latinos, and Asians. A "close friend" was defined as someone whom they would have over to their house for dinner.

#### 4.4.5 Academic Performance Anxiety

A scale that measures the performance anxiety of students resulting from stereotype threat was adopted and modified from a version used by Massey and Fischer (2005). The performance burden scale which measures students' anxiety about academic performance has 8-items, but one item was omitted because it asked for students' awareness of how Asian students perceived them, and was not necessary for this study. Also, the wording of two items was changed from past tense to present tense (i.e., "How self-conscious were you about the way that

White students perceived you” was changed to “How self-conscious are you about the way that White students perceive you”). Both measures were based on a scale on 0-10 with 0 indicating total disagreement and 10 indicating total agreement. The modified performance anxiety scale was found to be moderately reliable ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

#### **4.4.6 Participation in Student Support Service Programs and/Black Student**

##### **Organizations**

Two closed-ended questions were asked to gather information on students’ involvement in AAAN and Black Student Organizations. Respondents that answered “yes” to either question were then asked to respond to a 6-item measure that inquired into whether these organizations have helped participants increase the number of Black students in their social networks and whether they have provided them with opportunities to interact socially with members from other racial groups. Initially the scale had a low Cronbach’s alpha of .55. After removing several items<sup>1</sup> to increase reliability, the Cronbach’s alpha was .66.

#### **4.4.7 Background Demographics**

Information was collected on participants’ class year, gender, family income, racial-make up of their high school and neighborhood, and high school GPA. Racial composition of high school and neighborhood was used as an indicator of pre-college intergroup contact.

#### **4.4.8 Academic Performance**

Students were asked to report their current college GPA.

#### **4.5 Procedure**

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<sup>1</sup> The items deleted were as follows: “Involvement in AANN and/or BSO have not helped me to increase the number of Black students in my circle of friends” and “Involvement in AANN and/or BSO have not made it less likely to interact with non-Blacks on campus.”

During a 3-month period in the spring of 2010, participants were recruited via email to take part in an online survey. Reminder emails were sent out to potential participants once every two to three weeks. The email supplied potential participants with a detailed description of the research and provided them with the web link to access the survey at SurveyGizmo.com. After completion of the survey, participants were prompted to send the researcher an email if they wanted to enter the drawing for one of four \$25 Target gift cards.

#### 4.6 **Preliminary Analysis**

Missing data was identified, coded using the number 99, and identified as system missing. After checking for frequency distribution, measures of central tendency and dispersion, there was no need to perform transformations; thus composite variables were formed for specific scales.

##### 4.6.1 **Composite Variables**

A composite variable consisting of the 2-items from the meta-stereotype scale was created. First, the item "intelligent" was reverse coded, and then scores were totaled, and averaged with the item "unintelligent." The result was a scale ranging from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with unintelligent as a stereotype that Whites have about Blacks, and 7 representing strong agreement.

The 5-items in the Performance Anxiety Scale had a range of values from 0 to 10. A composite was created by first by summing, and then averaging the items in the scale. A separate variable was then created which categorized scores as high, moderate, or low. Scores ranging from 6.6 to 10 were identified as high, scores from 6.5 to 4.6 were coded as moderate, and scores 4.5 and below were categorized as low.

A racial centrality composite was also created after several items were reverse coded<sup>2</sup>, totaled and averaged. The composite meant that scores ranged from between 1 and 7 with 7 indicating high racial centrality and 1 indicating low racial centrality. Additionally, an intergroup composite was created. First, several items were reverse coded<sup>3</sup>, and then scores were totaled, and then averaged. Scores ranged from 10 to 1, with 10 indicating high intergroup anxiety, and 1 indicating low intergroup anxiety.

#### 4.6.2 **Coding of Qualitative Data**

The researcher coded open-ended responses as negative, positive, or neutral based in part on meta-stereotypes and stereotypes found in past research (e.g. Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Torres & Charles, 2004; Fujioka, 1999). For example, meta-stereotypes like ignorant, aggressive, and criminals were coded as negative, while meta-stereotypes like athletic, intelligent, and beautiful were coded as positive. Neutral meta-stereotypes included the words funny, divided, and tall. The number of positive, negative, and neutral stereotypes was then tallied for each participant and inputted into PAWS statistical software for further analysis.

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<sup>2</sup> The following items were reverse coded: “Overall, being black had very little to do with how I feel about myself”, “Being black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am”, and “Being black in not a major factor in my social relationships.”

<sup>3</sup> The following items from the Intergroup Anxiety Scale were reverse coded: uncertain, awkward, anxious, worried, and threatened.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Sample Size and Composition

The snowball sample consisted of 49 Black undergraduate students currently enrolled at UIC. The sample was 79% female ( $N=38$ ) and 21% male ( $N=10$ ), with one participant not coded. The average age of participants was 23.4 ( $SD= 7.25$ ), with a range of from 18 to 58. The mean grade point average (GPA) for the sample was 2.97 ( $SD= .499$ ). The sample was classified into three distinct groups. Twenty participants (41%) used SSSP and/or BSO in the past (past participants), but were not currently involved in these organizations, 37% ( $N=18$ ) were currently involved in these organizations (current participants), and 22% ( $N=11$ ) of the students in the sample have never used these organizations (non-participants). Table 1 [Appendix C] represents the differences in age, year in school, GPA, and family income for participants in each group. Table 2 [Appendix D] shows the geographic locations where students were raised, types of high school they attended, and the estimated percentages of black students in their high schools.

Some general observations can be made based on the self-reported data about these three groups. For example, Black students likely to be involved in SSSP and/or BSO are relatively younger than those who have not participated, are generally in an earlier stage of their academic career, and have lower grade point averages than students who are not in these organizations. Additionally, Black students involved in such organizations either currently or in the past went to high schools where the black student population was between 25-50 percent. By contrast, black students that have never been involved in these organizations ( $N=11$ ) went to high schools that were less racially diverse; 10-24 percent students ( $M= 2.36$ ,  $SD= 1.29$ ) were black.

## 5.2 **Research Question 1a, 1b and Hypothesis 1**

RQ<sub>1a</sub> asked about Black students' meta-stereotypes. Using the three meta-stereotype dimensions (e.g. social pathologies, racial inferiority, and positive image) outlined by Sigelman and Tuch (1997), and adding two additional dimensions (i.e. physical attributes and other character attributes), students' self-reported meta-stereotypes were classified in Table 3 [Appendix E]. The racial inferiority dimension is where students generated the most meta-stereotypes. These included the perception that Whites think of Blacks as inferior, ghetto, ignorant, incompetent, and unmotivated. As for social pathologies, Blacks think that Whites perceive them as drug dealers, murderers, cheaters, and welfare dependent. Positive images of Blacks were limited, but included such attributes as brave, courageous, and spiritual. Both the physical attribute and other character attribute dimensions were relatively small, but included beliefs that Whites think of Blacks as tall, athletic, sassy, intimidating, and rude.

Next, the reported meta-stereotypes were counted for frequency of appearance. Table 4 [Appendix F] outlines Black students' most frequently reported meta-stereotypes. The top eleven reported meta-stereotypes were that Blacks are loud, ignorant, lazy, ghetto, poor, inferior, dumb, athletic, violent, criminals, and strong.

Finally, using the categorization of stereotypes in past research (e.g. Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Charles & Torres, 2004; Fujioka, 1999) as a guide, the meta-stereotypes were classified by the researcher as positive, negative, or neutral. H<sub>1</sub> posited that Black students' meta-stereotypes would be significantly more negative than positive. An independent sample t-test was performed to examine if there was a significant difference between the number of negative and positive meta-stereotypes reported. The results indicate a significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) between the

number of negative meta-stereotypes ( $M= 6.18$ ,  $SD= 2.68$ ), and positive meta-stereotypes ( $M= .76$ ,  $SD= .947$ ) reported by participants. Thus,  $H_1$  is supported.

### 5.3 **Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2**

RQ<sub>2</sub> inquired into whether there is a difference in racial centrality amongst students who participate in SSSP and/or BSO and those who do not participate in either.  $H_2$  predicted that students in SSSP and/or BSO would have higher racial centrality than non-participants. Because three groups emerged from the analysis (current participants, past participants, and non-participants) a one-way ANOVA was performed to test if there was a significant difference between the three groups in regards to racial centrality. The three groups did not differ significantly,  $F(2, 45)= 1.873$ ,  $p=.13$ .

Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicate that past participants had higher racial centrality scores ( $M= 5.05$ , 95% CI [-.904, 1.57]) than current participants ( $M= 4.37$ , 95% CI [-1.61, .465]) but this difference was not significant,  $p = .16$ . Comparisons between students who have never been involved in SSSP and/or BSO ( $M= 4.95$ , 95% CI [-1.11, 1.61]) and the other two groups was also not significant,  $p= .38$ . These results indicate that, as a group, current students involved in SSSP and/or BSO have lower racial centrality than past participants and non-participants, thus  $H_2$  is not supported. In other words, racial identity is over-determined and ceiling effects prevent membership in these organizations from turning up significant differences among the groups.

### 5.4 **Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3**

RQ<sub>3</sub> asked about the racial composition of Black students' friendship networks, and  $H_2$  posited that students who participate in SSSP and/or BSO would have more racially homogeneous friendship networks than Black students who do not currently participate in either.

On average, students reported twice as many Black ( $M= 6.09$ ,  $SD= 4.03$ ) as White friends ( $M= 3.04$ ,  $SD=4.39$ ). Additionally, there were more Latino friends in students' networks ( $M= 3.65$ ,  $SD=8.68$ ) than Asian friends ( $M= 1.90$ ,  $SD= 2.66$ ).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to see if there was a significant difference in the composition of participants' social network based on their participation or non-participation in SSSP or BSO. Table 5 [Appendix G] represents the differences between the groups with respect to Black, White, Asian, and White friends. Between groups, there were no significant differences between the number of Black friends,  $F(2, 44)= .445$ ,  $p= .644$ ., and Latino friends  $F(2, 45)= 2.13$ ,  $p= .131$ , in Black students' social networks. However, there were significant differences between the groups in regards to the number of White friends  $F(2, 45)= 7.05$ ,  $p=.002$ , and Asian friends  $F(2, 45)= 7.38$ ,  $p= .002$  in Black students' social networks. Students that have never participated in SSSP and/or BSO have significantly more White and Asian friends as revealed through the Tukey post-hoc comparison.

Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicate the students who have never participated in SSSP and/or BSO ( $M= 7.00$ , 95% CI [1.28, 12.72]) have over six times more White friends in their social networks than those who currently participate in these groups and organizations ( $M= 1.28$ , 95% CI [.58, 1.98]). This difference is significant at  $p= .002$ . There was also a significant difference ( $p= .017$ ) between those who participated in SSSP and/or BSO in the past ( $M= 2.65$ , 95% CI [1.70, 3.60]) and those who have never been in these organizations ( $M= 7.00$ , 95% CI [1.28, 12.72]). In other words, non-participants claim to have significantly more White friends in their social networks compared to both past and current participants in SSSP and/or BSO.

Additionally, further Tukey post-hoc comparison showed a significant difference between



groups in the number of Asian friends in Black students' social networks. Black students who are currently involved in SSSP and/or BSO have significantly fewer Asian friends ( $M = .94$ , 95% CI [.32, 1.57]) than those who have never participated in these organizations ( $M = 4.40$ , 95% CI [1.31, 7.49]),  $p = .002$ . The latter group also has significantly more Asian friends than Black students who have used SSSP and BSO in the past ( $M = 1.50$ , 95% CI [.70, 2.30]), with a significance of  $p = .007$ . Put clearly, students in this sample who have never participated in SSSP and/or BSO have significantly more Asian friends in their social networks compared to current and past participants. In summary, students who are not members of these organizations have more racially diverse social networks.

Further descriptive analysis shows that on average ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ) students who have never been involved in SSSP and/or BSO ( $N = 11$ ) attended schools where only 10-24 percent of the student population was black. These students were likely to have more White and Asian students in their social networks compared to current ( $N = 17$ ) and past ( $N = 20$ ) students who went to high schools where the black population was between 25-50 percent. It is possible that prior contact with White and Asian students in high school has influenced the number of White and Asian students in social networks of Black students that have never used SSSP and/or BSO.

### 5.5 **Research Questions 4a and 4b**

RQ<sub>4a</sub> asked whether participation in SSSP and BSO would limit students' opportunities to interact with students from different racial groups. Both current and past participant groups agree that SSSP and/or BSO have not provided them with opportunities to interact socially with students from other racial groups. There was not a significant difference ( $p = .70$ ) between current participants ( $M = 5.18$ ,  $SD = 2.22$ ) and past participants ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 2.18$ ). Additionally, both groups strongly agree that current ( $M = 5.76$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) and/or past ( $M = 6.05$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ )

involvement in these groups have made them less likely to interact socially with non-Black students on campus. However, the difference in agreement between the two groups was not statistically significant ( $p = .59$ ).

RQ<sub>4b</sub> inquired into whether participation in SSSPs and BSOs increase the number of Black students in an individual's friendship network. Current participants are rather uncertain ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ) as to whether involvement in SSSP and/or BSO has helped to increase the number of Black students in their circle of friends, while past participants firmly agree ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ) that involvement had helped to increase the number of Blacks in their circle of friends. The difference between the two groups was not statistically significant,  $t(34) = -1.169$ ,  $p = .25$ .

#### 5.6 **Research Question 5 and Hypothesis 4**

RQ<sub>5</sub> asked whether Black students with less pre-college intergroup contact have more negative meta-stereotypes than those with more pre-college intergroup contact. It was hypothesized that there would be no difference in reporting of negative meta-stereotypes based on pre-college intergroup contact. Using data collected about high school composition, and the number of negative meta-stereotypes reported by each student, descriptive statistical analysis shows that those students who went to high schools where under 10% of the population was Black ( $N = 10$ ), reported more negative meta-stereotypes ( $M = 7.40$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ) than Black students who went to schools where 10-24 percent of students were Black ( $M = 6.17$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ,  $N = 6$ ), where 25-50 percent were Black ( $M = 6.50$ ,  $SD = 2.71$ ,  $N = 10$ ) and where over 50 percent of students were Black ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 2.94$ ,  $N = 22$ ). However, an ANOVA test indicated no significant differences in negative meta-stereotypes amongst students who went to high schools

with less opportunities for intergroup contact and those who went to high schools that were more racially diverse,  $F(2, 44) = 1.28, p = .293$ . Thus,  $H_4$  is supported.

#### 5.7 **Research question 6 and Hypothesis 5**

RQ<sub>6</sub> asked if there is a relationship between Black students' perception of what Whites think of Blacks' intellectual ability and academic performance anxiety.  $H_4$  stated that there would be a positive relationship between Black students' perception of what Whites think of their intellectual ability and academic performance anxiety. A Pearson's  $r$  product moment correlation test was performed. The results indicate that there is an insignificant, weak positive relationship between academic performance anxiety and the negative meta-stereotype about Blacks' intelligence,  $r = .218, p = .15$ .  $H_4$  is partially supported.

#### 5.8 **Research Question 7 and Hypothesis 6**

RQ<sub>7</sub> inquired into the relationship between Black students' perception of negative stereotypes held by Whites about Blacks and intergroup anxiety.  $H_5$  posited that there would be a positive relationship between Black students' overall perception of what Whites think about Blacks and intergroup anxiety. The results of a Pearson's  $r$  product moment correlation test indicate that there is a positive significant relationship between intergroup anxiety and Black student's overall perception of Whites' beliefs about members of their group ( $r = .34, p = .03$ ). Thus,  $H_6$  is supported.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Summary

Similar to previous research (e.g. Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Charles & Torres, 2004) which found that Blacks hold generally negative views of what Whites think about them, the Black students at UIC share similar perspectives. Specifically, the Black students surveyed for this study perceived that Whites hold stereotypes that they are loud, ignorant, lazy, “ghetto,” poor, and inferior. Many of the metastereotypes articulated by Black students fit into the three metastereotype dimensions developed by Sigelman and Tuch—social pathologies (e.g. drug dealers, criminals, thieves, etc.), racial inferiority (e.g. victimized, gullible, illiterate, etc.), as well as positive images (e.g. friendly, strong, talented, etc.). However, other dimensions also emerged, including a category with physical attributes, and other character attributes, such as Blacks being rude, intimidating, and frightening.

There were several other significant findings from this study. First, this study found no significant differences in racial centrality amongst the three groups of students surveyed. In fact, racial centrality was relatively moderate on average amongst the three groups, thus its significance as a contributing factor in determining the nature of Black students involvement in SSSP and/or BSO cannot be clearly determined. Past, current, and non-participants did differ on factors such as students’ age, year in school, as well as the racial composition of their high school.

Secondly, a key finding in this study involved the differences in number of Asian and White friends in Black students’ social networks. Students that have never participated in SSSP and/or BSO had significantly more White and Asian friends in their social networks compared to current and past participants in these organizations. Upon further analysis, it was discover that

these students with more diverse social networks attended schools with a relatively small black population, and thus they interacted more frequently with non-black students. This particular finding highlights the potential impact of prior exposure to intergroup relations has on later development of interracial friendships in college.

As predicted, pre-college intergroup contact did not impact the number of negative meta-stereotypes reported by Black students. In fact, students with more intergroup contact reported more negative stereotypes than those who presumably had less opportunity for intergroup contact in high school. This finding is similar to what Sigelman and Tuch (1997) discovered in their research. These findings suggest that Black students in general, regardless of their intergroup interactions with Whites, continue to hold mostly negative views about what Whites think about them. According to the findings in this study, these perceptions of negative stereotypes have a positive relationship to Black students' intergroup anxiety indicating that regardless of the number of White friends in students' social networks, they continue to have a certain level of anxiety when faced with interactions with Whites.

Finally, a finding that is central to the overall aim of this study, which was to determine the extent to which segregated student support programs and Black Student Organizations are counterproductive to the aims of the university, is that both past and current participants strongly agreed that SSSP and/or BSO have made them less likely to interact with non-Black students on campus. Although the effect of involvement in SSSP and/or BSO on the diversity of Blacks students' social networks cannot be drawn based on the data collected here, it can be noted that such organizations do not aid in the formation of ties outside the racial group that is served.

## 6.2 **Limitations**

There were a number of limitations to this study, including, but not limited to, the means of recruitment, and method of data collection. The snowball method was employed because the population of African American or Black students on campus at UIC is relatively small compared to that of other groups. Soliciting participants through means of email yielded very little response. Because the snowballing method relied heavily on the participation of those contacted to be first willing to participate and secondly, willing to pass on the information to their peers, the data was not collected as quickly as anticipated. For this reason, the initial estimation of participants of 200 was not achieved.

Although the data presented here does reflect some interesting insights into some of the Black student populations' beliefs, intergroup anxiety, and social and academic experiences at UIC, it is relatively limited in scope. Due to the overall response rate, and sample size, limited conclusions can be made based on the data set. The ability to generalize the conclusions either broadly, or specifically to the UIC Black student population is also limited. Additionally, the quantitative nature of this study does not provide any additional insights that could help answer several lingering questions with regard to Black students' experiences on a relatively diverse campus that maintains programs that continue to be segregated. A qualitative study that employs interviews and/or focus groups, would be fruitful in teasing out additional variables to these students' experiences that are not offered here.

The limitation of time and scope of this research much also be considered. By surveying a wider population of studies, at a specific time in a semester, without subsequent follow-up in either future semesters or later in students' careers at UIC, the findings here do not offer the possibility that Black students' experiences may change over time. Thus, particularly as it

pertains to the development of social relationships across racial lines, it might be most beneficial for a future project to not only be multi-methodological in nature, but also longitudinal in scope. In other words, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to chart students' attitudes, friendship networks, and variables that may account for any increase or decrease in negative meta-stereotypes.

### 6.3 **Implications for Future Research**

There are several important findings from this research that should be further explored. First, the content of Blacks meta-stereotypes continues to be of particular importance. During a time when we are said to have entered a post-racial society, the valence of Blacks' meta-stereotypes, and Whites' affirmation of them, will be just one telling marker that demonstrates the prevalence of perceived racial difference. Secondly, as previous research has recommended, future research should continue to monitor the level of intergroup contact between students at racially and ethnically diversifying institutions of higher learning. It is amongst these students that researchers can chart the growth or absence of intergroup contact and communication, and subsequently strengthen theory about group relations amongst ethnic and racial groups.

A question that arose as a result of this research is the extent to which Black students' perceptions about what Whites think about them can be attributed to their own experiences with Whites, or other Blacks' experiences with Whites. In other words, are Black students reporting more negative meta-stereotypes because they think Whites view members of their group in that way, or because they believe that the majority of blacks perceive that Whites view them in that way? When thinking about the Black community in general in speaking of racial perceptions and race relations, is there a separation of the two perspectives—the "I" versus the "We" or "Us"? If

not, how might such an interconnected relationship influence reports of meta-stereotypes amongst blacks?

#### 6.4 **Conclusion**

The findings from this research, while limited, demonstrate the need to look deeper into the impact of segregated student support programs and Black student organizations in order to evaluate the impact that they have on aiding UIC in achieving its goal of diversifying interaction between racial and ethnic groups on campus. Although SSSP and BSO have significant value for Black students—who often enter both predominately White institutions and self-proclaimed “diverse” institutions expecting specific academic challenges and social concerns—their current construction does not lend easily to interaction between Black students and other groups on campus. Diversity in higher education—which often comes in the form of numerical representation of various ethnic and racial groups—is important, but if it does not aid in increasing intergroup contact in sustained and meaningful ways, or does not help to alter pre-conceived notions that groups have about others, then institutions like UIC are only providing the appearance of “diversity.”

There is much a stake for universities such as UIC. If African Americans students continue to perceive that Whites view them through a negative lens, how can there be true progress both academically and socially at such institutions? Given the current social and political climate where the question of whether the United States is ideologically “post-race” and “post-racism” the findings offered here suggest that certain groups of individuals continue to have anxiety about the ways that they may be viewed by others on the basis of race. Racially diverse campuses such as can UIC play a pivotal role in reshaping these groups anxiety through continuing the build an atmosphere that seeks to provide academic and social support that not



only fosters African American students ingroup identity, but also brings them together with members of other racial groups for the purpose of truly collaborative community building.

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## **APPENDICES**



## APPENDIX A

### ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

#### Informed Consent Message

I have been invited to take part in a research study being conducted to understand African American students' racial identification, beliefs about what other students think of them both socially and academically, and the impact of their identification and beliefs on their college experience. I understand that Dayna E. Chatman is conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Andrew Rojecki, Department of Communication at the University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC).

I am at least 18 years of age and a current undergraduate student at UIC.

The online survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. I recognize that I can choose to abort the survey at any time, and for any reason, with no penalties. I also recognize that if I am unable or unwilling to answer a question for any reason I have the right to skip that question. I understand that participation in this survey is voluntary and confidential. Confidentiality will be safeguarded to the extent that technology will allow. If I wish to participate in a random drawing for one of four \$25 gift cards to be awarded on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, I must follow the directions at the end of the survey and email the primary researcher directly. Neither my email address nor any other identifying information will be linked to my responses.

If I do participate in the study, I recognize that risks to participating in this survey are minimal; it is possible that I may experience some discomfort reading questions about race, since these are questions of a very personal nature and can invoke strong feelings. If this occurs, I recognize that I have the options of skipping questions, or ending the survey. If discomfort persists, I understand that there are services available to me as a student at the UIC Counseling Center and I can contact them by calling (312) 996-3490.

If I have any further questions, concerns, or wish to report a research-related problem, I should contact:

Dayna E. Chatman  
Graduate Student  
Department of Communication

I have carefully read this Consent Form and understand the terms herein. I am fully eligible, capable, and willing to participate in this survey.

By clicking on the link below, you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old and giving your consent to participate in this research.

#### Meta-perception

1) For the following statement please indicate 8 to 10 words, (i.e. smart, short, strong, etc) that first come to your mind.

### APPENDIX A (continued)

White Americans think African Americans or Blacks are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

2) On a scale from 1 -7 1(Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) respond to the following:

Whites think that Blacks are:

Unintelligent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

3) Overall I think that White American's perceptions or beliefs about Black Americans are:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Negative			Neither			Extremely Positive

### Racial Identification

4) On a scale of 1-7, with 1= strongly disagree, and 7= strongly agree, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself.

In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.

My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.

Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.

I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.

I have a strong attachment to other Black people.

Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.

Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.

I feel good about Black people.

I am happy that I am Black.

## APPENDIX A (continued)

## Social Interaction

5) For each of the items listed below, indicate, how you would feel when interacting with White students on campus in social situations outside of a classroom environment. (e.g. at a party, or other social gathering.)

I would feel:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all comfortable									Extremely comfortable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all uncertain									Extremely uncertain
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all confident									Extremely confident
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all awkward									Extremely awkward
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all anxious									Extremely anxious
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all at ease									Extremely at ease
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all worried									Extremely worried
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all threatened									Extremely threatened
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all friendly									Extremely friendly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all safe									Extremely safe
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all at trusting									Extremely trusting

## APPENDIX A (continued)

### Friendships

6) Think of your closest friends. A close friend is someone who you would invite to your home to have a meal with. Below, please indicate the number of close friends you have from each racial group.

Blacks

Whites

Asians

Latinos

### Performance Burden

7) Using the 0–10 scale below, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

If I let my instructors know that I am having difficulty in class, they will think less of me

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total										Total
Disagreement										Agreement

If I let other students know that I am having difficulty in class, they will think less of me

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total										Total
Disagreement										Agreement

If I excel academically, it reflects positively on my racial or ethnic group

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total										Total
Disagreement										Agreement

If I do poorly academically, it reflects negatively on my racial or ethnic group

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total										Total
Disagreement										Agreement

I don't want to look foolish or stupid in class

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total										Total
Disagreement										Agreement

### APPENDIX A (continued)

If I don't do well, people will look down on others like me

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total					Total					
Disagreement					Agreement					

How self-conscious are you about the way that White students perceive you?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not					Extremely					
Conscious at all					Sensitive					

How self-conscious are you about the way that your teachers perceive you?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not					Extremely					
Conscious at all					Sensitive					

### Campus Participation

8) Have you, at any time past or present, utilized services at the African American Academic Network (AAAN)?

Yes  
No

9) Are you currently a member of a Black student organization, such as a Black sorority or Black fraternity, or other Black social group at UIC?

Yes  
No

10) If you answered "Yes" to either of the questions above, please respond to the following statements regarding your participation. Please indicate your level of agreement on a scale of 1-7 with 1(Strongly disagree) to 7(Strongly Agree).

Involvement in AAAN/Black Student Organizations:

Has not provided me with opportunities to interact socially with students from other racial groups.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has not helped me to increase the number of Black students in my circle of friends.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has helped me to form friendships with Black students on campus.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has made me less likely to interact socially with non-Black students on campus.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has provided me with opportunities to interact socially with students from other racial groups.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**APPENDIX A (continued)**

Has helped me to increase the number of Black students in my circle of friends.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**Student Background**

11) How old you were on your last birthday?

\_\_\_\_\_years

12) What is your class rank at UIC?

freshman

sophomore

junior

senior

13) What is your approximate grade point average?

\_\_\_\_\_

14) How would you describe the community where you grew up?

rural

small town

suburban

urban

15) What kind of high school did you attend at the time you graduated?

public

private, religious

private, non-religious

16) What was the African-American makeup of your neighborhood?

under 10 percent

10 – 24 percent

25 - 50 percent

over 50 percent

17) What is your gender?

Female

Male

18) In which of the following ranges does your annual FAMILY income fall?

1 \_\_\_\_\_under \$25,000

2 \_\_\_\_\_\$25,000 - \$35,999

3 \_\_\_\_\_\$36,000 - \$50,999

4 \_\_\_\_\_\$51,000 - \$75, 999

5 \_\_\_\_\_\$76,000 - \$100,000

6 \_\_\_\_\_\$100,000 +

## APPENDIX B

Email Message

RE: Request for participation in online survey

Greetings:

I am currently conducting a research study on African American students' racial identification, beliefs about what other students think of them both socially and academically, and the impact of their identification and beliefs on their college experience. I am looking for African American undergraduate students that are 18 years old or older to participate in an online survey at SurveyGizmo.com (link below). I am sending you this email in hopes that you can participate and/or are willing to forward this email to other African American students whom you know and encourage them to do the same. The goal is to reach as many African American students on campus as possible.

All online survey responses are confidential and will be safeguarded to the extent that technology will allow. Students' names, or any other identifying information will not be identified in the publication of the results. The online-survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, if you wish to participate in a drawing for a \$25 Target gift card you can follow the instructions do enter. Again, your name and email address will remain confidential. The survey period will run from Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 to Friday, April 23, 2010. Winners of the drawing will be notified by email on Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

If you wish to participate you can do so by clicking on the following link or pasting the web address into your browser:

(SurveyGizmo.com link here)

Your participation in any form is greatly appreciated. If you wish to receive more information about this research or know the outcome of the survey, please contact Dayna E. Chatman at dchatm2@uic.edu.

Thank you.

Dayna E. Chatman  
Graduate Student  
Department of Communication

## APPENDIX C

Table 1  
Means and Standard Deviations for Age, Year in School, GPA and Family  
Income, by Group

Group	Total	Age		Year in School		GPA		Family Income*	
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Current Participants	17	20.1	1.31	2.82	.951	2.87	.488	3.81	1.68
Past Participants	20	23.9	6.92	3.45	.759	2.77	.517	2.75	1.45
Non- participants	11	27.5	10.8	3.89	.333	3.27	.303	4.00	1.89

\*Note: An average of 2 indicates an income level of \$25,000-\$35,999, 3 indicates \$36,000-\$50,999, and 4 indicates an income level of \$51,000-\$75,999.



## APPENDIX D

Table 2  
Respondents Geographic Community, Type of High School Attended, and the Estimated Percentage of Black Students in High School

<u>Community</u>	<u>Respondents*</u>	
	<i>N</i>	%
Urban	25	51.0
Suburban	19	39.0
Small Town	2	0.04
Rural	1	0.02
Total	47	90.1
<u>High School</u>	<i>N</i>	%
Public	37	76.0
Private, Non-religious	1	0.02
Private, Religious	10	20.4
Total	48	96.42
<u>Black Students in High School</u>	<i>N</i>	%
Under 10 percent	10	20.4
10-24 percent	6	12.2
25-50 percent	10	20.4
Over 50 percent	22	45.0
Total	48	98.0

\*The number of respondents reporting on these items differs from the total number of responses used in this study ( $N=49$ ).

## APPENDIX E

Table 3 Three Dimensions of Black Students Self-reported Meta-stereotypes	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Social pathologies	drug dealers, gangsters, criminals, cheaters, pimps, hoes, thieves, murderers, welfare recipients, whiners, welfare dependent, needy, promiscuous, manipulators
Racial inferiority	inferior, ghetto, discriminated against, victimized, devalued, ignorant, stupid, dumb, incompetent, unintelligent, "slow", gullible, illiterate, misinformed, not smart, niggers, helpless, monkeys, unimportant, unmotivated, envious, lazy, unsociable, disrespectful, pitiful, worthless, wild, violent, threatening, intimidating, loud, frightening, intolerable
Positive image	intelligent, brave, hardworking, strong*, friendly, good a sports, talented, out-going, spiritual, courageous, fighters, easy going, athletic, good citizens, cool, awesome, progressing
Physical Attributes	well endowed, tall, athletic, fast, black, dirty, big, have huge butts, attractive, strong*
Other Character Attributes	rude, sassy, intimidating, entertaining, frightening, angry, self-absorbed

\*Note: strong could mean mental or physical strength.

## APPENDIX F

Table 4  
Black Students' Most Frequently Reported Meta-  
stereotypes\*

<b>Meta-stereotype</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Loud	24
Ignorant	20
Lazy	20
Ghetto	18
Poor	16
Inferior	11
Dumb	10
Athletic	10
Violent	8
Criminals	8
Strong	8
Intimidating	6
Scary	6
Stupid	6
Uneducated	6
Thieves	6
Unintelligent	5
Funny	5
Incompetent	5

\*Note: Total number of unique meta-stereotypes was 176.

## APPENDIX G

Table 5  
Between Group Differences in the Number of White, Black,  
Asian, and Latino Friends in Black Students' Friendship  
Networks

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Number of White Friends	2	7.054	.002*
Number of Black Friends	2	.445	.644
Number of Asian Friends	2	7.382	.002*
Number of Latino Friends	2	2.127	.131

\*significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level

## VITA

NAME	Dayna Earlene Chatman
EDUCATION	<p>PhD, Communication (In Progress) Annenberg School for Communication &amp; Journalism, University of Southern California</p> <p>MA, Communication, with a concentration in Gender and Women's Studies (Exp. 2012) University of Illinois at Chicago</p> <p>BA, Communication, minor in History (2005) Saint Mary's College of California</p>
TEACHING	<p>Annenberg School for Communication &amp; Journalism, University of Southern California; Communication and Culture, 2011 to present</p> <p>Department of Gender and Women's Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago; Global Perspectives on Women and Gender, 2009-2010</p> <p>Department of Communication, University of Illinois at Chicago; Fundamentals of Human Communication (Public Speaking), 2008-2009</p>
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS	<p>Chatman, D. (2010). "Watching race in a post-racial era: A critical exploration of blackness on HBO's <i>True Blood</i>." Presented at the National Communication Association Annual Convention, African American Culture and Communication Division: San Francisco, CA.</p> <p>Chatman, D. (2009). "The gendered workplace: An analysis of gender practices in the fictional workplace of <i>Grey's Anatomy</i>." Presented at the National Communication Association Annual Convention, Student Division: Chicago, IL.</p>
HONORS	<p>Annenberg Fellowship, University of Southern California, 2010-present</p> <p>Lincoln Fellowship, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2007-2008</p>
ACADEMIC SERVICE	Chair, Graduate Student Council, Diversity Committee, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2009-10.

Representative, Graduate Student Council, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2008-10.

Representative, UIC Senate Research Committee, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2008-09.

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Vice Chair-Elect, National Communication Association, Student Division, 2011-Present.

Secretary-Elect, National Communication Association, Student Division, 2010-11.

Reviewer, National Communication Association, Student Division, 2010.