Agents of Socialization: Effects on the Attitudes and Beliefs of African Americans on Interracial Marriages

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Agents of Socialization: Effects on the Attitudes and Beliefs of African Americans on Interracial Marriages

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Sociology
Western Kentucky University
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jashard Justice
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Agents of Socialization: Effects on the Attitudes and Beliefs of African Americans on Interracial Marriages

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Director of Thesis

Date

Director of Graduate Studies
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Agents of Socialization: Effects on the Attitudes and Beliefs of African Americans toward Interracial Marriages

Ja’Shard Justice August 2002 70 pages

Directed by Joan Krenzin, Douglas Smith, James Grimm, and Muyoma Musalia

Department of Sociology Western Kentucky University

Using the 2000 General Social Survey I analyzed appropriate variables to assess the effects of agents of socialization in relation to the attitudes and beliefs of African Americans toward interracial marriages. Socialization theory was examined and used as a framework to guide this current study. Regression analyses indicated that neighborhood composition is the best predictor of facilitating positive attitudes for African Americans toward interracial marriages. In line with past research, African Americans, despite ongoing discrimination and prejudiced attitudes, still prefer to reside in neighborhoods that are mixed 50-50 (Farley, Schuman, Bianchi, Colasanto, and Hatchett 1978). Contrary to expectations, education, schools, peers, class, and religion failed to be significant. Moreover, 96 percent of
African Americans opposed laws banning racial intermarriage.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is no mystery that racism and discrimination still exist in our society. However, “Americans have moved from open hostility and aggressive racism to a more subdued, covert, and even unconscious form of racism” (Sydell and Nelson 2000, p. 267). This latter form of racism is primarily due to the abolition of the Jim Crow Laws, which prevented the mixing of races in any shape, form, or fashion.

As our world continuously evolves, racism will always take center stage even though the races may change. Modern racism in the United States is a product of the beliefs and attitudes held by whites many years ago. Moreover, the beliefs and prejudiced attitudes of whites toward African Americans along with other minorities have been deeply embedded in our social structure. The division between blacks and whites is widened, and even more solidified, by ignorant and close-minded individuals. These people undermine past and present efforts to alleviate ongoing racial tensions.
Ongoing changes in the context of race relations bring forward sensitive issues that are simultaneously ignored by many while openly accepted by others. Although America has undergone a substantial amount of improvement in race relations, crossing from formal or impersonal to intimate ties still is a big step. The breaking down of legal barriers opened the gates to new and improved opportunities. These opportunities ranged from better jobs to better living conditions. Needless to say, the abolition of laws preventing the mixing of races also had a significant effect on intimate relationships. "A swarm of people are beginning to break down the color barriers rooted in the past and are beginning to cross all racial and ethnic backgrounds that you could ever imagine" (Suro 1999, p. 56).

The color of our skin is no longer an impenetrable barrier for finding love, peace, and happiness. Decades ago people were restricted by law to racially homogenous relationships. Interracial marriages were forbidden. With this notion in mind some people were forced into relationships that were, in their eyes, undesirable. However, people today are free to express their freedom in various ways. Some expressions of freedom bring about consequences that are severe, which if not anticipated may
cause the destruction of these subjective expressions (e.g., “coming out of the closet”). On the other hand, there are expressions of freedom that have little or no consequences at all (e.g., eating at your restaurant of choice).

However, the freedom that appeals to me is the ability to love, marry, or date anyone regardless of class, race, or sex. Interracial marriages have steadily been on the rise because legal and normative barriers have been broken. According to Suro (1999), there were 310,000 interracial marriages in 1970. This number increased dramatically in 1992 to 1,161,000 and continues to rise today. Needless to say, this courageous defiance of traditional social norms by numerous couples stirs up mixed emotions.

This study focuses on the perceptions and attitudes held by African Americans regarding racial intermarriage. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of various agents of socialization (e.g., parents, schools, and peers) on the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have towards racial intermarriage. To guide my analyses I examined socialization theory. I extracted variables from a 2000 GSS data set in order to analyze the effects of agents of socialization on the attitudes African Americans have as regards interracial marriages. The next chapter
pertains to the theory I will use in order to explain African Americans’ attitudes and beliefs regarding interracial marriages.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The United States has undergone significant changes in relation to the common values and beliefs of society. Traditionally, society valued all forms of endogamy, which is the tendency to marry within one's own group (race, religion, social class, etc.). However, contemporary society focuses less emphasis on endogamy, especially as regards race because modern society has been influenced primarily by private and public cultures.

In "private cultures" the values and beliefs present in a society derive from the cultural heritage of many racial and ethnic groups. In contrast, the term "public cultures" refers to the values and beliefs that derive from schools or the media (Roer-Strier and Rosenthal 2001, p. 220). Trying to balance the values and beliefs of both private and public agents is a complicated task for many people. It is possible that the values and beliefs of a public culture or agent may be contradictory to the values and beliefs of a private culture. This contradiction of
values and beliefs illustrates the importance of significant others and reference groups.

Nevertheless, contradictions between the values and beliefs of public and private cultures would also disrupt the social order. There would be a lack of understanding between the two people on the basis of norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs. Therefore, this lack of understanding of one another would give rise to conflict and possibly cause them to withdraw from one another.

Socialization Theory

Socialization is the process of learning and internalizing new norms, values, and beliefs, which help individuals, participate effectively in social groups or in society at large (Lauer and Handel 1983, p. 98). Effective socialization entails a change in attitudes, which in turn reflects behavior. Socialization is a never-ending process that begins at birth. There are various agents of socialization such as the family, schools, or even churches. Families, which are the most important "primary groups," a term coined by Cooley [1909] 1964, are of critical importance in the development of the child. Anything we currently know, understand, or believe came about through socialization. Cooley, Angell, and Carr
(1933) specified five fundamental characteristics of primary groups:

1. Face-to-face association;
2. The unspecialized character of the association;
3. Relative permanence;
4. The small number of persons involved;
5. The relative intimacy prevailing among the participants (p. 53).

In regard to childhood socialization, parents or the family come first and foremost until the child starts school. They have a profound effect on the actions and behaviors of children. Parents’ attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms become “imaginary boundaries,” which guide the behaviors of their children. Stated more explicitly, these imaginary boundaries are a form of social control, and children internalize the norms and expectations of their parents.

Consequently, the children’s actions and behaviors are directed or guided in ways that reinforce the values, norms, and beliefs of their parents. This process holds true at least during the primary years of socialization. Parents in a sense mold their children’s attitudes and beliefs into nearly identical reflections of their own values and beliefs; parents’ ideal image of their children is reflective of their ideologies (Roer-Strier and Rosenthal 2001).
In order to explain the process of childhood socialization, Mead (1934) developed several fundamental stages. Within the first stage Mead emphasized the importance of the infant recognizing the responses of others in a situation. The meanings associated with various symbols are understood only through the responses of others. To learn various norms and beliefs, children must be socialized through interaction. During this preparatory stage, babies acquire several symbols either from gestures or through language. For example, they learn that crying, smiling, or various sounds elicit certain types of responses from their parents (Levin 1991). However, these symbols or meanings come to be understood only through the responses of others (Mead 1934). The responses of others during this stage are germane to the initial development or socialization of the child.

**Play Stage**

In this stage children imitate the behaviors of adults; however, understanding of various symbols and meanings is not present in the child. Children are practicing meaningful adult behavior in this stage (Levin 1991). The concept "looking-glass self," another term coined by Charles Cooley ([1909] 1964), elaborates on this stage of development. Cooley believes that we see
ourselves through our perception of how others see us. The looking-glass self is based on the perceptions we have of how others view us. According to Mead (1934) this notion of looking-glass self is referred to as “role taking” or taking the role of particular others. Taking the role of particular others allows us to recognize ourselves as objects. The ability of the child to think of himself or herself vis a vis “particular others” is characteristic of this stage.

**Game Stage**

There is a major leap between Mead’s game stage and play stage. The game stage is distinguished by the child’s ability to associate meanings with various symbols. Children understand that they “play” a certain position in the game and that people expect them to perform their parts well. In addition, children understand that others’ positions are different and have different norms.

The internalization of various norms, values, and beliefs is found outside particular others in what Mead called “generalized others” (Mead 1934, p. 167). Taking the role of the “generalized other” requires the child to take into consideration the norms, values, beliefs, and expectations of a group in society. The difference is inherent in the fact that not only are the expectations of
significant others important but the expectations of various groups are also vital for developing the child. Thus, the child has internalized society. Society is in oneself, and the self arises through role taking and internalizing all these roles. Therefore, one understands how to act or behave in any given situation.

It is in the form of the generalized other that the social process influences the behavior of the individuals involved in it and carrying it on, i.e., that the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members; for it is in this form that the social process or community enters as a determining factor into the individual’s thinking (Mead 1934, p. 167).

Various norms and values are learned throughout a person’s life. A significant portion of the norms learned about what is right or wrong as regards romantic relationships is acquired from childhood peer cultures. Children as young as preschoolers produce peer cultures that are very influential in the acquisition of various norms (Corsaro and Rizzo 1988).

Within this context I believe the socialization processes of African Americans will have a profound effect on the perceptions and attitudes they may have regarding interracial marriages. Understanding the processes of socialization is vital for gaining a deeper understanding of the perceptions and attitudes people have about
interracial marriages. However, socialization is a life-
long, continuous process. Socialization extends beyond an
infancy or childhood stage to what can be called adult
socialization. Agents of adult socialization are less
influential on the individual mainly because adults come
into situations with preexisting values and beliefs (Lauer
and Handel 1983). Ronald Inglehart's (1977) belief that
attitudes crystallize is consistent with the belief that
agents of adult socialization have a lesser impact on the
lives of individuals.

Society is ever changing. Incorporated into this
belief is the notion of "resocialization" (Levin 1991, p.
151). Adaptation to the norms, values, beliefs, and
expectations of the present environment is imperative for
the individual to function properly in society. As we
mature physically and mentally, we venture out into other
groups. Groups within our society are very diverse.
Diversity poses a greater threat for some than for others.
Diversity gives one at least some choice or alternative to
satisfy one's own impulses (Lauer and Handel 1983).

In some earlier times, perhaps, societies were
homogenous. The ideal image parents had of children was
constant from one generation to the next; however, where
societies are undergoing a substantial amount of change
(e.g., social or political), the “adaptive adult” image may be symbolic of the future desired (Roer-Strier and Rosenthal 2001, p. 219). Parents and other agents of socialization who are exposed to new values and norms of a society are supposed to adapt to and internalize the new values prescribed by that society. However, adaptation is not the ultimate result in all cases. In societies in which the duration of a common set of beliefs has been relatively long, an individual’s ability to adapt to new values becomes harder (Wu and Thomson 2001).

This behavior is expressed in modern-day society. Racist attitudes of the past are being reenacted into our future, and conflicting forces of socialization are taking place. The process of recycling racist attitudes has a major impact on race relations. Clinging to the past and its way of life prevent an individual from functioning properly in the present and future. This problem would not exist if society were constant. However, society undergoes constant changes, which may affect previously internalized norms and values. These conflicting interests explain the controversy in the United States over interracial relationships. It is the people of the past or people who are still living in the past that affect our current position in society as regards race relations. An
individual who remains unchanged despite constant evolution develops a blurred vision clouded by the norms, values, and beliefs of the past.

Some African Americans may have been socialized to believe Whites are equal and to treat them fairly despite a long history of racism and discrimination. If this type of socialization occurred in African American families, those family members may be more open and accepting of interracial marriages. However, some African Americans may have been socialized to dislike or hate Whites due to the history of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Within this context African Americans will favor laws against racial intermarriage. Moreover, they may object to interracial relationships in general. In the next chapter I will examine various agents of socialization that can conceivably affect African Americans’ attitudes and beliefs regarding interracial marriages.
CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although antimiscegenation laws have been abolished for over thirty years (Qian 1999), for many Americans the past is inescapable. The bitter beliefs and attitudes held against interracial marriages or dating in our past have made their way into our new millennium. Norms make some lines of action easier to travel; therefore, those lines of action are most often followed. The normative consequences or repercussions for taking such pathways in life are less severe (e.g., emotionally, physically, or psychologically). Moreover, when lines of action are anticipated as overwhelmingly difficult, people are more reluctant to pursue them. Exploring the unknown is filled with feelings of anomie.

Contemporary belief in segregation among blacks and whites has been derived from past generations, which emphasized segregation. Segregation based solely on the color of someone's skin was the way of life during the days of slavery. This type of discrimination and inequality was
law, and this law was not atypical in any sense (Morris and Robinson 1996).

**Endogamy**

Endogamy is the tendency for people to marry someone within their own group (e.g., race, social class, religion) (Kalmijn 1998). Thus, racial endogamy is the tendency for people to marry someone within their own race. The prevalence of endogamy mirrors the beliefs and attitudes held by the dominant culture during slavery. The Jim Crow Laws stated that blacks and whites were to be afforded separate facilities (Price 2001). These laws have been abolished for many decades, but endogamous relationships have persisted over a substantial amount of time.

Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 it would have been logical to deduce that blacks and whites live as separate entities because of legal requirements. Furthermore, it would have been easier to use the law as a scapegoat to justify actions and behaviors. However, in the midst of all the legal changes and transformations that have occurred, endogamy has still been prevalent. It is not law that has prevented the formation of interracial relationships (e.g., dating or marriage). What has caused endogamy to persist? Why do some individuals refrain from dating or marrying someone outside their race?
It is common belief that interracial relationships are condemned by our society. Popular attitudes toward interracial relationships are bitter and negative. However, endogamous behavior does not necessarily mean that both groups are closed (Kalmijn 1998). Just as it takes two to tango, it takes two to marry. If members of two groups have different perspectives on interracial marriage, endogamy may still be the ultimate consequence. Nevertheless, statistics indicate that interracial marriages between blacks and whites are on a rise, yet very low when compared to intraracial marriages (Kaljimn 1998).

Past studies on interracial relationships have examined only couples that were married (Yancey and George 1998). Within this context light is shed on the reasons why people in an interracial relationship marry one another. Is socialization relevant to this question? For example, I may have been socialized to believe that dating white girls is all right but marrying them is undoubtedly wrong.

Merton’s (1941) exchange theory suggests that whites who enter into interracial relationships trade their racial status and superiority for relational capital such as physical attractiveness. On the other hand, blacks who enter into interracial relationships, most likely, trade
money or physical attractiveness for the higher racial status of a white person. Murstein, Merighi, and Malloy (1989) support this belief also.

Kalimijn (1998) examined socioeconomic resources as regards marriage patterns. The economic well-being and status of one spouse improves the overall well-being and social class of the family. With this notion in mind people search for a spouse who is economically stable. Consequently, the economic well-being and status of the family will increase.

The status of the family is based primarily upon the occupation of the husband due to pay differentials between men and women in the work force. Class background, physical attractiveness, and or cultural participation will be exchanged when the well-being of the family is dependent upon the occupation of the husband (Kalmijn 1998). Kalmijn has also indicated that the smaller the group, the less likely members of that group will marry within their own group. In other words, endogamy is affected by the size of the group. Moreover, the more an individual comes into contact and interacts with members of another group, the more likely he or she is to marry outside his or her group (Kalmijn 1998). Within this context the more African Americans interact with whites, the more likely they are to
hold positive attitudes and beliefs regarding interracial marriages.

**Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are generalizations about members of a group simply because of their membership in that group (Levin 1991). Thus, stereotypes can be perceived as either positive or negative. However, it is the negative stereotyping of African Americans that has endured and crippled our society.

Stereotypes were placed on African American slaves, and they were used to justify the inhumane and oppressive acts of the dominant culture (Levin 1991). African Americans have been historically characterized as hostile, violent, unintelligent, drug dealers, drug addicts, and welfare queens (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Lapchick 2000; New York Amsterdam News 1997). These stereotypical characteristics of African Americans do not uncover half of the racial overtones that undermine the existence of African Americans.

When blacks are judged based on the rich source of negative stereotypes, they are at a great disadvantage. Negative stereotypes have truly been instrumental in perpetuating endogamy patterns. Whites who are dependent on stereotypes to guide their behavior and beliefs are
deprived of experiencing life in its true sense. Research has indicated that whites are more negative and prejudiced than blacks against members of other races (Mills, Daly, and Longmore 1995). On the other hand, more blacks than whites believe that interracial relationships of any form are unacceptable to whites (Jarmon 1980; Passet and Taylor 1991).

It has been found that whites with strongly held negative stereotypes toward blacks are more reluctant to change or alter their stereotypical characteristics of an African American and are more likely to conceive of these behaviors as a black phenomenon (Hurwitz and Peffly 1997). Thus, whites in a sense fall victim to practicing stigmatization. Whites who base reality on distorted images of blacks align their own actions in response to those stereotypes. Consequently, many African Americans believe that most whites are prejudiced.

Stereotyping can also lead to stigmatization for African Americans. Coined by Erving Goffman (1963), stigma in this sense is the negative stereotyping of a person or group that leads to them accepting this negative label. The infamous crime of the century stirred up mixed emotions between whites and blacks. The crime itself, whether O.J. committed it or not, played a negative role in society. It
fed the negative energies of whites who pass judgment on blacks due to negative stereotypes (Gallop Poll Organization 1997).

To many whites, O.J. entered the trial as a fellow white man and grew darker as the proceedings went on. He was the perfectly assimilated minority hero until he was associated with terrible crimes. Then he became just another black male under arrest, presumed to be guilty of everything. In their imagination he was transformed in the course of a year from one of their own to Bigger Thomas (p. 41).

The sheer magnitude and force of negative stereotypes is evident in this case. Hence, you have a white woman swept off her feet by a famous black star athlete who is, now, no different from any other African American. This case is stereotypical of whites and blacks who date or marry interracially: “Show me the money.” Now I must shift my attention to the various socialization agents that may play vital roles in shaping the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have regarding interracial marriage.

**Parental Socialization**

Parents are undoubtedly the most influential in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of their children (Thomas and Speight 1999). African Americans are a very unique group to study because of their torturous past. In light of the attitudes and perceptions African Americans have
regarding interracial marriages, it is crucial to face the gruesome reality of their past experiences (Thomas and Speight 1999). Despite prejudiced attitudes and discrimination, blacks have endured the pain and struggle.

How are the socialization processes of African Americans different from the socialization processes of whites? African American parents' socialization tactics or practices are different from those of white parents because of their history and background experiences. Previous research has indicated that both black and white parents discuss race with their children (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, and Wilson 2001); however, the messages conveyed are different. White parents tend to emphasize tolerance and equality while African American parents focus more on cultural heritage and racial pride (McLoyd et al. 2001).

This specific socialization practice present in African American families is typically thought of as racial socialization. Racial socialization promotes strong self-identity along with group identity (Thomas and Speight 1999). Thorton, Chatters, Taylor, and Allen (1990) reported that two out of every three African American parents provided some form of racial socializations message to their children. However, some studies indicate that not all African American parents value race and find it
significant in everyday life (McLoyd et al. 2001; Thompson 1994).

Some African American parents downplay the role of racism and refrain from talking about it unless their children bring it to their attention (Thompson-Vetta 1994). The reasons given for deliberately ignoring race and racism in the daily lives of some African American parents were in their children’s so-called best interest. They did not want to fill their children’s heads with negativity and hatred towards whites (Thompson-Vetta 1994). This tolerant outlook still coincides with the intentions other African American parents have in preparing their children to deal with the ills of the world (e.g., prejudice, and discrimination).

There are clear inconsistencies within the research data that has been developed on the socialization messages that African Americans convey to their children. Some studies have indicated that African American families’ racial socialization messages are full of words promoting adaptive strategies for coping with a prejudiced society (Kofkin, Katz, and Downey 1995). Other research has uncovered the fact some African American parents do not find it as important in preparing their children for dealing with stereotyping and discrimination (Thorton et
al. 1990). However, one study has indicated that African American parents racially socialized their girls differently from their boys. Whereas girls received more socialization messages toward achievement, boys received more messages on prejudice, discrimination, and coping mechanisms (Thomas and Speight 1999). This practice may be due to the overwhelming amount of discrimination and prejudice towards African American men. Parents may feel that African American males are more susceptible to prejudiced acts and stereotyping. Thus, emphasizing coping mechanisms is of vital importance for these parents.

One way African Americans deal with oppression and dissipate anger is by group cohesion. Strong kinship ties have been very instrumental in the families of African Americans. Extended family members have been anchors in the midst of storms (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, and Buriel 1990). The relevance of extended family members in the lives of African Americans dates back to the slave days when collectivism was valued as a source for dealing with societal problems (Harrison et al. 1990).

The role extended family members play in providing financial, emotional, and psychological support has also been greatly researched. However, the particular roles they play in the socialization process have not received
much attention (Harrison et al. 1990).

Age is another variable that has been examined regarding racial socialization but has received very little attention (Thomas and Speight 1999; Thorton et al. 1990). As a person's age increases, the chances of dating or marrying interracially decreases (Hallinan and Williams 1987). Furthermore, the older you are, the more likely you are to racially socialize (Thorton et al. 1990). This finding may suggest that older generations are more in touch with their cultural heritage. It may also be harder for older generations to accept new norms and values because the old ones had been part of their lives for a longer period of time. Within this context older African Americans may emphasize racial pride and culture more because they are able to relate more to the definitions of being black and living in a white man’s world.

**School Socialization**

School socialization is important because schools are usually the first places children are able to interact with others outside of their family without being under the control of their parents (Elkin and Handle 1984). Moreover, the increased influence of schools on the behaviors and beliefs of children may be due to the weakening influence of parents (Kalmijn 1998).
Schools in the South, at first, were segregated due to the Jim Crow Laws. This type of segregation of schools meant that blacks and whites had their own curricula. The famous Supreme Court decision of Brown vs. The Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas was very instrumental for improving the chances for blacks in schools and education (Turner 1995). Through various civil rights movements blacks worked their way into white schools, and, indeed, there was enormous controversy between blacks and whites over the desegregation of schools.

The educational system of the past possessed values and beliefs identical to those of the dominant culture (Spencer 1998; Turner 1995). Therefore, the values and beliefs of African Americans were ignored. Educational reforms were implemented in the 20th century despite great oppression from Whites (Spencer 1998). These new educational reforms were aimed specifically at eliminating the discrimination and inequality that was present in our educational systems. The segregation of schools tended to reinforce the values and beliefs of segregation in mainstream society. This reinforcement was done directly and indirectly (Egan 1992; Turner 1995). Today, under the changes taking place in our educational systems, African Americans’ values and beliefs are being incorporated into
school experiences in order to increase their awareness of and identity with their cultural heritage.

An education is a valuable tool to possess. Several studies have concluded that more highly educated members of ethnic or racial minority groups marry outside their race more often than do their counterparts who are less educated (Kalmijn 1998; Qian 1999). Furthermore, it has been found that parents with higher levels of education racially socialize their children more than do the less educated parents (Thorton et al 1990).

Peer Socialization

I can vividly remember the friendships I established in elementary school. In most cases the relationships children establish in elementary school tend to follow them throughout their years of schooling. Children do just about anything to "fit in" or be accepted by their peers. Peers are third parties who are not directly involved in the family relationship. Peers become important because they can prevent individuals from marrying outside their race (Kalmijn 1998).

One way third parties prevent exogamy is by group identification. It is not atypical for children to be brought up with some sense of group identification (Kalmijn 1998). This group identification collaborates with the
socialization efforts of African American parents who aim at developing strong individual and group identity. This form of group identification comes about from either awareness of a common background or cultural heritage or by recognizing differences (Kalmijn 1998). The deeper the feelings of group identification and the more people have internalized the social norms of endogamy, the greater their chances of marrying endogamously.

**Neighborhood Socialization**

Neighborhoods have received little attention in studying the attitudes and beliefs about interracial marriage or dating. However, an array of studies has indicated that the composition of the neighborhood is vital to the socialization processes. Mothers who live in neighborhoods where there are similar distributions of whites and blacks tend to racially socialize their children more than mothers in all black communities (Thorton et al. 1990).

Numerous studies have indicated that although the United States has changed immensely as regards race relations, residential segregation is still prevalent. Whites, overall, have consistently shown a greater reluctance than their counterparts to live in neighborhoods that are diverse in nature with respect to race. A large
percentage of whites (75%) live in neighborhoods or municipalities that are less than five percent black (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). However, a majority of African Americans prefer to live in racially integrated neighborhoods that are 50-50 (Farley, Schuman, Bianchi, Colasanto, and Hatchett 1978).

Many whites view their neighborhoods as separate entities as regards race. The presence of substantial numbers of blacks in the neighborhood contaminates this so-called sacred land or ground, which gives rise to neighborhood tipping. Neighborhood tipping occurs, mostly, in low status neighborhoods where there are significant numbers of blacks (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). Once a neighborhood or suburb acquires the stigma of being black it ceases to be an attractive area for whites due to the negative connotations whites attribute to blacks in our society (Aldrich 1975; Schneider and Logan 1982; Schnore, Andre, and Sharp 1976). Subsequently, a neighborhood that is predominantly white, at one point in time, transforms into a predominantly black neighborhood.

Class Socialization

Racial attitudes are shaped in part by an individual's class or socioeconomic status in society. People who comprise the lower class are in more competition for
economic resources (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). However, in the past laws eliminated this competition between blacks and whites.

Resources for people who are in the lower class are extremely scarce. The knowledge of having limited resources intensifies the struggle and strain for jobs and other services, which perpetuates racial animosity, especially for whites (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). Some researchers believe that whites who live in low-status neighborhoods denigrate out-groups for the purpose of maintaining their own dignity, pride, and self-esteem (Brown 1985; Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Needless to say, people who constitute the lower class typically live in low-status neighborhoods. Moreover, individuals who live in low-status neighborhoods are usually less educated (Skogan 1990). The characteristics of these low-status neighborhoods are overbearing and have an immense impact on racial attitudes. People living in low-status neighborhoods are exposed to higher rates of crime, violence, drugs, and very poor sanitary conditions in contrast to people who reside in middle-class neighborhoods. Thus, these environmental conditions, coupled with limited access to resources, heighten the opposition one race has toward out-groups by creating
feelings of anxiety, fear, and alienation (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000).

Quite to the contrary, people who are in the upper class live in upper and upper middle-class neighborhoods or municipalities in which the threat or chances of neighborhood tipping are greatly diminished (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000). Denton and Massey (1988) discovered that, for most racial and ethnic groups, as social class rises, residential segregation slowly diminishes. However, blacks are an exception to this finding. The majority of African Americans, despite their social classes, tend to reside in neighborhoods that are predominantly black.

Numerous research studies have shown that as the percentages of blacks increase within the community, county, or metropolitan area, whites' negative racial attitudes also increase (Bobo 1988; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Glaser 1994). Thus, whites who live in higher status neighborhoods tend to have less racial animosity toward African Americans because these neighborhoods consist primarily of whites. I must note that competition for economic resources is atypical between blacks and whites in higher status neighborhoods because blacks are rarely visible in white suburban neighborhoods.

To my surprise, education has failed to elicit
positive effects when assessing whites' attitudes toward large numbers of blacks living in their communities or neighborhoods (Jackman and Muha 1984; Smith 1981). A conglomeration of studies in the past has indicated that higher status whites still possess the same negative stereotypes of blacks as do lower class whites (Devine and Elliot 1995; Dovidio and Gaertner 1986). Regardless of class and education, whites opt to live in neighborhoods that are homogenous with respect to race.

It is quite clear that substantial numbers of blacks in neighborhoods or communities pose a perceived threat to whites across all socioeconomic classes. In opposition to this belief blacks, overall, are generally more accepting and tolerant of whites and interracial relationships (Davidson and Schneider 1992).

**Religious Socialization**

It is generally common knowledge that Sunday mornings are the most segregated hours of the week. This type of behavior has long been the norm in society since development of the Jim Crow Laws. The Jim Crow Laws instituted segregation in all public places; however, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned segregation in public places (Price 2001).
Religion provided many African Americans with a sense of collectivity in light of facing oppression and discrimination. This sense of collectivity is better known as "collective effervescence" (Durkheim [1912] 1965, p. 250). "It is in the midst of these effervescent social environments and out of this effervescence itself that religious idea seems to be born" (Durkheim [1912] 1965, p. 250). During slavery African Americans sought religion to escape their painful realities of extreme racism and discrimination (Morris and Robinson 1996).

Churches and religion were, indeed, symbolic of strength and endurance. Black churches developed as separate entities form white churches because of racism and discrimination on the part of whites in society. Thus, different values and beliefs developed out of the formation of separate churches (Morris and Robinson 1996). Although not legally segregated, churches have remained segregated by choice. This segregation in society enables me to assess the possible effects of black churches on the perceptions African Americans have of interracial relationships.

These are the various agents of socialization on which I focused to examine the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have regarding racial intermarriage. With
varying degrees of importance, these agents work together to mold and shape the beliefs and attitudes of African Americans. In the next chapter I will describe the methods used in the current study.
CHAPTER IV

METHODS

The process of socialization from parents, schools, peers, neighborhoods, and churches is a vital area that should be examined in order to assess the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have towards interracial marriages. The following section contains a list of several hypotheses regarding the effects of various socialization agents previously mentioned on the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have regarding interracial marriages. In addition, the manner in which I will test the hypotheses is detailed in this chapter.

Hypotheses

After reviewing the literature, I formulated the following hypotheses:

H₁: African American males will be more accepting of interracial marriages than African American females will be.

H₂: The higher the education of the parents, the greater the probability that the respondent will accept interracial marriages.

H₃: A small proportion, rather than a large proportion, of blacks in schools will facilitate
positive attitudes and beliefs for African Americans regarding interracial marriages.

\(H_4\): A small proportion, rather than a large proportion of blacks in the neighborhood when growing up will facilitate positive attitudes and beliefs toward interracial marriages.

\(H_5\): The higher the social class of the parents, the greater the probability that the respondent will accept interracial marriages.

\(H_6\): The more often a respondent attends religious services, the greater the probability that the respondent will accept interracial marriages.

**Sample**

In order to assess the effects of socialization on African Americans' attitudes and beliefs toward interracial marriages, I analyzed appropriate variables from the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a nationwide annual survey administered to noninstitutionalized adults who are 18 years of age and older. Not all people had the opportunity to respond to questions in the 2000 GSS data set. In this analysis the focus is on agents of socialization and their effects on the attitudes and beliefs of African Americans in relation to interracial marriages; thus, the sample total is 276. However, because of differences in the questions administered on ballots, the n drops to 129.
Dependent Variables

There were two dependent variables that I used for regression analyses. The first was “respondent favors close relative marrying a white person.” Just over 50 percent of respondents were somewhat in favor of a close relative marrying a white person. It is interesting to note that only 12 percent of respondents were opposed to a close relative marrying a white person. However, the second dependent variable “favor law against racial intermarriage” was analyzed dichotomously. When conducting my analyses 1=yes and 2=no. Over 96 percent of respondents were opposed to a law banning racial intermarriage.

Independent Variables

There are seven independent variables that I used in order to assess the effects of socialization on the attitudes and beliefs of blacks toward interracial marriages. They are 1) gender socialization, 2) parental socialization, 3) school socialization, 4) peer socialization, 5) neighborhood socialization, 6) class socialization, and 7) religious socialization.

In order to assess the effects of “parental socialization” on African Americans’ attitudes and beliefs regarding interracial marriages, I analyzed the following:

father’s highest year of school completed
mother’s highest year of school completed

Education has been found to be significant in assessing the attitudes and beliefs toward interracial marriages. The higher the level of education, the more likely a person will have positive attitudes toward interracial relationships (Kalmijn 1998).

Almost half of the respondents’ fathers (46%) had less than a high school level of education or a high school diploma, and roughly 35 percent had a high school diploma. In addition, only 20 percent of respondents’ fathers had one or more years of college education. Respondents’ mother’s level of education was almost identical to father’s level of education. A total of 43 percent of respondents’ mother’s had less than a high school education or high school diploma. Only 36 percent of respondents’ mothers had a high school diploma and only 20 percent of respondents’ mothers had one or more years of college education.

The school is a second agent of socialization that is just as important as parental socialization, primarily because of the extensive time children spend in a school setting or atmosphere. Hence schools’ influence on the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have toward
interracial marriages may be greater than the influence of their parents. The racial compositions of the schools blacks attend are my main focus. I analyzed school socialization by using the following variables.

- does respondent know whites from school
- high school mostly white

There were approximately 60 percent of respondents who knew whites from school and, roughly 28 percent of respondents' high schools were at least half-white. A staggering total of 70 percent of respondents' high schools included races other than white.

Attaining the school's racial composition is germane because of the exposure to peers. "Peer socialization" was also assessed from the three variables formerly mentioned. Schools are the most homogenous when it comes to age but the most heterogeneous in relation to sex (Kalmijn 1998). They are also socially segregated, some more than others are. If a school is predominantly black, African Americans may favor laws against racial intermarriage. They would interact only with peers of the same race, therefore minimizing their level of contact with whites. With this notion in mind whites, in a sense, would be foreign to African Americans. More than likely if the schools are predominantly black, so would be the neighborhoods in which
African Americans live. On the other hand, if a school mixed to some extent, African Americans may be opposed to a law banning interracial marriages.

"Neighborhood socialization" was measured by examining the following variables:

- percentage of blacks living in respondent’s community
- percentage of whites living in respondent’s community
- respondent favors living in half white neighborhood

Over 50 percent of respondents had 50 percent of blacks living in their communities. However, 50 percent of blacks had only 30 percent of whites living in their communities. In addition, 50 percent of respondents favored living in half-white neighborhoods.

Research has indicated that class or socioeconomic status is a variable that warrants attention when analyzing one-group racial attitudes toward out-groups. For this particular research study I examined the class status of the respondents’ parents. The following variables were analyzed to determine “class socialization”:

- father’s occupational prestige score
- mother’s occupational prestige score
- father’s socioeconomic index
mother's socioeconomic index

Although these four variables are measurements of status, they served as proxies for measuring the attitudes and beliefs African Americans have toward interracial marriages. The median of the respondents’ father’s occupational prestige score was 37 or less. Although slightly lower, mother’s median occupational prestige score was 35 or less.

Religion has been extremely instrumental in the lives of African Americans. Religion has long held a significant place in the everyday lives of many African Americans by suppressing the feelings of anger and hatred and uprooting positive attitudes against their own oppressors (Morris and Robinson 1996). For African Americans during slavery, church and religion allowed them a place to worship and temporarily escape their bitter and harsh reality. Religion provided African Americans with a feeling of “effervescence” (Durkheim [1912] 1965, p. 250). “Religious socialization” was measured by using the following variable:

- how often respondent attends religious services

Of the respondents 50% attended church once a month or less and only 30% of respondents attended church every week.
Analytic Procedures

To guide me in my research analysis I performed bivariate analysis, using a correlation matrix, and multivariate analysis, including multiple regression and logistic regression. Because my first dependent variable "respondent favors close relative marrying a white person" is not dichotomous, I was able to perform a multiple regression. I must note that performing multiple regression on a dichotomized variable violates the normal regression assumptions of a normal distribution. Opting to perform multiple regression allowed me to assess the best predictor(s) of respondents' favoring a close relative marrying a white person.

Logistic regression is appropriate for my research because my second dependent variable "favor law against racial intermarriage" is dichotomous. A dummy variable was created for gender in which 1=male (38%) and 0=female (62%). Logistic regression tests allowed me to analyze the significance of each independent variable on the dependent variable while holding all other variables constant. In addition, logistic regression allowed me to assess the odds of a respondent favoring a law banning racial intermarriage with respect to my independent variables at alpha levels of .05.
CHAPTER V
RESULTS

In order to investigate the relationship between agents of socialization and African Americans' attitudes towards interracial marriages, the 2000 General Social Survey data were analyzed by use of bivariate correlations, multiple regressions, and logistic regressions.

Bivariate Correlations

The data in Table 1 display the statistical results of my correlation matrix tests. This method of analysis was conducted first to assess the relationships between my independent and dependent variables and to check for multicollinearity among independent variables. Included in Table 1, also, are the Pearson Correlation r-values along with an indication of significance.

By examining the correlation matrix (Table 1) it is quite clear that the majority of my hypotheses are not supported. There is a significant and negative relationship between my two dependent variables "respondent favors close relative marrying a white person" and "favors law against racial intermarriage" (r=-.300, p<.01). In

42
other words, favoring a close relative marrying a white person decreases the likelihood of favoring a law banning racial intermarriage.

In addition, there is positive and significant relationship between "respondent favors close relative marrying a white person" and "respondent favors living in half-white neighborhood" (r=.359, p<.001). Thus, the more likely you are to favor a close relative marrying a white person, the more likely you are to favor living in a half-white neighborhood. My two dependent variables at the bivariate level were not significantly related to any of my other independent variables, thus providing early proof that many of my hypotheses would not be supported.

**Gender Socialization**

There is a negative and significant relationship between being male and "does respondent know whites from school" (r=-.191, p<.05). Furthermore, there is a negative and significant relationship between being male and "percentage of whites living in respondent’s community" (r=-.209, p<.05). This negative correlation means that being male was related to a decreased percentage of whites living in a respondent’s community. One might hypothesize that at least a portion of the sample included single males living in the inner city.
There is also a negative significant relationship between being male and "mother's occupational prestige score" \( (r = -0.162, p < 0.05) \) and "mother's socioeconomic index" \( (r = -0.163, p < 0.05) \). These two correlations indicate that males were less likely to have mothers with high occupational prestige scores and socioeconomic indexes.

Although there are four negative and significant relationships among being male and variables formerly mentioned, there is one positive and significant relationship worth noting. Being male was positively correlated in a statistically significant fashion to "percentage of blacks living in respondent's community" \( (r = 0.251, p < 0.01) \). There were no other significant relationships with respect to being male.

**Parental Socialization**

Education is also a key component to consider when assessing African Americans' attitudes toward racial intermarriages. In my bivariate analysis there were two variables intended to measure parental socialization. They were 1) father's highest year of school completed and 2) mother's highest year of school completed.

The correlation matrix in Table 1 clearly depicts a negative and significant relationship between "father's highest year of school completed" and the following
variables: "does respondent know whites from school" ($r = -0.453$, $p < 0.001$) and "high school mostly white" ($r = -0.330$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that the higher the education of the father, the less likely that respondents will know whites from school, and the less likely that the high school will be mostly white.

However, there are several positive significant relationships between "father's highest year of school completed" and variables serving as proxies for measuring class socialization. "Father's highest year of school completed" was positively and significantly linked to "father's occupational prestige score" ($r = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$), "mother's occupational prestige score" ($r = 0.420$, $p < 0.001$), "father's socioeconomic index ($r = 0.388$, $p < 0.001$), and "mother's socioeconomic index ($r = 0.447$, $p < 0.001$).

These relationships indicate that the higher the education of the father, the higher the occupational prestige score is for both him and the mother. Also, the higher the education of the father, the higher the socioeconomic index is for both him and the mother. The data in Table 1 also show a positive and significant relationship between "father's highest year of school completed" and "mother's highest year of school completed".
(r=.628, p<.001). In other words the higher the education of the father, the higher the education of the mother.

There were other significant relationships pertaining to “mother’s highest year of school completed.” Statistics in Table 1 show a negative and significant correlation between mother’s education and “does respondent know whites from school” (r=−.233, p<.05). This negative correlation shows that the higher the mother’s level of education, the less likely you are to know whites from school. This finding runs counter to what was anticipated.

In addition, mother’s level of education was significantly but positively correlated with “mother’s occupational prestige score” (r=.618, p<.001) and “mother’s socioeconomic index” (r=.579, p<.001). As the mother’s level of education increases, so does her occupational prestige score and her socioeconomic index total.

**School and Peer Socialization**

There were two variables intended to measure school and peer socialization. They were “does respondent know whites from school” and “high school mostly white.” The former had a positive and significant relationship with the variable “high school mostly white” (r=.210, p<.05). Thus, the more likely a respondent is to know whites from school, the more likely it is for his or her high school to be
mostly white. The first of the two variables intended to measure school and peer socialization was not significantly correlated to any of the other variables.

The variable "high school mostly white" was significant and negatively correlated to "percentage of whites living in a respondent’s community" ($r=-.280, p<.01$) but significant and positively correlated with "percentage of blacks living in a respondent’s community" ($r=.189, p<.05$). These statistics suggests that a high school that is mostly white will have a lower percentage of whites living in a respondent’s community and thus a higher percentage of blacks living in a respondent’s community. The variable "high school mostly white" was not significantly correlated with any other variables.

**Neighborhood Socialization**

Variables intended to measure neighborhood socialization were 1) respondent favors living in half-white neighborhood, 2) percentage of whites living in a respondent’s community, and 3) percentage of blacks living in a respondent’s community. Two of these three variables had significant relationships. "Respondent favors living in half-white neighborhood" had a significant and negative relationship with the "percentage of whites living in respondent’s community" ($r=-.181, p<.05$). Living in a
community with a low percentage of whites correlates with a respondent favoring living in a half-white neighborhood. "Percentage of whites living in a respondent's community" was negatively correlated with "percentage of blacks living in respondent's community" (r=-.775, p<.001).

**Class Socialization**

Three of four of the variables intended to measure class socialization were significantly related to other variables. "Father's occupational prestige score" was positively and significantly related to "mother's occupational prestige score" (r=.349, p<.001), "father's socioeconomic index" (r=.881, p<.001), and "mother's socioeconomic index" (r=.373, p<.001). These relationships suggest consistent measures of respondents' status.

A "mother's occupational prestige score" was positively and significantly correlated with "father's socioeconomic index" (r=.379, p<.001) and "mother's socioeconomic index" (r=.889, p<.001). Thus, the higher the mother's occupational prestige score, the higher her socioeconomic index and the higher the father's socioeconomic index. These correlations, again, show consistency of status measures.

A "father's socioeconomic index" had a positive and significant relationship with "mother's socioeconomic
index” \((r = 0.387, p < 0.001)\). As the father’s socioeconomic index increases, so does the mother’s socioeconomic index.

**Religious Socialization**

There were no significant correlations between “how often respondent attends religious services” and other variables. This finding was unexpected but might result from conflicting religious principles taught at conservative and liberal churches.

**Multiple Regression Analyses**

Table 2 shows the results of six multiple regression models. In each model, respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person was used as the dependent variable. Also, in each of the regression models, being male was included to assess whether gender was significant in relation to the dependent variable. However, as can be seen in Table 2, being male was not statistically important in any of the regression models. Therefore, my first hypothesis was refuted.

Model 1 includes two variables that were intended to serve as proxies for measuring parental socialization. With respect to Model 1, “mother’s highest year of school completed” was the only significant predictor of a respondent “favoring a close relative marrying a white person.” Furthermore, Model 1 has a \(R^2\) of coefficient of
# Table 1

**Correlation Matrix among Model Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1</th>
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<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Favors Close Relative Marrying White Person</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Favors Law Against Racial Intermarriage</td>
<td>-.300**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Being Male</td>
<td>-.089</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Father's Education</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Mother's Education</td>
<td>-.132</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.628***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Knows Whites from School</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>-.191*</td>
<td>-.453***</td>
<td>-.233*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. High School Mostly White</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-.330**</td>
<td>-.145</td>
<td>.210*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Favors Living in Half White Neighborhood</td>
<td>.359***</td>
<td>-.110</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Percentage White Living in Respondent’s Community</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-.209*</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.280**</td>
<td>-.181*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Percentage Black Living in Respondent’s Community</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.251**</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.189*</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>-.775***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Father’s Occupational Prestige Score</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.114</td>
<td>.389***</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>-.204</td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Mother’s Occupational Prestige Score</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>-.162**</td>
<td>.420***</td>
<td>.618***</td>
<td>-.145</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>.349***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Father’s Socioeconomic Index</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>.388***</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>-.151</td>
<td>-.116</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>-.104</td>
<td>.881***</td>
<td>.379***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Mother’s Socioeconomic Index</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>-.163**</td>
<td>.447***</td>
<td>.579***</td>
<td>-.177</td>
<td>-.083</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>.373***</td>
<td>.889***</td>
<td>.387***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How Often Respondent Attends Religious Services</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.069</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>-.040</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
determination of .116. This statistic means that variables intended to measure parental socialization explain roughly 12% of the total variance in a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person.

However, mother’s level of education yielded a negative beta (beta=-.378, p<.05). This evidence suggests that education does indeed affect a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person, but in a way that was not hypothesized. Hence, my second hypothesis is also rejected.

The results for Model 2 in Table 2 include variables intended to measure only the effects of school and peer socialization. However, in contrast to the statistical results in Model 1, there were no significant predictors in Model 2. Variables intended to measure school and peer socialization were not significant in determining respondents favoring a close relative marrying a white person.

Included in Model 3 are variables intended to measure the effects of neighborhood socialization. Of the three variables, "respondent favors living in a half-white neighborhood" was the only significant predictor of respondents favoring a close relative marrying a white person (beta=.377, p<.001). In other words, controlling
for all other variables, a standard deviation increase in respondents favoring living in a half-white neighborhood is expected to yield a .377 standard deviation change in respondents favoring a close relative marrying a white person.

The statistical results in Model 3 provide strong support for my fourth hypothesis; thus, neighborhood socialization does, in fact, facilitate positive attitudes and beliefs among African Americans toward interracial marriages. By examining the coefficient of determination (.156) for Model 3 it is clear that this model explains 16 percent of the variation in respondents favoring a close relative marrying a white person.

The results for Model 4 in Table 2 include variables serving as proxies for measuring class socialization. To my surprise, there were no variables in this model that significantly predicted a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person. Hence, the data in Model 4 provide irrefutable evidence to counter my fifth hypothesis.

My sixth hypothesis was also rejected. The results in Model 5 of Table 2 as regards how often a respondent attends religious services show that it had no effect on respondents favoring a close relative marrying a white person.
person. Moreover, Model 5 provided very little explanatory power ($R^2 = .022$).

I took a different approach for Model 6 in Table 2. There were no new variables introduced; however, I included the two variables that were found to be significant in my previous five regression analyses. These two variables were "mother's highest year of school completed" and "respondent favors living in a half white neighborhood."

It is interesting to note that after combining the two previous significant predictors of a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person, mother's level of education was no longer important. However, "respondent favors living in a half white neighborhood" maintained its significance (beta = .429, p < .001). This regression statistic indicates that while holding all other variables constant, a standard deviation increase in a respondent favoring living in a half white neighborhood elicits a .429 standard deviation change in a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person. The coefficient of determination is (.201), indicating that approximately 20% of the variance in a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person is explained by this model. Results clearly show that respondents current attitudes toward neighborhood composition are more important than
### Table 2
Standardized Betas and Coefficients of Determination for Regressions Showing the Determinants of Favoring a Close Relative Marrying a White Person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Male</td>
<td>-.157 (-1.171)</td>
<td>-.109 (-1.067)</td>
<td>-.043 (-.476)</td>
<td>-.254 (-1.702)</td>
<td>-.084 (-.920)</td>
<td>-.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Education</td>
<td>.244 (1.402)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td>-.378* (-2.156)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows Whites from School</td>
<td></td>
<td>-108 (-1.067)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Mostly White</td>
<td></td>
<td>.042 (.407)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favors Living in Half White Neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td>.377*** (4.228)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.426*** (4.527)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage White Living in Respondent’s Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.132 (.953)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Black Living in Respondent’s Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.182 (1.327)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Occupational Prestige Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.359 (-1.177)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Occupational Prestige Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.058 (-.205)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Socioeconomic Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.492 (1.551)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Socioeconomic Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.232 (-.819)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.129 (-1.421)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of cases</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: t-values are in parentheses. ***p<.001  *p<.05  alpha level =.05
Table 3
Logistic Regressions of Favoring a Law Banning Racial Intermarriage on Selected Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Male</td>
<td>19968.768</td>
<td>34160.804</td>
<td>14435.324</td>
<td>2.670</td>
<td>2.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Education</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's Education</td>
<td>1.094</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows Whites from School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.873</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Mostly White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favors Living in Half White Neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.474</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage White Living in Respondent's Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Black Living in Respondent's Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Occupational Prestige Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.073</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's Occupational Prestige Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Socioeconomic Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.942</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's Socioeconomic Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Often Respondent Attends Religious Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>4126801.3</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>4.267</td>
<td>20.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of cases</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
education in relation to attitudes toward a close relative marrying a white person.

Logistic Regression Analyses

I also ran regression analysis on a second dependent variable, which is “favors law against racial intermarriage.” Table 3 includes five regression models that are used in the logistic regression analyses. Being male was included in each of the models to test its significance in relation to “favors law against racial intermarriage.” Because my second dependent variable was dichotomous, logistic regression was the method chosen for this analysis. In reference to all five regression models in Table 3 there were no significant predictors of favoring a law banning racial intermarriage. Thus, none of my hypotheses were supported by logistic regression analyses.

What these findings show is that African Americans are interested in progress. The old ways of life that are characterized by hatred, discrimination, inequality are not of any interest in the lives of African Americans. African Americans would rather keep the past in the past.
CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this study was the effects of various agents of socialization (e.g., parental, school, neighborhood) on African Americans' attitudes and beliefs regarding racial intermarriage. Based on common knowledge I hypothesized that African American males, more than African American females, would be accepting of interracial marriages. However, regression analyses indicated that gender ceased to be of any significance when examining agents of socialization with respect to attitudes and beliefs of African Americans regarding racial intermarriage, thus providing evidence to reject my first hypothesis.

This evidence suggests that, perhaps, contemporary African American women are becoming more accepting of interracial relationships due to the increased importance of accepting and embracing diversity. Although African American women will never reach a unanimous decision on whether racial intermarriage is right or wrong I feel that their feelings are moving toward more liberal attitudes.
From previous findings (Kalmijn 1998) I formulated a second hypothesis, which stated that the higher the education of the parents, the more likely a person would have positive attitudes toward racial intermarriage. In opposition to this finding, multiple regression analyses showed that mother’s education negatively influenced African Americans’ attitudes toward interracial marriages (beta=-.378, p<.05). This result denotes that the higher the mother’s level of education, the less likely it is for respondents to favor a close relative marrying a white person.

I assume that father’s highest year of school completed was not significant with respect to “respondent favors close relative marrying a white person” because of the underrepresentation of black fathers in African American families due to the overrepresentation of black fathers in prisons. In many cases African American women are playing both parenting roles. For many African American women who are also single mothers the dual parenting system becomes an emotional, physical, and psychological barrier to climb.

Contemporary society emphasizes that “education pays,” but educated black women, who are also minorities, venture out into new experiences and meet new people whom they may
find to be very unpleasant. Thus, those new experiences made possible through higher levels of education negatively impact African American women's attitudes toward whites and interracial relationships.

Due to the increased importance of schools and peers I hypothesized that a small proportion, rather than a large proportion, of blacks in schools would facilitate positive attitudes for African Americans toward racial intermarriage. However, the data show no support for my third hypothesis. As the coefficient of determination indicates, variables measuring school and peer socialization are very poor predictors of a respondent favoring a close relative marrying a white person.

One possible explanation for this outcome is that the quality of contact among African Americans and whites in schools may have been poor. Variables that measured school and peer socialization did not shed light on the quality of interaction among blacks and whites in schools. There is no clear way to determine whether interaction experiences between blacks and whites in schools were rewarding or bitter. Although one can see that whites are physically present in the same schools as blacks, the scope of the interaction processes between blacks and whites seem to be of greater importance. The results may have different if
the proportion of whites in the school had been greater. When blacks represent a smaller proportion, there interaction with whites is usually more positive (Kalmijn 1998).

Neighborhood socialization was, by far, the best predictor of positive attitudes and beliefs of African Americans toward favoring a close relative marrying a white person. A respondent favoring living in a half-white neighborhood yielded a significant and positive relationship to favoring a close relative marrying a white person. Consistent with past research (Farley, Schuman, Bianchi, Colasanto, and Hatchett 1978) multiple regression analyses have indicated that most African Americans, still, prefer to live in neighborhoods that are mixed 50-50. These results provide clear support for my fourth hypothesis. Evidence shows, that in the midst of oppression, discrimination, and hatred, African Americans favor living in neighborhoods that are mixed 50-50.

Based on previous studies (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Skogan 1990) I hypothesized that the higher the social class of the parents, the greater the probability that the respondent would accept interracial marriages. Quite to the contrary, results of multiple regression analyses failed to support my fifth hypothesis. Denton and Massey’s
research finding that blacks tend to live in neighborhoods that are predominantly black despite their social classes (Denton and Massey 1988) provides a possible explanation for this finding. Although blacks may move up in class status, they still tend to reside in predominantly black neighborhoods. Living in neighborhoods that are predominantly black decreases interaction among blacks and whites on a regular and or equal basis.

Likewise, there was no support found for my sixth hypothesis. Multiple regression failed to show religion as significant in facilitating positive attitudes for African Americans favoring a close relative marrying a white person. With respect to a close relative marrying a white person, variations in the teachings of different denominations may be more important than the number of days a respondent goes to church.

Because 96 percent of the respondents opposed a law banning racial intermarriage, no meaningful analyses could be run on that dependent variable. There responses would seem to indicate the passing of an era in relation to that concern.

Evidence suggests that African Americans are not too concerned with politics and laws banning interracial marriages. African Americans favoring a law banning racial
intermarriage would be a major set back to many rights they once fought for. Also, if this were true African Americans would be succumbing to racist beliefs of the past that represents inferiority. African Americans partaking in laws banning racial intermarriages would be like turning back the hands of time, which I am almost certain they do not want to do.

**Limitations of the Study**

The first limitation of the study was the use of an existing data set. In particular, there were questions in the 2000 GSS data set that were not asked of everyone, thus minimizing the sample total for my regression models. I feel that this problem best explains the results of my regression analyses. Perhaps larger sample totals in my regression models would have yielded different results. In addition, although there were questions included in the data set that were beneficial to my research, there are several questions omitted from the data set that I feel would have provided further insight for my research.

Another limitation of my study was analyzing only African American respondents. In a future study it would be helpful to determine whether whites' attitudes are influenced by the same socialization factors. Also, analyzing quantitative data was another drawback of this
study. A quantitative approach does not allow for subjective interpretations on behalf of the respondents. Hence, my regression results, overall, are more general in nature and may not capture the total picture.

I understand that parents are not the whole family. Grandparents and other extended family members may be just as important. However, variables that measure the effects of extended family members on African Americans' attitudes and beliefs toward interracial marriages are not included in the 2000 GSS data. The 2000 GSS data set also lacks variables that measure the effects of racial socialization messages on the attitudes and beliefs of African Americans regarding racial intermarriage. Although the 2000 GSS data set is lacking in the variables previously mentioned, I believe that the variables I used in order to measure parental socialization were sufficient.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research should be directed toward assessing how agents of socialization affect whites' attitudes and beliefs in relation to interracial marriages. With respect to this suggestion, the same data set could be used in order to compare and contrast the attitudes and beliefs of African Americans and whites.
Another suggestion for future research is to devise your own questionnaire, therefore enabling important questions omitted in the 2000 GSS data set to be asked. These questions may entail the impact of various racial socialization messages or the impact of extended family members on the attitudes and beliefs of African Americans regarding interracial marriages. Along these same lines, whites could be asked identical questions, opening the door for compare and contrast analysis.

One last suggestion for future research is taking a qualitative approach. This method would allow for an in-depth understanding of how various agents of socialization affect the attitudes and beliefs not only of African Americans but also of whites in relation to interracial marriages.
REFERENCES


