

RACE, PLACE, AND DISCRIMINATION

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ABSTRACT

A growing body of research has found that verbal and non-verbal hostilities in public spaces is an increasingly important feature of contemporary life in the United States. The present article reviews prior studies of discrimination. Noting that past research has not: (1) examined the nature and extent of discrimination for both African Americans and whites; (2) used multiple indicators of discrimination; and (3) used broad-based population samples, the present study uses all three approaches to consider the levels, types, and social distribution of discrimination in a large probability sample of both African Americans and whites. Not surprisingly, we found that African Americans report experiencing higher levels of discrimination than whites. Seventy percent of African Americans compared to 36 percent of whites report experiencing at least one discriminatory event in their lifetime. Approximately 32 percent of African Americans compared to 12 percent of whites report experiencing at least one discriminatory event in the past year. This finding varied little by social setting or sociodemographic characteristics. Our multivariate analysis revealed that while both gender and age were related to reports of discrimination for African Americans and whites, income and education were only associated with reports of discrimination among African Americans.

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INTRODUCTION

Verbal and non-verbal hostilities in public spaces are an important feature in the lives of both African Americans and women in the United States (Drake and Cayton 1945; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Gardner 1995). Race and gender are two readily discernible physical characteristics that have been used historically as a basis for social categorization (see Gardner 1995; Gossett 1963; Omi and Winant 1994; West and Zimmerman 1987). Individual's physical presentation and appearance often leads to immediate placement within one of these social categories (Fiske and Neuberg 1989), which in turn leads to others' either positive or negative reaction (Gardner 1995). More specifically, within our racialized and gendered hierarchy, an individual's classification as "black" or "woman" oftentimes evokes negative (or unwanted positive reactions e.g., cat calls and whistles) reactions from others. Not surprisingly, recent reports indicate that African Americans (or blacks) continue to experience racial harassment in a broad range of public and semi-public settings (Cose 1993; Essed 1991; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Graham 1995). While public harassment and hostility are not limited to any one racial and/or social group (see Gardner 1995), there have been few examinations that take a comparative view of the nature and extent of discrimination using broad-based population samples. In fact, most prior research has only focused on one racial group, used convenience samples, or used limited measures of discrimination.

Our purpose in the present article is to address several of the limitations of prior research on discrimination by (1) considering a broader range of discrimination items; (2) reporting data for Blacks and Whites; and (3) using population-based data. We investigate three related questions concerning race and discrimination. First, we examine the prevalence of discrimination in the lives of Blacks and Whites. Second, we examine whether or not reports of discrimination vary by setting. Third, we consider several key sociodemographic factors relationship to reports of discrimination. In the next section we provide an overview of the discrimination literature. Specifically, we consider four aspects of the literature: (1) measurement and methodological issues in the study of discrimination, (2) the magnitude of discrimination, (3) the variation in sites of discrimination, and (4) the social distribution of discrimination.

BACKGROUND

The Range of Discrimination

Feagin and Sikes (1994, p. 15) argue that survey researchers' attempts to measure discrimination have been hampered by the use of single item indicators and the fact that "[survey researchers] have not asked... about discrimination in such important areas of everyday life as public accommodations, the street, and white-collar workplaces." Sigelman and Welch (1991) also note that existing measures of discrimination utilized by survey researchers only address broad dimensions of quality of life, such as housing and education and neglect the more routine, subtle, and covert forms of discrimination that might occur in day-to-day life.² They point out that because standard approaches have not assessed subtler forms of discrimination, we currently have an underestimate of the prevalence of discrimination. Indeed, several scholars have argued that racism is embedded in both the culture and social structures of U.S. society (see Bonilla-Silva 1997; Omi and Winant 1994). As a result of these arguments the study of the "everydayness" of racism has become quite important (see Essed 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Holt 1995). For example, Essed uses the term "everyday racism" to refer to systematic, recurrent, and familiar practices that permeate the everyday life of racial minorities. Feagin (forthcoming) illustrates the importance of the concept "everyday discrimination" stating,

The findings from surveys show varying amounts of racial barriers for Black respondents. The wording of the questions is one reason for this variation. But there are more fundamental problems. Perhaps the most important is that racial barriers are so much a part of Black lives that they become for most, to varying degrees and depending on the issue, part of the "woodwork." The "everydayness" of the discrimination means that for many a question about discrimination will only draw out the dramatic incidents which are at the front of the mind, and not the everyday incidents and intrusions that are imbedded in and around most Black lives.

Unfortunately, prior survey research has not given systematic attention to the everyday forms of discrimination that affect African Americans. This is an especially glaring omission given the early work of Drake and Cayton (1945) that showed that everyday forms of discrimination were quite prevalent among Blacks in the City of Chicago. In fact, researchers continue to document discrimination against African Americans in a broad range of public and semi-public settings, from securing a home/apartment and/or car to workplaces, schools, stores, streets, highways, restaurants and the courts (ACLU 1996; Ayres 1991; Ayres and Sigelman 1995; Krieger and Sidney 1996; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Graham 1995; Naff 1995; Schuman, Singer, Donovan, and Seltitz 1983; Seltitz 1955; Yinger 1995).

Social scientists argue that discrimination exists along a continuum, ranging from avoidance and rejection to verbal attacks and physical threats (Allport 1958; Feagin 1991; Gardner 1995). For example, Gardner (1995) specifies three broad categories that discrimination in semi-public and public places can be divided. First, there are exclusionary practices which prevent or inhibit individuals from entering or engaging in certain activities in public places. Second, there are exploitative practices in which words or behavior are used to restrict the freedom or limit the privacy of others. Finally, there are evaluative practices in which unwanted and negative evaluative opinions of others are received. There is considerable overlap among these categories and the specific experience of harassment/discrimination can fall into more than one category.

These works provide a conceptual framework for considering discrimination as a multidimensional construct that survey researchers should measure by using multiple indicators that cover a range of life domains. Two recent studies on discrimination support such a conclusion. Landrine and Klonoff (1996) reported unusually high levels of discrimination in a convenience sample of 153 African American faculty, staff, and students at a large university. Using an 18 item inventory of discriminatory events, they found that ninety eight percent of the sample reported experiencing discrimination in the previous year. Krieger and Sidney (1996) also reported high levels of discrimination in their sample of African Americans between the ages of 25 and 37. They assessed the experience of discrimination in seven different contexts (at school, getting a job, at work, getting housing, getting medical care, on the street or in a public setting, and from the police or in the courts) and found that 77 percent of black women and 84 percent of black men reported experiencing discrimination in at least one of the seven situations, while almost 50 percent and 60 percent, respectively, reported discrimination in three or more situations.

Levels of Discrimination

Prior research provides few estimates of whites' experience of discrimination. In fact most prior work has focused on whites' perceptions of discrimination against African Americans (see Bonilla-Silva, Forman, and Padin 1997; Sigelman and Welch 1991; Kluegel and Smith 1982; Kluegel 1990). Two exceptions are the work of Bledsoe, Combs, Sigelman, and Welch (1996) and Jackson, Williams, and Torres (1996). Jackson and associates (1996) found using national data that approximately 8 percent of whites reported being treated bad due to their race. Bledsoe, Combs, Sigelman, and Welch (1996) in their 1992 survey of Detroit metropolitan residents found that 14 percent of whites report being the victim of discrimination.

In contrast, there is a considerable amount of empirical evidence on African Americans' experience of discrimination. However, past research on African

Americans provides varying estimates of their exposure to discrimination. This is true for several reasons. First, prior work on discrimination has focused on a limited set of life domains (e.g., work). Second, it has frequently used a single, global measure of discrimination. Third, it has asked about discrimination in the past year or past month or lifetime, but rarely has it considered these simultaneously. In the absence of construct uniformity prior work has provided varying estimates of the prevalence of discrimination. A 1978 survey conducted by Louis Harris, for example, indicated that a majority of blacks denied experiencing discrimination in housing or employment. However, the items used ask about whether or not family members had been discriminated against in pursuing work opportunities and how likely the respondent thought it was that they would experience discrimination in purchasing a home. The 1980 Black Pulse survey conducted by Robert B. Hill reported that 37 percent of Caribbeans and 27 percent of African Americans experienced employment discrimination (Billingsley 1992). A 1986 ABC News/Washington Post survey also revealed that one in four blacks reported experiencing discrimination in getting a quality education and in obtaining decent housing. The highest levels of discrimination were in employment, with 40 percent indicating that they had experienced hiring discrimination and an equivalent number reporting that they had experienced wage discrimination. Jackson, Williams, and Torres (1996) found that 41 percent of African Americans reported being treated badly due to their race. Relatively low levels of discrimination have been found in the National Study of Black Americans (Williams and Chung in press). Eleven percent of the sample indicated that they or a family member had been treated badly because of their race in the previous month. Similarly, 13 percent indicated that they had been turned down for a job at their current place of work because they were black.

These varying estimates of African Americans' exposure to discrimination raise important conceptual and measurement issues with regard to discrimination. In general, social scientists studying discrimination have found it to be quite an elusive construct (Merton 1948; Myers 1993), especially in the survey context (Smith 1993). In part this is due to survey research's heavy reliance on single items indicators of discrimination. Sigelman and Welch (1991) note that the actual level of reported discrimination is linked to how questions are asked. For example, although no more than 40 percent of blacks indicate experiencing discrimination in education, housing, jobs, and equal wages, 60 percent indicated that they had experienced at least one of these types of discrimination, one in three that they had experienced discrimination in more than one of these realms, and more than one in 10 reported discrimination in all four areas. It is clear that single item indicators are grossly inadequate for measuring discrimination. For example, Bobo and Suh (1995) in a probability sample of 4,025 respondents, used four questions to assess experiences of discrimination in the labor market. In addition to a general

question of whether they had experienced racial/ethnic discrimination at their place of work, respondents were also asked if their supervisor or boss used racial slurs, if they felt that others got promotions or pay raises faster because of race or ethnicity, or if they had felt at any time that they had been refused a job because of their race/ethnicity. Overall, the rate of discrimination reported for any single item was low. However, 59 percent of African Americans and 25 percent of whites reported experiencing at least one of the discriminatory events. Similarly, the 1997 Gallup Poll Social Audit on Black/White Relations found that approximately 45 percent of blacks report experiencing unfair treatment due to race in at least one of five settings considered (e.g., shopping, dining out, work, police, public transportation). These results suggest that levels of discrimination are linked to the site in which discrimination occurs.

Sites of Discrimination

Brittan and Maynard (1984, p. 7) argue that "the terms of oppression are not only dictated by history, culture, and the sexual and social division of labor. They are also profoundly shaped [by] the site of oppression." To be sure, the research literature on discrimination is replete with examples that indicate that the probability of experiencing discrimination varies by social setting and that as African Americans move from private to semi-public and public settings their chances of experiencing discrimination increase (Anderson 1990; Benjamin 1991; Cose 1993; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Gardner 1995; Smith 1995). In this regard discrimination also has a spatial element. Gardner (1995) explains that people who hesitate or refrain from harassing others in private or at work often do so in public. She indicates that public spaces provide a high probability of victimization because the perpetrator is likely to believe that s/he will escape punishment. In her studies of public harassment, Gardner (1995) found that the streets, parks, and recreation spots were among the most public context for women, with semi-public places such as stores, restaurants, newsstands and other service establishments being other common sites for public harassment. Similarly, Feagin (1991) indicated that public streets provide the greatest exposure of African Americans to discriminatory behavior because they carry the greatest probability of exposure to strangers. Regarding this point a professional woman's discussion of the spatial dimensions of discrimination is quite instructive.

If I'm in those areas that are fairly protected (i.e. private and semi-public places—work setting or among friends)...[that] mediates against hostile perception, then it's fairly comfortable...when I divide my life into encounters with the outside world, and of course that's ninety percent of my life...it's fairly consistently unpleasant at those sites where there's

nothing that mediates (i.e., public places—parks, stores, restaurants, street) between my race and what I have to do (Feagin 1991, p. 109).

Others have also found that the experience of discrimination co-varies with spatial location—that is, public versus private settings. For example, Krieger and Sidney (1996) found for both African Americans men and women, the street or a public setting were the most common sites of discriminatory behavior. Occupational settings were the second most common site for women and police and the courts ranked second for men. Sigelman and Welch (1991) report that levels of discrimination were highest in the employment area, compared to other semi-public contexts such as education and housing. Similarly, Gary (1995) found that the workplace was the setting cited most often by black men, with government agencies and discrimination from the police being the next two most frequently listed settings.

However, the observed relationship between discrimination and space is in direct contrast to the expectations of several authors that argue that public settings (e.g., bars, cafes, restaurants, the street, parks, etc.) are the breeding ground for inclusivity and democracy (Berman 1982; Habermas 1989; Howell 1993). An example of this reasoning is provided by Young (1990, p. 240) who states that public places, at least in theory, are supposed to provide a venue in which "one...risks encounter with those who are different, those who identify with different groups." Yet, oftentimes chance encounters in public places between individuals and/or groups that might not otherwise meet result in hostility, especially when the difference is race (see DuBois 1903; Drake and Cayton 1945; Fanon 1967; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Gardner 1995). In short, while Title II of the 1964 Civil Rights Act made provisions for the full and equal enjoyment of public accommodations by racial and ethnic minorities there remains increasing evidence that the public sphere is both gendered and racialized (Anderson 1990, 1995; Ruddick 1996; Staples 1987, 1994; Young 1990). Existing accounts by African Americans of encounters with whites in public places graphically depicts the role of discrimination in public settings (Anderson 1990, 1995; Baldwin 1964; Essed 1991; Fanon 1967; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Hooks 1992; Mbembe 1992; Smith 1995). For example, Anderson (1990) demonstrates how racial stereotypes shape white pedestrians' perceptions of and negotiations with African American men in public settings. He points out that, "when black men appear, women (especially white women) sometimes clutch their pocket-books...[or others] on spotting black males from a distance...often[times] cross the street...(1990, p. 164). Although Staples (1994) does not write explicitly about discrimination in public places, he provides anecdotal evidence supporting Anderson (1990) claim in his description of experiences on the streets of Hyde Park as a graduate student at the University of Chicago.

Sociodemographic Variations in Discrimination

Although the patterns are not entirely clear, the available evidence indicates that discrimination is not randomly distributed in the population (Williams and Chung in press). Several social status categories predict variations in exposure to discrimination. Here we focus on three: age, socioeconomic status (SES), and gender.

Age

Age is an important correlate of discrimination. However, the nature and direction of the relationship between age and discrimination is conflicting. For example, Sigelman and Welch (1991) found that older blacks reported more discrimination than their younger counterparts. However, analyses by Gary (1995) found that young, black males reported higher levels of discrimination than their older counterparts. Similarly, in the National Study of Black Americans respondents between the ages of 18 to 54 were twice as likely to report experiencing discrimination in the previous month than those over age 55 (Williams and Chung in press). In a study of African Americans in a southern city, Adams and Dressler (1988) also found an inverse relationship between age and perceptions of discrimination. However, Schuman and Hatchett (1974) found a curvilinear relationship between age and perceptions of hiring and promotional discrimination among African Americans. They found the highest reported levels of discrimination among African Americans in middle adulthood. In contrast to other perspectives they speculate that the opportunity to experience discrimination is "career-related." They posit that until African Americans reach primary working age (25 thru 54 years of age) the likelihood of experiencing discrimination should remain quite low and consequently reports of discrimination, at least in the employment context, should be lower among the young and old. Consistent with this perspective, Bobo and Suh (1995) found a curvilinear pattern between employment discrimination and age for blacks. That is, reports of employment discrimination were highest for the prime working ages of 36-50.

Socioeconomic Status

The extant literature on discrimination suggests a complex pattern of association between SES and discrimination. Contrasting perspectives predict different patterns of association with SES. On the one hand, higher SES may be inversely associated with discrimination because higher SES blacks may be likely to share the same values as middle class whites and to operate in settings where discrimination is less overt (Sigelman and Welch 1991). On the other hand, there could be a positive association between SES and

discrimination because higher SES blacks are more likely to interact with whites, associate with them as equals, and therefore pose a greater threat to the status quo. In addition, persons with more education may be more likely to be aware of discrimination and hence more likely to report it. Consistent with this expectation several recent studies of discrimination have focused on the black middle class (Cose 1993; Essed 1991; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Hochschild 1993).

Sigelman and Welch (1991) found a positive association between education and discrimination. In addition, they found that respondents of working class status, those receiving government assistance, and having financial difficulties were most likely to experience discrimination. Bobo and Suh (1995) found a strong positive relationship between education and employment discrimination among African Americans. In his study of black men, Gary (1995) found that discrimination was positively related to both education and employment status but unrelated to income. Interestingly, Landrine and Klonoff (1996) also found that income was unrelated to discrimination among African Americans. These results provide a rather complicated portrait of the relationship between SES and discrimination.

Gender

Gardner (1995, p. 16) notes that women are "habitually and situationally disadvantaged in public places." Sigelman and Welch (1991) also indicate that because black women occupy disadvantaged status, they are more susceptible to discrimination and probably experience higher levels than men. At the same time, they contend that women would be less likely to report discrimination than men. According to this perspective, women are more likely than men to discount the discrimination they face or to compare themselves to a different reference group. They speculate that black women are likely to use white women as their frame of reference and to feel less discriminated against because black and white women are more similar in employment characteristics, including wages, than black and white men. Consistent with this perspective, the male/female difference in discrimination is larger on items pertaining to jobs and equal wages than it is on items concerning education and housing (Sigelman and Welch 1991). Secondly, some research suggests that there is a tendency for women to deny being personally discriminated against (Crosby 1984).

Consistent with their expectations, Sigelman and Welch (1991) found in the studies reviewed that black women report lower levels of discrimination than black men. However, Landrine and Klonoff (1996) found no gender differences in discrimination using their 18 item inventory of discriminatory events. Bobo and Suh (1995) found that gender was unrelated to job discrimination for African Americans, although for whites males reported higher levels of discrimination than females. In the National Study of Black Americans, men

tended to report higher levels of global discrimination and employment discrimination than females but these differences were not significant (Williams and Chung in press). However, men were much more likely than women to report that African Americans were discriminated against at their work places. In a probability sample of African American males residing in Norfolk, Virginia, Gary (1995) assessed the extent to which males had experienced discrimination in range of situations, at the bank, from the police, from waiters or waitresses, or from government agencies. Forty percent of black males had experienced discrimination in one of these settings in the previous year and eleven percent reported two or more experiences of discrimination. Importantly, Krieger and Sidney (1996) found that the association of gender with racial discrimination depended on the type of discrimination under consideration. In their study of discrimination among 25-37 year old adults, there were no gender differences in discrimination in school, at work, getting housing, and getting medical care. However, black men reported more discrimination than women on the street or in a public setting, getting a job, and from the police or in the courts.

Summary

The present article addresses several unresolved issues in prior research on discrimination. First, we systematically assess the overall levels of discrimination using a broad range of major experiences and everyday indicators of discrimination. This strategy enables us to explore how levels of reported discrimination vary by: (1) using multiple indicators of discrimination and (2) multiple settings. Second, we explore the extent of sociodemographic variation in discrimination. By using population-based data we can compare our findings related to sociodemographic variation in discrimination to prior work that has used either convenience samples that consists of an array of indicators of discrimination or those that use probability samples but include limited indicators of discrimination. Last, we replicate all analyses performed with our data on African Americans for whites. We believe that it is important to understand the levels of discrimination and the social context of bias for other racial groups. Such analyses not only shed important new light on the fundamental social processes underlying discrimination, but also enhances our understanding of the extent to which the experience of persons of African descent in the United States is unique.

DATA AND METHOD

Sample

The 1995 Detroit Area Study was a multistage area probability sample representative of the population 18 years of age and older, residing in Wayne,

Oakland, and Macomb counties in Michigan, including the city of Detroit. The fieldwork was completed between April and October 1995 by University of Michigan graduate students in a research training practicum in survey research and professional interviewers from the Survey Research Center. Face-to-face interviews were completed with 1139 adult respondents, for a response rate of 70 percent. Blacks were over sampled and the final sample included 520 white and 586 black respondents. The remaining 33 respondents were self-identified Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanics. All of the analyses reported in this paper use only black and white respondents. The oversampling of African Americans makes comparisons between African Americans and whites possible. In analyses conducted on the entire sample, a weight was used to take into account differential probabilities of selection and to adjust the demographics of the sample to that of the Detroit metropolitan area. However weights were not used in multivariate analyses run separately by race.³

Dependent Variable:

We use two measures of discrimination in the present article: (1) major experiences of discrimination and (2) everyday discrimination. These items were developed by the authors to assess discrimination in a variety of life domains as suggested by the literature on discrimination (Anderson 1990; Bobo and Suh 1995; Cose 1993; Feagin 1990; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Gary 1995; Graham 1995; Staples 1994).

Major experiences of discrimination: Two indices were created to represent major experiences of discrimination: (1) lifetime discrimination and (2) recent discrimination. The two indices are based on six items for black respondents and three items for white respondents (presented in appendix A). For each of the six items respondents (i.e., three items for whites) were asked to respond, "yes" or "no" to whether or not they had experienced a particular treatment. Lifetime discrimination sums the response to these items—six items for blacks and three items for whites. In order to derive a measure of recent discrimination respondents that answered, "yes" to any of the six items were followed up with a question that asked, "did that happen in the last 12 months?" Based on responses to this follow up question items were summed.

Everyday discrimination: An index was created to represent everyday discrimination. The index was based on nine items (presented in appendix A) and has an estimated reliability coefficient of .88. For each of the nine items respondents were asked to respond on a five point likert-type scale from, "very often" to "never." The scale was reversed so that "very often" was the highest value. Everyday discrimination sums the responses to these nine items.

Independent Variable: Sociodemographic Correlates

Gender: Gender was coded 1 for male and 0 for female.

Age: Age was coded into four categories: (1) 18 thru 34; (2) 35 thru 54; (3) 55 thru 65; and (4) 65 and over.

Education: Education is based on respondent's self-report of the number of years of formal education completed. Education was coded one for "less than high school"; two for "high school graduate"; three for "some college"; and four for "college graduate or more."

Family Income: Family income was based on self-report of income before taxes. Family income was coded into five categories: (1) less than \$10,000; (2) \$10,000 thru \$19,999; (3) \$20,000 thru \$39,999; (4) \$40,000 thru \$59,999; and (5) \$60,000 and above.

Analysis Strategy

The analyses are presented in five parts. First, the univariate distributions of major experiences of discrimination (both lifetime and recent) are reported by race. Second, the bivariate relationships among sociodemographic factors (age, gender, education, and income) and major experiences of discrimination (both lifetime and recent) are explored by race. Third, the univariate distributions of everyday discrimination are reported by race. Fourth, the bivariate relationships among sociodemographic factors (age, gender, education, and income) and everyday discrimination are explored by race. Lastly, ordinary least squares regression is used to estimate the magnitude and statistical significance of the sociodemographic correlates on the three discrimination measures by race.

RESULTS

Major Experiences of Discrimination

Table 1 shows the proportion of respondents reporting experiences of discrimination (both lifetime and recent) by race. In general, blacks are more likely than whites to report experiences of discrimination in the Detroit metropolitan area. This relationship remains true for both recent and lifetime measures of discrimination. For example, 38.2 percent of blacks report that they have been unfairly fired or denied a promotion because of their race, whereas 24.1 percent of whites report that they have been unfairly fired or denied a promotion because of their race. On two of the three indicators of discrimination asked of both whites and blacks, blacks are three times more likely than whites to have experienced discrimination in their lifetime.

Table 1. Major Experiences of Discrimination by Race

Major Experiences of Discrimination	Lifetime Discrimination (% Yes)		Recent Discrimination (% Yes)	
	Black	White	Black	White
1. Unfairly Fired/Denied Promotion	38.2%	24.1%**	12.8%	8.1%**
2. Not Hired for a Job	32.1%	11.9%**	9.5%	2.3%**
3. Harassed by Police	37.4%	13.4%**	14.7%	3.2%**
4. Discouraged by Teacher	17.8%	—	2.6%	—
5. Landlord/Reactor Bias	14.4%	—	5.0%	—
6. Neighbors made life difficult	17.3%	—	5.6%	—
Percent reporting any discrimination	70.2%	36.4%	31.5%	11.7%

Notes: + $p \leq 10$; * $p \leq 05$; ** $p \leq 01$.
 † These items were not asked of white respondents.

When asked about recent experiences of discrimination (i.e., the past year) 12.8 percent of blacks versus 8.1 percent of whites report that they have been unfairly fired or denied a promotion because of their race. Interestingly, blacks are two times more likely to report discrimination related to the police and work than education and housing.

The proportion of blacks reporting discrimination related to education and housing seems rather low given recent findings from a federal study of housing discrimination and national survey data on discrimination in education. These studies found that black renters and homeseekers faced a 50 percent chance of experiencing discrimination (Turner, Struyk, and Yinger 1991) and that approximately 25 percent of blacks experienced discrimination in receiving a quality education (Sigelman and Welch 1991). Furthermore, during the first six months of 1990 the Detroit chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People reported that complaints of racial discrimination in housing had more than doubled from the previous year (Marchetti 1990). Yet, our results are consistent with other research that has found that a small minority of blacks report being the victim of housing discrimination (see Bledsoe, Combs, Sigelman, and Welch 1996). Why is this? One possibility is that the higher proportion of blacks reporting discrimination as a result of work or police interaction versus educational or housing discrimination is due to the high degree of residential segregation in the Detroit metropolitan area (see Farley, Steeh, Jackson, Krysan, and Reeves 1993; Farley, Steeh, Krysan, Jackson, and Reeves 1994). For example, housing and/or educational bias may be less apparent to the African American respondent than racial bias in employment or police interaction in part because there is less frequent white-black contact in schools and housing than in the workplace or in police interactions (Bledsoe, Combs, Sigelman, and Welch 1996; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Massey and Denton 1993; Meier, Stewart, and England 1989; Orfield 1993). Feagin and Sikes make the point that typically the "workplace offers no shelter from white racism, for it is a site where white peers and supervisors may isolate black employees, sabotage their work, or restrict their access to better jobs and promotion (1994, pp. 360-361). Another possibility is that blacks, at least in housing, are unaware of the discrimination. One study of racial steering in housing found that blacks that were discriminated against were not conscious of the discrimination in all cases except one (Center for Community Change 1989). Furthermore, recent interviews with blacks concerning discrimination seems to support the plausibility that black respondents reports of discrimination in housing and education may be underreports as a result of residential segregation. For example, one person interviewed noted that "I've lived in a black neighborhood that's at least a hundred years old. And there's no discrimination in my neighborhood" (Feagin and Sikes 1994, p. 264) another individual in response to the question of whether or not they had experienced discrimination in housing replied, "No,

only because the area where we live is predominantly African American" (1994, p. 264). Despite the lower proportion of blacks reporting discrimination as result of housing and education one perceptive interviewee importantly noted that implicit in residential segregation is discrimination,

You get discriminated not necessarily in that you are denied use of this house, but if you live in a black neighborhood, you'll also see that they will allow a salvage yard, as an example, right down the street to be organized in your neighborhood. Even though the neighbors protested.....Also there is a code that requires vacant lots to be cleaned up and grass cut and underbrush cut, but somehow in the black neighborhoods these things don't get done. So you get discrimination in public services, public utilities and so forth, which also affects your housing (Feagin and Sikes 1994, pp. 266-267).

The high proportion of blacks reporting harassment by the police (37.4%) is not as surprising given the historical tensions between the black community and the police department (see Anderson 1990; Blackwell 1984; Campbell and Schuman 1968; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Parker, Onyekwulije, Murty 1995; Schuman and Hatchett 1974). A recent study found that of 137 police brutality incidents reported in regional and national newspapers African Americans and Latinos were the victims in 97 percent of the cases and 93 percent of the suspects (i.e., police officers) were white (Lersch 1993).

Similar to other studies the rates of discrimination reported by African Americans on any single item is quite modest. However, the proportion whites experiencing discrimination is much larger in our survey than in prior work. Whereas past research has reported approximately 8 percent nationally and 14 percent locally of whites experiencing discrimination, our survey results show that 12 percent of whites have experienced not being hired for a job because of race, 13 percent have been harassed by the police, and approximately one in four has been unfairly fired or denied a promotion. The discrepancy in national and Detroit data may be the result of the concentration of Polish Americans in the Detroit area. For example, Jackson, Williams, and Torres (1996) found that whites that ethnically identified as Polish were more likely to report experiencing discrimination (16%) than any other whites. Thus, given the relatively high proportion of Polish residents in the Detroit metropolitan area our data may over estimate the prevalence of discrimination among whites.

A shift to the question of how many respondents have experienced at least one form of discrimination provides some interesting results. Seventy percent of African Americans and 36 percent of whites reported experiencing at least one of the discriminatory events in their lifetime. While there remains a large racial difference in reports of at least one form of discrimination these differences should be considered cautiously since three additional questions were asked only of African American respondents. Yet, even when we turn to recent experiences of discrimination we find that approximately 32 percent of African Americans and 12 percent of whites have experienced at least one

of the discriminatory events in the past year. These results provide further support for our earlier contention that discrimination is a multidimensional construct and consequently should be measured by multiple items.

As stated earlier, several studies indicate that the risk of experiencing discrimination varies by social setting (see Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Gardner 1995). Table 1 shows that the proportion of blacks reporting discrimination increases if the setting is semi-public versus semi-private or private. For example, with the exception of the item that asks whether or not neighbors make life difficult for respondent, the proportion of blacks reporting discrimination in semi-public settings range from 37.4 percent to 38.2 percent. In contrast, the proportion of blacks reporting discrimination in semi-private and private settings, with the exception of the item that asks whether or not the respondent has not been hired for job because of race, range from 14.4 percent to 17.8 percent. A similar pattern emerges when we consider recent discrimination. In general, the proportion of blacks reporting recent discrimination is highest in semi-public settings. The relationship between social setting and reports of discrimination also holds for whites. Whites are more likely to report discrimination in semi-public (24.1% and 13.4%) than private settings (11.9%).

Unfortunately, we do not have items in our survey that capture public settings like parks and streets. However, many interactions with the police occur in public settings, though our item does not ask whether the harassment by the police occurred in the street, park, or somewhere else. In general, our distinctions between semi-public, semi-private, and private settings should be viewed cautiously. However, we were guided in our distinction by the simple fact that many interactions with landlords, employers, and teachers are fairly private events. The point here is that oftentimes discrimination in private and semi-private settings goes undetected by the victim. Consequently, the low proportion of blacks reporting discrimination based on landlord/realtor bias is not surprising.

Sociodemographic Correlates of Major Experiences of Discrimination

Table 2, columns 1 and 2 show the relationship between sociodemographic factors (age, gender, education, and income) and major experiences of lifetime discrimination for blacks and whites. Age is significantly related to lifetime reports of discrimination for both blacks and whites. Unlike prior research which found a linear relationship between age and discrimination (Adams and Dressler 1988; Campbell and Schuman 1968; Gary 1995; Sigelman and Welch 1991; Williams and Chung in press) our data shows a curvilinear relationship between age and lifetime discrimination for African Americans. African Americans in middle adulthood (35-54 years) report the highest level of lifetime discrimination. Schuman and Hatchett (1974) and Bobo and Suh (1995)

Table 2. Bivariate Associations Between Sociodemographic Factors and Discrimination (Lifetime and Recent) by Race

Sociodemographic Factors	Lifetime Discrimination		Recent Discrimination	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
Age ^a	1.11	0.66**	0.61	0.26**
18-34	1.22	0.51	0.30	0.10
35-54	0.96	0.45	0.13	0.08
55-64	0.67	0.18	0.04	0.00
65+	1.38	0.62**	0.52	0.15**
Gender ^b	0.84	0.38	0.25	0.13
Male	0.90	0.37**	0.25	0.13**
Female	1.00	0.42	0.42	0.11
Education ^c	1.23	0.64	0.41	0.23
Less than high school	1.15	0.48	0.33	0.07
High school graduate	1.04	0.29	0.57	0.18**
Some college	0.96	0.35**	0.30	0.08
College degree +	1.20	0.49	0.40	0.17
Income ^d	0.98	0.57	0.23	0.14
Under \$10,000	1.14	0.54	0.30	0.13
\$10,000-\$19,999	1.20	0.49	0.40	0.17
\$20,000-\$39,999	0.98	0.57	0.23	0.14
\$40,000-\$9,999	1.14	0.54	0.30	0.13
\$60,000 and Over				

Notes: + $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$.
^a = main effect significant at the $p \leq .01$
^b = main effect significant at the $p \leq .05$
^c = main effect significant at the $p \leq .10$
^d = main effect not significant

also found a curvilinear relationship between age and discrimination among African Americans. As mentioned earlier, this finding is consistent with the "career-related perspective." That is, adults that are primary working age (25-54 years old) are the most at-risk for experiencing discrimination. For whites a linear relationship between age and discrimination exists. Whites in young adulthood (18-34) report the highest levels of lifetime discrimination. A similar linear trend was found for recent discrimination. In multivariate analysis Jackson, Williams, and Torres (1996) found a similar pattern for whites.

Gender status has been an important correlate of discrimination. Prior work suggests that men on average report higher levels of discrimination than women (Jackson, Williams, and Torres 1996; Williams and Chung in press; Bobo and Suh 1995). Consistent with prior work we found clear gender effects for both lifetime and recent experiences of discrimination. Both black and white men report higher levels of lifetime and recent discrimination than black and white women.

Socioeconomic status has been found to be positively associated with reports of discrimination among African Americans (Bobo and Suh 1995; Gary 1995; Jackson, Williams, and Torres 1996; Sigelman and Welch 1991; Williams and Chung in press). Accordingly, we expected African Americans with high levels of education and/or income to report higher levels of lifetime and recent discrimination. According to Table 2 education is significantly related to both lifetime and recent reports of discrimination among African Americans and whites. However unlike past research which showed linear relationships between education and discrimination we found a curvilinear relationship. Generally, the highest reports of lifetime and recent discrimination were among respondents with some college. Income was also significantly associated with both lifetime and recent reports of discrimination among African Americans and whites. However, according to our data a complex relationship exists between income and discrimination. African Americans that earn less than ten thousand dollars, between twenty and forty thousand dollars, or over sixty thousand dollars report the highest levels of lifetime discrimination. This finding is not consistent with other research that has found no association between income and discrimination among African Americans (Bobo and Suh 1995; Gary 1995; Landrine and Klonoff 1996; Williams and Chung in press). Generally, it seems that whites with family incomes of forty thousand dollars and over report the highest levels of lifetime discrimination. In addition, at every level of age, gender, education, and income African Americans report higher levels of lifetime and recent discrimination than whites.

Several of our indicators of socioeconomic status reveal contradictory effects for recent discrimination. These inconsistent findings may potentially be explained by prior research lack of uniformity in the measurement of discrimination. While we use both lifetime and recent measures of discrimination past work has used lifetime or recent measures of discrimination

but rarely both. Thus, our finding that age has a curvilinear relationship with lifetime reports of discrimination but a linear relationship with recent reports of discrimination may not be inconsistent, but rather may reflect the measurement error inherent in using solely a lifetime or recent measure of discrimination and not both. For example, respondents who are asked about lifetime discrimination but can only remember what occurred in the past year may provide responses based on past year occurrence which will bias downward our measures of lifetime exposure to discrimination. Consequently, researchers using such a measure as an exclusive measure of discrimination will oftentimes report it as a lifetime measure of discrimination, and possibly, find a linear relationship between age and discrimination. However, if we ask respondents explicitly about both lifetime and recent exposure to discrimination then we have a greater chance of assessing both prior year as well as lifetime experiences of discrimination. Prior works omission of both a recent and lifetime measure of discrimination may explain its report of somewhat contradictory associations between age, education, and income and discrimination.

Experiences of Everyday Discrimination

Table 3 shows the proportion of African Americans and white respondents reporting experiences of everyday discrimination. In general, African Americans report more experiences than whites of everyday discrimination in the Detroit area. This relationship is true across all nine measures of everyday discrimination. For example, 10.4 percent of African Americans and 3.2 percent of whites say they are often treated with less courtesy on a daily basis. Prior work suggests that for African Americans poor and sometimes non-existent service in restaurants and/or stores is major problem (Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Feagin and Vera 1995; Graham 1995; Schuman, Singer, Donovan, and Seltiz 1983; Seltiz 1955). One of the earliest studies on discrimination in restaurants found that 42 percent of the earliest studies in the sample provided blacks with inferior service (Seltiz 1955). In our data 12.4 percent of African Americans versus 4 percent of whites report that they are often given poor service in restaurants and stores.

Approximately one in five blacks (17%) report that they are often treated as if they are not smart by others versus 3.9 percent of whites. A potentially related finding is that 24.6 percent of blacks compared to 9 percent of whites report that others often act as if they are better than them. Perhaps "acting as if better" is another form of expressing one's belief of black inferiority. The recent publication of the *Bell Curve* has brought the theme of black intellectual inferiority back into public discourse (Hernstein and Murray 1994). While recent survey data suggests that a *small* minority of whites believe that blacks have less in-born ability (12.7%) a *substantial* minority continue to believe that blacks are lazy (31.3%) (see Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Williams, Jackson,

Table 3. Experiences of Everyday Discrimination by Race (% Often)

Everyday Discrimination	Race	
	Blacks	Whites
1. Less courtesy Often	10.4%	3.2%**
2. Less respect Often	10.1%	3.6%**
3. Poor service Often	12.4%	4.0%**
4. Not smart Often	17.0%	3.9%**
5. People afraid Often	15.0%	4.4%**
6. Think dishonest Often	7.3%	2.4%
7. They are better Often	24.6%	9.0%**
8. Called names/insulted Often	6.1%	2.3%**
9. Threatened/harassed	2.9%	2.0%
Percent reporting any discrimination	41.1%	16.8%

Notes: + $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$.

Brown, Forman, Torres, and Brown 1996). Essed (1991, p. 14) points out that while, "the traditional idea of genetic inferiority is still important in the fabric of racism, the discourse of Black inferiority is increasingly reformulated as cultural deficiency, social inadequacy, and technological underdevelopment."

Fifteen percent of blacks compared to 4.4 percent of whites report that others often act as if they are afraid of them. A similar pattern is found for dishonesty, 7.3 percent of blacks compared with 2.4 percent of whites report that individuals act as if they are dishonest. One possible explanation for the large race difference in these items is offered by Feagin and Sikes (1994, p. 256) whom point out that, "the image of blacks, especially black men, as criminals is deeply imbedded in many white minds." St. John and Heald-Moore (1995) study of whites fear of crime provides survey data that are somewhat consistent with Feagin and Sikes contention. They find that whites are most fearful of encounters with black strangers, however their fear is invariant to the characteristics of the black person encountered (e.g., black lawyer versus vagabond or woman versus man) and the setting in which the encounter occurs. Furthermore, Farley (1997) examination of whites' racial stereotypes revealed that on average whites think Blacks are less intelligent and more prone to involvement in drugs and crime than themselves.

Using all nine items, we counted the number of respondents that had experienced at least one form of everyday discrimination. The results, which are shown at the bottom of Table 3, document the large race difference in experience of everyday discrimination. Forty one percent of blacks as compared with 16 percent of whites report often experiencing at least one form of discrimination. These results provide support for the argument that prior estimates of black's exposure to discrimination are underestimates of overall prevalence because they have failed to assess these subtler and everyday forms of discrimination.

Table 4. Bivariate Associations Between Sociodemographic Factors and Everyday Discrimination by Race

Sociodemographic Factors	Everyday Discrimination	
	Blacks	Whites
Age ^a		
18-34	2.28	1.99**
35-54	2.19	1.76
55-64	1.78	1.45
65+	1.58	1.30
Gender ^a		
Male	2.20	1.80**
Female	2.02	1.63
Education ^a		
Less than high school	1.87	1.61**
High school graduate	2.05	1.77
Some college	2.25	1.74
College degree+	2.19	1.68
Income ^a		
Under \$10,000		
\$10,000-19,999	2.22	1.58**
\$10,000-19,999	2.02	1.55
\$20,000-\$39,999	2.14	1.78
\$40,000-\$59,999	2.03	1.78
\$60,000 and Over	2.04	1.72

Notes: + $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$.

^a = main effect significant the $p \leq .01$

Sociodemographic Correlates of Everyday Discrimination

Table 4 shows the relationship between sociodemographic factors and everyday discrimination for blacks and whites. Age is significantly related to everyday discrimination for both blacks and whites. Unlike the findings for lifetime discrimination we find an inverse, linear relationship between age and discrimination. Young adults (18-34 years) report the highest level of everyday discrimination and the oldest age group (65+ years) report the lowest. For both whites and blacks, men are more likely than women to report experiencing everyday discrimination. Both Staples (1987, 1994) and Anderson (1990) discuss the negative stereotypes associated with being black and male and how this structures black men's interactions in public spaces. Anderson succinctly states, "to be black and male... is to be suspect" (1990, p. 192). Thus, the gender effect for everyday discrimination among blacks is not surprising, given that several of the items included in the index of everyday discrimination refer to fear and honesty. The gender effect holds for whites.

Education has a curvilinear relationship with reports of everyday discrimination. Among blacks, those with some college are the most likely to report experiencing everyday discrimination, whereas for whites the most likely are those with a high school diploma. This finding is somewhat inconsistent with previous research (Bobo and Suh 1995; Gary 1995; Williams and Chung in press). Our other measure of socioeconomic status, income, is only marginally related to reports of everyday discrimination for blacks and whites. The observed weak relationship between income and everyday discrimination is consistent with several past studies that have argued that income is not or is weakly related to reports of discrimination because discrimination is randomly distributed among the black poor, middle class, and wealthy (Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Landrine and Klonoff 1996). Yet, ours and others consistent finding of a positive effect of education on reports of discrimination raise several concerns about the "randomness interpretation" of discrimination (Bobo and Suh 1995; Gary 1995; Sigelman and Welch 1991; Williams and Chung in press). In short, why is education strongly related to discrimination but income is not? For now, we leave this question to future empirical investigation. Similar to the findings for lifetime and recent discrimination at each level of age, gender, education, and income blacks report higher levels of everyday discrimination than whites.

Multivariate Analysis of Discrimination

We now turn to a multivariate analysis of the association between sociodemographic factors and our three measures of discrimination. The three indicators of discrimination are: lifetime, recent, and everyday. Table 5 shows the standardized coefficients from our ordinary least squares regression analyses separated by race. Each dependent variable was regressed on the four sociodemographic variables—age, gender, education, and income. The distribution of income in our sample was highly skewed so we chose to use the natural log of income in regression analyses. Columns 1 and 2 report standardized coefficients for lifetime discrimination by race. Similar to the patterns in bivariate analysis age is significantly and inversely related to lifetime reports of discrimination among blacks and whites. That is, older respondents are less likely than younger ones to report experiencing lifetime discrimination. For both blacks and whites, men are more likely than women to report lifetime discrimination. Interestingly, among blacks gender and education are the two most important predictors of lifetime discrimination, whereas for whites it is age and gender. There are a couple of noteworthy interactions. For example, education is an important predictor of lifetime discrimination for blacks but not whites. Gender is more strongly linked to lifetime discrimination for blacks than whites. Controlling for age, gender, and education reduces the effect of income on lifetime discrimination to non significance for both blacks

Table 5. Regression Analysis of Discrimination (Lifetime, Recent, and Everyday) by Race (Standardized Regression Coefficients)

Variable	Discrimination					
	Lifetime		Recent		Everyday	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
Education	.173***	.069	.026	-.012	.097***	-.020
Gender						
Male	.308***	.134**	.150***	.021	.133**	.110**
Female (omitted category)						
Age	-.099**	-.229**	-.296**	-.245**	-.295**	-.409**
Income (natural log)	-.032	-.004	-.121**	-.050	-.103**	.002
Adj. R-square	12.4%	7.7%	11.7%	5.1%	12.2%	17.8%

Notes: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Significant differences in effects for Blacks and whites are determined by whether the interaction coefficient between race and a particular independent variable is statistically significant in the full, pooled model.

^a Difference in coefficients for Blacks and whites is statistically significant at $p \leq .01$

^b Difference in coefficients for Blacks and whites is statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

^c Difference in coefficients for Blacks and whites is statistically significant at $p \leq .10$

and whites. Also noteworthy is the different amount of variance explained by the four sociodemographic factors by race. Among blacks these four variables explain 12.4 percent of the variance compared to 7.7 percent among whites.

Columns 3 and 4 report standardized coefficients for recent discrimination by race. Again like bivariate analysis black and white younger respondents are more likely than older ones to report recent discrimination. Education is not related to recent reports of discrimination. Age is the most important predictor of recent discrimination for both blacks and whites. There are three noteworthy interactions for recent discrimination. Gender is only significantly related to discrimination for blacks. Second age is more strongly linked to recent discrimination among blacks than whites. Finally, income is significantly related to recent reports of discrimination for blacks but not whites. For blacks, the higher their income the less likely they are to report recent discrimination. A similar pattern observed for lifetime discrimination also emerged for recent discrimination, that is, the four sociodemographic factors explained more variance in recent discrimination among blacks (11.7%) than whites (5.1%).

Columns 5 and 6 report standardized coefficients for everyday discrimination by race. Similar to bivariate analysis age is inversely related to reports of everyday discrimination. Older respondents, whether black or white, are less likely than younger ones to report everyday discrimination. Black and

white men are more likely than black and white women to report everyday discrimination. Education is positively associated with everyday discrimination among blacks but not whites. Blacks with higher educational levels are more likely than those with lower levels to report everyday discrimination. Age is the most important predictor of everyday discrimination among whites and blacks. Income is negatively associated with everyday discrimination for blacks but not whites. For blacks, the higher their income the less likely they are to report everyday discrimination. Unlike patterns observed for lifetime and recent discrimination, the four sociodemographic factors explained more variance in everyday discrimination among whites (17.8%) than blacks (12.2%).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Several months prior to his death of AIDS Arthur Ashe was interviewed by Charlie Rose. On his show Mr. Rose asked Ashe whether or not the AIDS virus was the most difficult challenge he had faced in his life. Ashe replied, "No, being black is... even now it continues to feel like an extra weight tied around me" (Shuster 1993). As Arthur Ashe asserted and as our study confirms, discrimination remains a major obstacle for blacks, including those that are the most successful (see Cose 1993; Collins 1997a; 1997b; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Graham 1995). In this study, we tried to bring greater conceptual and methodological clarity to one of the most important risk factors for blacks—harassment based on race. While many have discussed the difficulty of measuring discrimination in the survey context (see Hagan 1977; Smith 1993) the present article demonstrates the utility of using broad-based population samples to study such an important social phenomenon.

In this work we have also sought to go beyond prior survey work on discrimination by including multiple measures of discrimination. Our analyses support several conclusions about discrimination. First, multiple indicators of discrimination are necessary in order to provide accurate estimates of the overall prevalence of discrimination among both blacks and whites. In general, if we were to rely on any one indicator of discrimination in our survey we would derive estimates of discrimination ranging from 14 percent to 38.2 percent for blacks and 11.9 percent to 24.1 percent for whites. Each of these proportions lend themselves to varying interpretations of the prevalence of discrimination. Importantly, when multiple items are considered a different picture emerges concerning the prevalence of discrimination. That is, in our study blacks reports of discrimination are consistently higher than previous research that used single items or focused on one life domain. In this regard, our work is consistent with prior research on discrimination that considered multiple items and a broad range of settings (Bobo and Suh 1995; Gary 1995; Landrine and Klonoff 1996; Sigelman and Welch 1991).

Second our analyses indicate that blacks and whites predictably differ in the experience of discrimination. Blacks are more likely than whites to report lifetime, recent, and everyday discrimination. The relationship between racial group membership and discrimination does not vary by age, gender, social class, or setting. Given such a finding one might conclude that prior research's lack of focus on discrimination against whites is warranted. We disagree. In the present study a fair amount (36.4%) of whites report experiencing at least one form of discrimination. Consequently, future research needs to pay closer attention to the experience of discrimination among whites. However, this raises important conceptual issues concerning the construct discrimination. That is, what is the nature and meaning of discrimination among whites? It is noteworthy to state that our survey work has benefited enormously from the qualitative research on discrimination among African Americans conducted by Feagin and Sikes (1994) and Cose (1993). Unfortunately, no qualitative studies of discrimination exist among whites. As a result, we are often left to speculate about the meaning of various forms of discrimination reported in our white sample. For example, 24.1 percent of whites report that they have been unfairly fired/denied a promotion. Is this reverse discrimination? Available evidence cast strong doubt on such an interpretation. Wicker (1996) for example points out that between 1990-1994 reverse discrimination cases accounted for one to three percent of all employment discrimination cases. He adds, "many of these were brought by disappointed job seekers who were found by the courts to be less qualified than the job winners" (Wicker 1996, p. 98). Thus, the interpretation of whites reports of discrimination requires greater attention and more qualitative investigation.

Third our analyses reveal that discrimination varies by site. Recent work suggest that discrimination is not a geographically bounded phenomenon (Essed 1991; Feagin 1991; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Gardner 1995; Ruddick 1996). In fact, our data shows that a majority of discrimination against blacks occurs in semi-public and public settings. For example, a little more than four in 10 blacks are subjected to some form of verbal or non-verbal hostility on a daily basis. It seems that efforts three decades ago to provide equal access to public accommodations for racial minorities remains an elusive ideal. To be sure, the measures used in the present study to capture the different sites of discrimination only begin to tap the plethora of arenas in which discrimination occur. Future research should pay greater attention to the distinction between private, semi-public, and public sites of discrimination.

Fourth our analyses indicate that the relationship between socioeconomic status and discrimination is rather complex. While we found strong and consistent positive effects of education on discrimination we did not find similar a pattern for income. In bivariate analyses each social class measure operated in the direction that we expected. However, in multivariate analyses among African Americans, income oftentimes had the opposite effect of education.

That is, the lower your income the more likely you were to report experiencing recent and everyday discrimination. There are a number of possible explanations for these results but given the nature of our data we believe that these should be taken up by future research. Here we would like to just note that it is important that researchers develop a clearer understanding of how various socioeconomic status indicators relate to discrimination.

Finally, our analyses show that discrimination is a pervasive phenomenon among African Americans. Feagin and Sikes (1994, p. 360) argue that "racial discrimination is not an abstraction... nor is it mainly a problem of the recent past. For most... racial discrimination is not a matter of isolated incidents, but instead a succession of negative experiences with whites from early years of childhood to the last years of adulthood." Also implied by their comments is that discrimination occurs throughout the African American life course. Yet, our bivariate and multivariate analyses found strong and consistent negative age effects on African American reports of discrimination. In our sample the young were more likely than the old to report discrimination. These results are important since they lend themselves to both life cycle and cohort explanations that would contradict Feagin and Sikes assertion. Unfortunately the cross-sectional data used in the present study does not allow us to make any statements regarding the veracity of either explanation. However, this is an important issue for future research.

In conclusion, while there is a clear social science tradition of studying discrimination much prior work has been hampered by both methodological and conceptual uncertainty. The findings reported in this study we hope are a first step toward a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of discrimination. In addition, we hope that it is quite apparent from our study of discrimination that there exists a need for both qualitative and quantitative research on discrimination. This study shows that public harassment based on race in public and semi-public places remains a critical feature of contemporary life. Our results clearly indicate that: (1) both blacks and whites experience discrimination; (2) discrimination varies by site; and (3) discrimination is not randomly distributed. A potential limitation of this study is that it is based on data from a single city, Detroit. Yet, a comparison of our findings to nationally-based survey results leaves little reason to doubt our results.

APPENDIX

Measures of Discrimination in the 1995 Detroit Area Study

- I. Major Experiences of Discrimination*
1. Do you think you have ever been unfairly fired or denied a promotion? Yes = 1, no = 0.
 2. For unfair reasons, do you think you have ever not been hired for a job? Yes = 1, no = 0.
 3. Do you think you have ever been unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically treated or abused by the police? Yes = 1, no = 0.
 4. Do you think you have ever been unfairly discouraged by a teacher or advisor from continuing your education? Yes = 1, no = 0.
 5. Do you think you have ever been unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood because the landlord or a realtor refused to sell or rent you a house or apartment? Yes = 1, no = 0.
 6. Have you ever moved into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult for you or your family? Yes = 1, no = 0.
- II. Everyday Discrimination*
- In your day-to-day life how often have any of the following things happened to you?
1. You are treated with less courtesy than other people?
 2. You are treated with less than other people?
 3. You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores?
 4. People act as if they think you are not smart?
 5. People act as if they are afraid of you?
 6. People acts as if they think you are dishonest?
 7. People act as if they're better than you are?
 8. You are threatened or harassed?
 9. You are threatened or harassed?

Answers were coded from 1 = never to 5 = every often. (Very often/fairly often) = 1; not too often/hardly ever/never = 0)

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NOTES

1. The terms African American and black will be used interchangeably in the present article.
2. See Bonilla-Silva and Lewis (in press) for an excellent discussion of the importance of this type of discrimination in the Post Civil Rights era. In addition, Essed (1991) provides a cross-national perspective on the more subtle forms of discrimination.
3. Because the study over-represented African Americans it is necessary to use weights in analyses that seeks to generalize to the Detroit metropolitan area population, but multivariate analyses of discrimination for the separate racial groups will not be biased without weighting (for a discussion of this matter see Winship and Radbill 1994).

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