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Race-Class Interactions in Stereotyping

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Race-class Interactions in Stereotyping

(TITLE)

BY

Claudine Hoffman Truong

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Race-class Interactions in Stereotyping
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Running head: STEREOTYPING
Abstract

The present study investigated race and class stereotypes about Whites and African-Americans. The study recruited 160 subjects (eighty White and eighty African-American). Each subject read a brief class and race description of a person, and listed ten adjectives rating how positive or negative they intended the adjective to be. They also had to place themselves in a class and rate the importance of criteria used in that class placement. The study revealed that African-American (A.A.) subjects gave highest ratings to a person described as A.A., and White (W.) subjects gave highest ratings to a person described as W. Furthermore, subjects who were largely middle class gave a person described as middle class higher ratings than a person described as lower class. Finally, the more weight given to beliefs as a criterion in class placement, the more likely a subject would generate adjectives that refer to beliefs when describing a person. However, this was not a strong finding. Overall, the results were consistent with ingroup-outgroup theories.
Race-Class Interactions in Stereotyping

Stereotypes play an important role in human judgment (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). As cognitive structures, stereotypes are overgeneralized beliefs that all members of a group possess certain characteristics. These characteristics may be positive or negative (Conway-Turner, 1995). The function of the stereotype is to rationalize the perceiver's conduct towards that category (Allport, 1954). The stereotype is not only a justificatory device for categorical acceptance or rejection of a group, but also a selective device to maintain simplicity in perception and in thinking. Stereotypes contain organized knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about some human group (Niemann, Jennings, Rozelle, Baxter, & Sullivan, 1994). The perceiver stores this information in memory in a dormant state until it is activated for use (Gilbert & Hixon, 1991). Feldman and Hilterman (1975) found that stereotyping is a subcategory of a more general attribution process. Stereotype attribution followed the same principles as other types of trait attribution. During human development, four levels of stereotyping exist: failure to engage in stereotyping, rigid classification with denial of similarities, stereotyping but recognition of peripheral similarities, and stereotyping but recognition of psychological and systemic similarities (Leahy, 1990). Peripheral concepts are external, observable qualities while psychological concepts are inferred internal qualities. In addition, systemic concepts are derived from the ability to understand that an individual's membership in a group has implications for life-quality opportunities.

People may engage in stereotyping for several reasons.
First, people may use stereotypes by default when alternative information is absent. Also, people may use stereotypes when stereotype-confirming behavior is present. Furthermore, people may rely on stereotypes to protect and enhance their own self-identity (Wilder & Shapiro, 1991). Pratto and Bargh (1991) found that subjects used stereotypes when they had little time to consider the actor's behavior. However, Gilbert et. al (1991) found that the perceiver must have enough time to process dormant information stored in memory in order to activate stereotypes.

When stimulus information about a group or a member of a group is absent, stereotyping will determine a judgment. However, when the stimulus is unambiguous and relevant to the judgment task, the stimulus information will determine the judgment (Baron, Albright, & Malloy, 1995). In addition, researchers suggest that stereotype-inconsistent information reduces the biasing effect of stereotypes. However, in a study by Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992), subjects rated women whose leadership style was not stereotypically feminine (stereotype-inconsistent) or ambiguous unfavorably compared to male leaders. Regardless of how the subject evaluates the stimulus, researchers found that when inferences were counter-stereotypic, subjects were more likely to perceive the group as having changed. Subjects generalized these inferences to the stereotyped group as a whole. This may facilitate change in the stereotypes about the group (Mackie, Allison, Worth, & Asuncion, 1992). On the other hand, researchers have found that people generally attribute stereotype-inconsistent behavior to external causes and unstable internal causes, and attribute stereotype-consistent behavior to internal stable causes.
Stereotyping (Jackson, Sullivan, & Hodge, 1993). The manner in which a subject evaluates a behavior (positive or negative) also plays a role in the biasing effects of stereotyping. Subjects directed very low levels of derogation toward outgroup actors who engaged in positive behavior that violated stereotype-consistent expectancies. Subjects directed high levels of derogation toward outgroup actors who engaged in stereotype-consistent negative behavior (Linville & Jones, 1980). However, Greenberg and Rosenfield (1979) found that ethnocentric whites derogated the behavior of African-Americans regardless of whether the behavior was positive or negative.

Both stereotype-inconsistent and positive behavior may work together to affect attributions. For example, reactions to a middle class African-American may correspond to reactions to an African-American engaging in positive behavior. Subjects may view the achieved status of being middle class as stereotype-inconsistent (Howard & Pike, 1986).

Several methods have been used in studying stereotypes. In the majority of studies, subjects were asked to give ratings or descriptions of targets (Pratto & Bargh, 1991; Jackson, Sullivan, & Hodge, 1993; Schaller, 1992; Wilder & Shapiro, 1991). Researchers often give subjects an adjective checklist to use when rating or describing targets. In addition, most research on stereotypes uses within-subjects designs.

Class Stereotypes

Whether any given status is achieved or ascribed may determine attributes. Class is generally characterized as an achieved status, and may affect attribution in a different way than an ascribed status such as race (Feldman, 1972). Feldman found
that subjects characterized working class members as being coarse, illiterate, and unintelligent. Subjects viewed members of the middle class as being persistent, foresighted, resourceful, well-dressed, independent, and creative. In a study by Howard and Pike (1986), researchers found that status characteristics can have substantial effects on cognitive reactions to actors. Financial evaluations and possessions related to the most publicly visible activities of a particular group often define the distinctive features of stereotypes (Dittmar, 1994). Material symbols play an important role in structuring a person's perception of various socio-economic groups. People use material possessions to locate other people in a social-material hierarchy and to make stereotypical descriptions of different socio-economic groups. Dittmar found that subjects exaggerated real differences between socio-economic groups and underestimated similarities.

Depending on the stimulus' gender, race, or class, subjects may attribute stereotypes to either situational or dispositional factors (Howard et al., 1986). This is a function of stereotype-based expectancies. Leahy (1990) has found clear cognitive-developmental age trends in explanations of economic inequality. Younger children explained wealth and poverty in terms of differences in possessions, inheritance, or use of money. Older children explained inequality by claiming that rich and poor are different kinds of people and the frequency of this type of explanation increased with age. In a study by Baron et al. (1995), researchers found that when they provided no stimulus information other than SES, subjects rated the high SES target as higher in academic ability than the low SES target. In another study,
subjects attributed more blame to the character of the working class than the middle class actor and evaluated the middle class actor more positively in both an arrest and unemployment situation (Howard et al., 1986). The class background of an actor may also have an effect on the manner in which the perceiver stereotypes him or her. Feldman et al. (1975) found that subjects rated those of working-class background and professional occupation highest on the successful people factor. Also, subjects rated people of working-class occupation and professional background as being more racially stereotypical than any others.

Americans seem to associate occupations with classes in a way that may indicate that they are more sensitive to socioeconomic hierarchies based on occupational prestige, education, skill, income, job authority and task direction than they are to a blue-collar and white-collar dichotomy (Jackman & Jackman, 1983). The criteria that people use to determine class may vary between groups. American men use class labels to reflect actual position in class structure. Mental labor, authority, and ownership determine middle-class placement. However, women use mental labor to determine middle-class placement but do not use authority or self-employment. Furthermore, the African-American perception of middle-class differs from the white perception of middle-class. For African-Americans, the middle class is more broadly defined than the white middle class. African-Americans view middle-class as a nonmaterial ideological phenomenon. The middle-class is defined by behaviors and is independent of the material realities of their lives (Vanneman & Cannon, 1987). However, some studies have found that both races seem to have similar ideas about what.
Stereotyping determines class placement (Jackman et al., 1983; Leahy 1990).

Racial Stereotypes

Another important influence on stereotypes is race. Race is an ascribed status, something the actor does not choose or control. An ascribed status may have a different effect from an achieved status on attributions (Feldman, 1972). Conway-Turner (1995) found that subjects (primarily white females) listed characteristics for African-American males and females that were overwhelmingly negative. Conway-Turner mentioned that the top-ranking source of information on African-American elders for these subjects was from television films and movies that were fictional. The mass media socially supports and continually revives such stereotypes (Allport, 1954).

Stereotypes about African-Americans often characterize them as lazy, superstitious, ignorant, slowmoving, and militant (Feldman, 1972; Stephan and Rosenfield, 1982). Subjects characterized whites as being thrifty, intelligent, industrious, ambitious, neat and clean. Phenice & Griffere (1994) found that in 1992, stereotypes of African and Mexican Americans were less positive and more negative than they were in 1990. People with unfavorable attitudes toward African-Americans rated whites higher than African-Americans on traits such as intelligent, cultured, and well-dressed (Feldman et al., 1975). Such stereotypes are also apparent in children and adolescents. In a study by Lerner & Karson (1972), researchers found that white female and male adolescents held unfavorable attitudes toward African-Americans and favorable attitudes toward whites. Taylor (1996) found that white children held negative stereotypes about African-Americans and that
many African-American children accepted these stereotypes. The older the child was, the more likely he/she was to possess the negative stereotypes.

The educational level of subjects may influence their stereotypes about African-Americans. Subjects who were less educated were both more punitive and more hostile toward African-Americans. Better educated and less punitive subjects were more tolerant and more sympathetic to African-American problems (Hesselbart & Schuman, 1976). However, in a study on European desire for social distance from North African families, the more educated the subjects were, the more the desire for social distance (Schwartz, Link, Dohrenwend, Naveh, Levav, & Shrout, 1991).

**Race-by-class Stereotypes**

Many researchers have examined the effects of both race and class on stereotyping. These statuses are strongly correlated in actual social situations (Howard et al., 1986). However, many studies have found that class controls more variance than race. Bayton, McAlister, and Hamer (1956) suggest that race stereotypes are really an interaction between race and class stereotypes. They found that lower-class status accounted for the historically negative stereotypes of African-Americans, and upper-class status accounted for the previously positive stereotypes of whites. Feldman (1972) found that prejudiced subjects did not stereotype African-American targets more than the nonprejudiced subjects when occupation and social background were varied.

Status attributes never occur in isolation but appear in organized constellations since people occupy more than one status at a time (Landrine, 1985, Bayton et al., 1956). The subject may
subsequently assign traits to this multiple status target. Racial attitudes appear to indirectly influence stereotype attribution through assumptions about social class relevant attributes by subjects with both positive and negative racial attitudes. In many cases, African-Americans are assumed to be working class or lower-class people. This notion has been supported by many studies. In a study by Hesselbart et al. (1976), subjects perceived African-Americans as being worse off than whites. Feldman (1972) found that the African-American stereotype is really a lower-class African-American stereotype. Subjects believed that African-Americans are working-class people. Furthermore, Feldman (1975) found that subjects with negative racial attitudes had a greater tendency than those who were not prejudiced to assume that African-Americans are working class people.

However, in the same study by Feldman et al. (1975), the social background of an African-American stimulus did not significantly affect its ratings. The ratings of a white stimulus changed as a function of social class background. While it is clear that SES determines stereotypes, ethnicity also determines stereotypes even when SES is held constant (Schwartz et al., 1991). In a study by Triandis & Triandis (1960), race created more social distance than class and subjects who expressed the greatest distance from other classes were those who were prejudiced against out-groups in general. Schwartz et al. (1991) found that European subjects desired more social distance from the North African vignette families than from the European vignette families at every educational and occupational level. Even more distance was desired when the North Africans were of low education, more than would be
expected due to ethnicity or education alone. In a study by Ryan
and Sebastian (1980), speakers who were from both another ethnic
group and the lower-class received more negative evaluations than
from either one alone. In addition, on the social distance
measure, as the described relationship became more intimate,
rejection based on the speaker's ethnicity became more common.

For North African subjects, desired distance from vignette
families functioned according to the SES of the family. Both
groups expressed class prejudice, but only Europeans expressed
ethnic prejudice (Schwartz et al. 1990). Similarly, when rating
the upward mobility of African-Americans, Whites' ratings differed
as a function of their racial attitudes, while African-American
ratings of Whites remained unaffected by racial attitude (Feldman
et al., 1975). However, Smedley & Bayton (1978) found that black
subjects gave favorable ratings to lower class blacks and white
subjects gave unfavorable ratings. Both groups gave unfavorable
ratings to lower class whites. Black subjects gave favorable
ratings to all groups except lower class whites. White subjects
gave all lower class groups unfavorable ratings and all middle
class groups favorable ratings.

The characteristics of subjects may affect class and race
stereotypes. In a study by Giles, Gatlin, and Cataldo (1976),
racial prejudice was related to desegregation protest for subjects
who were low on education and income. Those high on income or
education but not both also showed a relation of racial prejudice
to protest. However, class prejudice rather than racial prejudice
was related to protest among subjects who were high in both income
and education. In a study by Taylor (1966), high SES children were
more likely to hold negative stereotypes about African-Americans.

The gender of the target may also affect stereotypes. Stereotypes of women differ significantly between race and social class (Landrine, 1985). The stereotypes of white women are more stereotypically feminine than the stereotypes of black women. Lower class women were both stereotypically feminine and lower-class. In a study by Turner and Turner (1982) on self-concept, African-American females of both high SES and low SES were less likely to adhere to feminine stereotypes than white women.

Situational characteristics may also affect stereotypes. In a study by Howard et al. (1986) race was more influential in an arrest situation while class was more influential in an unemployment situation. Mann and Taylor (1974) found that people in different cultural contexts may focus on different characteristics in stereotyping. Subjects of a distinct ethnolinguistic minority group in Canada were more likely to use ethnic differences in stereotyping. Subjects from the majority placed more emphasis on class, possibly because they are not constantly aware of ethnic differences. Smedley & Bayton (1978) also found that white students used class as a primary dimension in differentiating class/race stereotypes while African-American students used race. Migrants in Australia attributed their own wealth as well as that of whites (high SES and low SES) to ability and hard work (Forgas, Morris, & Furnham, 1982). Whites attributed ability and hard work only to migrants, a prevalent stereotype of migrant workers in Australia. White subjects attributed factors such as family advantages to explain wealth in the white middle-class and luck and risktaking to explain wealth in the white lower-
class. General attributions were most similar to attributions made about middle-class whites, evidence that sociocultural stereotypes have an important role in everyday explanations of wealth. Qualitative differences in race/class stereotypes also exist. For example, Smedley & Bayton (1978) found that African-Americans viewed rebelliousness as favorable while Whites viewed it as unfavorable. Phenice & Griffore (1994) also suggest that culture may define valuative labels.

Overall, the findings from previous research were conflicting. In several studies, lower class stereotypes were responsible for the negative stereotypes of African-Americans. Other studies found that stereotypes of African-Americans were negative regardless of their class. Research also revealed that many factors such as the situation or characteristics of the subject (race, class, education, or gender) may influence stereotypes.

Stereotypes play an important role in prejudice (Allport, 1954). When people dislike a group they utilize any stereotypes that justify this dislike, whether these stereotypes are compatible or not. In addition, stereotypes involve selective perception and selective forgetting. This is evidence that stereotypes are not about simply making group attributions. Stereotypes work to justify like or dislike for a group without the use of sequential and uniform logic. Furthermore, due to cultural pressures, minorities often look at themselves in the same way as other groups look at them, internalizing negative stereotypes. In a study by Munford (1994), preencounter subjects (individuals who devalue his or her ascribed race and racial group in favor of Euro-American
culture) were more likely to report depression and psychological distress. More African-American males were found to be in the preencounter stage than the females. The researchers suggest that this may be due to society's negative stereotypes about African-American males which may lead to negative attitudes about racial identity. According to Joel Rosenthal (1975), "For those tens of millions of Americans who fall outside the purview of WASP America there is the persistent problem, both social and personal, of self-identification." Clark (1985) found that dissociation from one's own racial group allows ethnic minorities and women to endorse negative stereotypes about their own groups and at the same time overlook these stereotypes when making self-evaluations. If society's prevalent negative stereotypes about minority groups continue, the assimilation of minority groups will involve the adoption of a white middle class identity and the rejection of one's own racial identity and cultural pluralism.

Problems in Previous Research

Several problems exist with many of the studies on class/race stereotypes. Most of these studies used adjective checklists to study stereotyping. However, checklists are often limited in language and generalizability. Checklists may not include words that describe groups included in more recent research, such as Mexican and Asian Americans. In addition, subjects may not be familiar with words contained in the checklist. Checklists may provide stereotypes that are more a function of the words presented on a list than of the schematic content of the respondents' stereotypes (Niemann et al., 1994).

Many of the studies also used within-subjects designs.
However, Feldman & Hilterman (1975) suggest that between-subjects designs are more appropriate for several reasons. Within-subjects designs may make the purpose or hypothesis of the study apparent to subjects. In stereotype research, subjects may engage in norms of social desirability. Taking external validity into account, people generally respond to a single stimulus person rather than a series of systematically different stimuli. Using a between-subjects design will create greater external validity for this case. An additional concern is that many studies did not control for social desirability effects. This is especially important when studying stereotypes. Disguising the nature of the experiment may be very useful.

**Present Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the interaction between class and race in stereotyping. It is important to understand what information is being used to arrive at these stereotypes. It is unknown whether racial stereotypes about African-Americans come from racial prejudice or class prejudice since much of the evidence is conflicting. Furthermore, previous studies using within-subjects designs have failed to control for social desirability. They have also failed to promote externally valid descriptions. The present study uses a between-subjects design in order to disguise the purpose of the study and to control for social desirability effects. A between-subjects design will also be greater in external validity since a real-life situation would involve a response to a single stimuli rather than a series of different stimuli. In addition, the present study uses free response when the subject describes the character rather than using
an adjective checklist. This will result in the use of adjectives that are more representative of the schematic content of the respondents' stereotyping (Neimann et al., 1994).

This study has several hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the class and race of the person described in the questionnaire (the character) and the race of the subject responding to the description will affect whether the subject views the character positively or negatively. The second hypothesis is that an interaction between the class of the character and the race of the character is present when the subject describes the character. The third hypothesis is that the race and class of the subject affects the criteria used to place oneself in a specific class. The fourth hypothesis is that a correlation will exist between the criteria used to place oneself in a class and the criteria used to describe the character.

The researcher expected to find that white subjects would give middle-class Whites the most positive evaluations and lower-class African-Americans the most negative evaluations. Also, African-American subjects would give middle-class African-Americans the most positive evaluations and lower-class Whites the most negative evaluations. These findings would indicate that the race of the subject as well as the race and class of the character influence how the character is viewed by the subject (positively or negatively).

Next, the researcher expected to find that subjects would assign different types of adjectives to middle-class White, middle-class African-American, lower-class White, and lower-class African-American characters. This would indicate that the class and race
of the character interact when the subject describes the character. In addition, the researcher would expect that middle-class and lower-class Whites would rate occupation, education, and money as most important in their own class placement, while African-American subjects would rate beliefs, lifestyle, and family as most important in their own class-placement. This would indicate that white and African-American subjects have different ideas about what determines class-placement.

Finally, the researcher expected that the more important the subject believed an adjective or criterion to be in his/her own class-placement, the more likely he/she would be to use that adjective or criterion in describing the character. This would indicate that if a subject felt a certain criterion was important in his/her own class-placement, he/she would be more likely to use that criterion when stereotyping a middle-class or lower-class character. The design of this experiment is a multi-factor between-subjects design (2X2X2): subject race (AA vs. W) X character class (LC vs. MC) X character race (AA vs. W).
Method

Subjects

The researcher recruited subjects from a departmental subject pool, the Black Student Union, Black Fraternities and Sororities, and the Partners for Excellence program at Eastern Illinois University for the present study. The study used 160 subjects. Eighty subjects were African-American and eighty were white. Eight groups existed and each group consisted of twenty subjects. The groups were based on the race of the subjects (African-American or white) and the type of questionnaire they received (African-American middle-class, white middle-class, African-American lower-class or white lower-class character to describe). Subjects were between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five and were both male and female.

Materials and Procedure

The researcher asked the subjects to complete a consent form which was the only identifying form. The researcher informed the subjects of this and told subjects that the study evaluates how people are perceived. The researcher collected the consent forms and then distributed the questionnaire (a sample of the questionnaire is located in the Appendix). First, the researcher asked subjects to respond to a description of a person that was located at the top of the page. Each subject was given only one race/class category to describe. The description was either "lower class white", "middle class white", "lower class African-American", or "middle class African-American". The subjects listed ten adjectives describing the person and rated the adjectives according to how positive or negative they meant the adjective to be. The
rating scale was from one to seven (one being very negative and seven being very positive). These measures were taken from Neimann et al. (1994). Next, the researcher asked subjects to complete another page containing questions on demographic information (sex, race, and age), what social class the subject considers himself/herself to belong to and ratings on how important the subject feels certain criteria are in classifying oneself. The subjects rated how important each criteria was in their own class placement on a scale from one to seven with one being not at all important, four being neutral, and seven being very important. The criteria were as follows: your occupation, what sort of education you have, how you believe and feel about things, and how much money you have. This measure was taken from Jackman & Jackman (1983). Subjects took approximately fifteen minutes to complete the experiment. When the subject was finished, he or she was given a sheet with a written debriefing explaining the nature and purpose of the experiment.
Results

The first question asked whether the class and race of the character and the race of the subject had an effect on the ratings given by the subject to the character. An analysis of variance revealed that an interaction between the character's race and the subject's race was significant. $F(1, 158)=16.93, p<0.05$. A.A. subjects gave significantly higher rating averages to A.A. characters than to W. characters, (A.A. character=4.61, W. character=3.52). W. subjects gave higher rating averages to W. characters than to A.A. characters (A.A. character=3.72, W. character=4.24). Analysis of variance also indicated that the main effect for the class of the character was significant. $F(1, 158)=85.45, p<0.05$. Rating averages for middle class characters (MCC) were higher than rating averages for lower class characters (LCC), (MCC=4.91, LCC=3.13), regardless of race.

The second question asked whether the class of the character was related to the race of the character when subjects assigned adjectives relating to occupation, education, beliefs, money, lifestyle, and family to the character. The researcher prepared the data by classifying the adjectives into six categories (occupation, education, beliefs, money, lifestyle, and family). The researcher counted the number of adjectives in each category separately for W. middle class, A.A. middle class, W. lower class, and A.A. lower class and used these values to perform Chi Squares on each category for A.A. and W. subjects. Table 1 shows an example of how the data for the observed and expected counts used to perform Chi Squares was set up.
Table 1

Observed counts, totals, and expected counts for Chi Squares
(MC=middle-class, LC=lower-class, AA=African-American, W=White)

Race of the Subject: White
Category: Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Class</th>
<th>MC</th>
<th>LC</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>4(2.8)</td>
<td>4(5.2)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Race</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>3(4.2)</td>
<td>9(7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third question asked whether the race and class of the subject had an effect on the importance ratings of certain criteria (beliefs, money, lifestyle, occupation, education, and family) when placing oneself in a class. The researcher performed an analysis of variance for each criterion. An analysis of variance revealed that results were not significant for any of the criteria.

The fourth question asked whether the importance ratings for the criteria were correlated with the number of times the subjects mentioned the criterion when describing the character. A Pearson R correlation revealed a significant correlation coefficient of $r = .15$, $p < 0.05$ for the "how you believe and feel about things" criterion. The more important beliefs were in classifying oneself the more times the subject mentioned adjectives relating to beliefs when describing the character.
Discussion

The first hypothesis was that the character's class and race and the subject's race would have an effect on the subject's ratings of the character. The second hypothesis was that an interaction between the character's class and race was present when the subject described the character. The third hypothesis was that the subject's race and class affected importance ratings for criteria. The fourth hypothesis was that a correlation existed between the importance rating of a given criteria and the number of times the subject mentioned it when describing the character.

The results supported the first hypothesis in that the study revealed a main effect for the character's class and an interaction between the character's race and the subject's race. However, the study did not reveal an interaction between the character's race and class or the subject's race and the character's class. The data also supported the fourth hypothesis only for the "how you believe and feel about things" criterion. The study revealed a significant correlation between the importance rating for belief and the number of times adjectives relating to beliefs were mentioned when the subject described the character. This correlation was very low, indicating that the criteria used in the subjects' own class-placement has a small impact, if any, on the evaluation of others, overall. The data did not support the hypothesis for occupation, education, money, lifestyle, and family criteria. The results did not support the second or third hypotheses.

Research by Smedley and Bayton (1978) indicated that whites gave all lower class groups unfavorable ratings and all middle
class groups favorable ratings. This is consistent with the finding in the present study that subjects (W and A.A.) gave lower ratings to lower class characters and higher ratings to middle class characters. However, Smedley and Bayton also found that blacks gave unfavorable ratings only to lower class whites. The present study found that A.A. subjects gave lower ratings to both lower class W. and lower class A.A. and gave higher ratings to both middle class W. and middle class A.A. This discrepancy may be accounted for because the subjects were largely middle class, and may have favored middle class characters. Research by Feldman (1972) also supported the present study's findings. The subjects assigned negative adjectives to working class characters and positive adjectives to middle class characters regardless of the character's race.

This study supports the several past findings that W. subjects gave higher ratings to W. characters and lower ratings to A.A. characters. Research by Conway-Turner (1995), Feldman (1972), Phenice and Griffore (1994), Feldman (1975), and Lerner and Karson (1972), all found that whites consistently gave negative evaluations to A.A. characters and positive evaluations to W. characters. However, the finding that A.A. subjects gave lower ratings to W. characters and higher ratings to A.A. characters was not consistent with research by Feldman (1975) and Triandis and Triandis (1960). Both studies found that minority groups did not stereotype on the basis of race. The findings may be inconsistent because of the time period in which the studies were conducted or because of the groups from which the researcher recruited A.A. subjects in the present study. Since the studies were conducted
over twenty years ago, attitudes about race may have changed drastically, especially the racial attitudes of minorities. A.A. subjects may have been more biased against whites or more favorable towards African-Americans than in the past. Also, most of the A.A. subjects were recruited from the Partners for Excellence program, the Black Student Union, and Black Fraternities and Sororities. These groups may have been more biased against whites or more favorable towards African-Americans than the general population.

Overall, the findings in the present study were most consistent with ingroup-outgroup theories. Schaller (1992) writes that people usually favor ingroups over outgroups. Ingroup favoritism may occur without information about the outgroup or ingroup. Even when people have information about the outgroup members, they perform effortful cognitive activities in order to maintain and justify group-serving beliefs. This would explain why middle class subjects gave lower class characters lower ratings than middle class characters. In addition this theory would explain why A.A. subjects gave A.A. characters higher ratings than W. characters and why W. subjects gave higher ratings to W. characters than A.A. characters.

The present study had several limitations. One limitation was that subjects were largely middle class, ages eighteen to twenty-five years, and from E.I.U. and the Partners For Excellence program. The results cannot be generalized to other populations. Another limitation was that the number of subjects was somewhat small (160 subjects). Implications for future research would be to use a larger and more diverse sample of subjects to increase external validity. Rather than holding subject characteristics
constant, future research could include such characteristics (age, class, sex, and education) as independent variables to find out which subject characteristics influence stereotypes and how they influence stereotypes. Also, content analysis of the adjectives should be conducted to reveal important findings. Finally, future research could include situational characteristics to increase external validity.
References


Appendix

#1. Please list 10 adjectives that you feel would best describe this person:

A WHITE MIDDLE CLASS PERSON

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

#2. Now rate each adjective on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 being very negative and 7 being very positive. When you use the adjective to describe a person, would you say that it indicates a positive or good trait, or would you say that it indicates a negative or bad trait? The scale is shown below. Choose the number you feel indicates the positivity or negativity of the adjective and write the number next to the adjective.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
very negative somewhat neutral somewhat positive very negative negative positive positive
Please answer the following questions:

#1. your a.) sex:
   b.) race:
   c.) age:

#2. What social class do you consider yourself to belong to?

#3. In deciding whether you belong to the social class you have identified, how important is each of these things to you?
Rate each of the following on a scale from 1 to 7 with 1 being not at all important and 7 being very important. Circle the number.
An example of the scale is shown below.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all very important

1. Your occupation.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all very important

2. What sort of education you have.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all very important

3. How you believe and feel about things.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all very important
4. How much money you have.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all           very important
important

5. Your lifestyle.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all           very important
important

6. The kind of family you have.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all           very important
important