RESEARCH ON RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS
IN THE ARMY

U.S. Army
Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

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Race Harmony

RESEARCH ON RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE ARMY,

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Research Problem Reviews are special reports to military management. They are usually prepared to meet requests for research results bearing on specific management problems. A limited distribution is made—primarily to the operating agencies directly involved.
FOREWORD

The Social Processes Technical Area of the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) is concerned with problems of social dynamics and interactions to help soldiers better adjust to the modern volunteer Army, to provide field commanders with techniques to increase unit competence, and to provide information to headquarters commanders on which they can appropriately base their decisions. Programs in the Technical Area deal with systematic research over wide areas and with immediate specific problems; in this case, the reduction of frictions caused by racial and ethnic tension in Army units includes support and evaluation of the existing Race Relations/Equal Opportunity (RR/EO) program, development of manuals for guidance to commanders and to RR/EO personnel, and development of educational and training programs to increase understanding between blacks and whites and with Spanish-ethnic soldiers.

This Research Problem Review summarizes the research on racial and ethnic interrelations in the Army which was completed through December 1974 and indicates ongoing and projected projects. Research was conducted under Army RDTE Project 2776/277A767 in the FY 75 Work Program, "Personnel Systems and Contemporary Problems," and is responsive to special requirements of the Director of Human Resources Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel of the U. S. Army. The research is conducted as a set of in-house efforts augmented by contracts with organizations selected as having unique capabilities in this area.

J. E. UHLANER,
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RESEARCH ON RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE ARMY

BRIEF

Requirement:

To provide an informative summary of the race and ethnic relations research conducted by ARI between 1972 and 1974.

Procedure:

The procedure consisted of (a) preparing a brief discussion of research on race relations that was conducted by various individuals and groups prior to 1972, (b) examining ARI reports (some completed, some preliminary) for the period 1972-74, (c) identifying in these reports the underlying purposes of the research, the data-gathering procedures used, and the conclusions that may be drawn, and (d) listing the titles of several research efforts initiated in FY 75.

Findings:

These reports discuss both research designed to gather data and present findings and that designed to develop usable products such as manuals and training programs. While findings are generally complex, some of the specific points are:

On the average, black enlisted men found the Army a more attractive place for a career than white enlisted men did.

Attitudes of Korean nationals toward black American soldiers have been affected by the stereotyped images of blacks conveyed by the older American films shown at Korean theaters.

On the average, black soldiers responded in much the same way to everyone, while white soldiers responded differently to whites and to the blacks and Spanish-Americans.

For white soldiers, willingness to engage in informal social interactions with someone from another ethnic group was more affected by where the activity would take place (onpost vs. offpost) than it was for black soldiers.

Verbal and nonverbal behavior does exist--such as engaging in "dapping" (primarily black) and extended eye-to-eye contact (primarily white)--that, when exhibited by members of one racial group is misunderstood by members of another and reacted to with suspicion and hostility.
Institutional racial discrimination, as defined here, has diminished in some areas of Army practice but not in others.

White soldiers perceived far less racial discrimination in the Army than black soldiers did, with the difference in perception being especially strong for soldiers in the lower paygrades.

Black soldiers saw race relations in the Army as getting better, while white soldiers saw it as getting worse.

Officers at higher levels of command showed greater awareness of the nature of the Army's race problem and greater acceptance of the need for Equal Opportunity and Treatment programs than officers at lower levels of command.

Most soldiers, both black and white, said they thought race relations training was beneficial; only a few said they thought it made matters worse.

Utilization of Findings:

Specific research products already developed include:

The Racial Attitudes and Perceptions Survey (RAPS) for measuring perceived discrimination against blacks, attitudes toward racial interaction, and racial climate at particular installations.

A method of indexing the degree of "institutional racial discrimination" at a given time and of examining the relevant data for evidence of change.

Rating material for evaluating the performance of Race Relations/Equal Opportunity (RR/EO) personnel.

A resource book for RR/EO personnel.

Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-16, Improving Race Relations in the Army - Handbook for Leaders.
# RESEARCH ON RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE ARMY

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Serious research on racial attitudes and behaviors of the American soldier seems to date back only as far as World War II and the establishing, in the Information and Education Division of what was then the War Department, of a Research Branch to conduct empirical research on personnel problems of concern to the Army. Only a small portion of this research focused directly on matters of race; but that which did and was eventually reported in the social science literature made an important contribution to our understanding of these matters. Following World War II, however, the Army did very little research in this area (one exception was the 1951 research on racial desegregation in the Army); and it was not until the beginning of the 1970s, when an increased assertiveness of black soldiers with regard to their being treated fairly brought racial tensions to the fore, that the Army began once again to conduct systematic research on race relations. This report summarizes the ARI research in this area that had been completed by December 1974, indicates which projects are being followed up in current research efforts, and identifies additional projects that have been planned for FY 75.

MOTIVATION OF MINORITY-GROUP MEMBERS TO SERVE A CAREER IN THE ARMY

Given the Army's commitment to the principle of equal opportunity, it seemed desirable to try to find out how this commitment was perceived by the soldiers themselves and, in addition, to find out whether there are aspects of Army life to which majority- and minority-group soldiers respond differently. One project sought to gather career-relevant information about black soldiers that could be used for comparison purposes and for identifying topics needing further research. The project involved administering questionnaires, in groups averaging about 60, to approximately 9,000 soldiers--officers and enlisted, blacks and


5 Decker, L. R., Hicks, F., Engler, R. E., and Thomas, J. A. Improved race relations in the Army. (In preparation.)
whites, men and women—at 22 Army installations around the world during the fall and winter of 1973. The major questions addressed in this effort were whether the present-day soldier (particularly the black soldier) sees the Army as a good place for a career and whether this perception is affected by what the soldier thinks of the current race relations situation in the Army. Interest centered primarily on whether there were racial differences in these matters, but small-scale analyses were also reported for a sample of women and for two groups referred to as "direct confrontation offenders" and "racial separatists." In addition, data were reported on several questions repeated from a 1951 study of racial desegregation and from a more recent study of how soldiers say they view the Army's Race Relations and Equal Opportunity (RR/EO) program. The results of the research were complex, but two of the findings were of particular interest:

a. Black officers (particularly company-grade black officers) said it was important to them to retain a positive sense of racial self-identity but that it was difficult to do this in the Army.

b. On the average, black enlisted men found the Army a more attractive place for a career than white enlisted men did.

A follow-up effort extended this research by asking a sample of black junior officers to "sound off," telling in their own words just what they did and did not like about the Army. Approximately 200 black officers, the majority of whom were company grade, were interviewed at a total of eight Army installations (six in the US and two in Germany) during the spring of 1974. The interviews were tape recorded, and the transcriptions were analyzed later to identify areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The results of this effort were consistent with the results of the previous effort in that they emphasized again the importance many young black officers attach to their racial self-identity. These results also suggest that concerns about racial self-identity, plus the belief that the Army is indifferent to these concerns, may lead many of these officers to decide against staying in the Army.

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6 Bogart, 1969, op. cit.


8 Engler, R. E., Wise, L. H., and Thomas, J. A. Sounds of black brass. (In preparation.)
IMPROVEMENT OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS

A second area of research interest has been that of finding ways to improve intergroup harmony within a unit. In some cases (as in the research on ethnic stereotypes) the research effort was aimed at finding out how different ethnic groups perceive each other. In other cases the effort was aimed at finding ways to develop intergroup understanding. For example, ARI constructed a special version of a type of instrument previous researchers had referred to as a "culture assimilator." The culture assimilator is a programmed learning text that presents the reader with information about a particular culture in the form of 75 to 100 short episodes. The reader, as he comes to each episode, is given four alternative explanations for the events described and is instructed to choose the one alternative he thinks is best. When he has made his choice, he is referred to a particular page in the text where he learns whether his choice was correct and why. If he was not correct, he is referred back to the original description of the episode and instructed to choose again. If he was correct, he is instructed to go on to the next episode. The idea in all this, as in other programmed learning texts, is that discovering immediately whether one has made the correct choice is a powerful aid to learning. What the culture assimilator does is to apply this idea to the teaching of information assumed to be useful in helping members of one culture to "interact and adjust successfully with members of another culture." In the present project, ARI made the assumptions that some cultural elements underlying the behavior of black enlisted men are different from the cultural elements underlying the behavior of white enlisted men and that these cultural elements are not as well understood by white officers as they might be. With these assumptions, ARI sought to develop a culture assimilator of a particular type--one that would help white company-grade officers interact successfully with black enlisted men.

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9 Boyd, N. K. and Savell, J. M. Stereotypes held by black and white soldiers with respect to black, white, and Spanish-American enlisted men. (In preparation.)


The work began by interviewing approximately 300 officer and enlisted personnel, both black and white, at two Army installations in the U. S. in the fall of 1972. The interviews were conducted in five-man racially homogeneous groups, with the race of the interviewer matched to the race of the group members. Using the "critical incident" technique, the investigators sought to identify types of interracial encounters that could potentially be perceived differently by black and white participants in the encounter. The interviews were tape recorded for later analysis, and eventually a set of 75 items (i.e., episodes and alternative explanations for them) was constructed. These 75 items were added to 25 items used in previous research, and the resulting 100 items were presented to a total of 85 black and 84 white company-grade officers at four installations in the U.S. In addition to the basic assimilator, participants answered a number of questions that were included to assess the familiarity of the episodes and the extent to which the participants' perceptions of racial matters had changed as a result of having gone through the assimilator. The results of this effort suggested that an effective culture assimilator for white officers might be developed if additional research were carried out. The additional research was begun in November 1973.

ARI also sought to gather information about American race relations in another country; Korea was chosen as the example. Available information had suggested that several different aspects of the problem should be distinguished and that any data-gathering effort should address each of them: (a) relations between black American soldiers and Korean nationals, (b) relations between white American soldiers and Korean nationals, (c) relations between American soldiers as a group and Korean nationals, and (d) relations between black and white American soldiers. The project involved interviewing, in the spring of 1973, a random sample of 260 black and white American soldiers and a comparison sample of Korean nationals to determine such things as how each group saw members of the other group, how each felt about the other, and how much contact (both onpost and offpost) each had had with the other. The results suggested that while the race relations problem in Korea is complex some of the more troublesome aspects can be identified. Of particular interest was the conclusion that Korean attitudes toward black American soldiers had been affected by the stereotyped images of blacks conveyed by the older American films shown at Korean theaters.

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16 Hampton, G. M., and Thomas, J. A. Race relations research in Korea. (In preparation.)
Another project in this area\textsuperscript{17} was an effort to understand some of the stereotypes that many soldiers, both black and white, hold with respect to those who are ethnically different from themselves. A questionnaire was constructed that included personality and general ideology measures, a set of adjectives (e.g., "honest," "ignorant") presented with instructions to indicate what proportion of white, black, and Spanish-American enlisted men the respondent would characterize by each one, the same adjectives presented with instructions to indicate how good or bad it is to be characterized by each of these adjectives, and a set of social-distance items (referring to behaviors in onpost, offpost, and more general situations) presented with instructions to indicate how willing the respondent would be to engage in the specified behavior with a white, black, or Spanish-American enlisted man. The questionnaire was administered to approximately 150 soldiers (officers, enlisted, both black and white) at each of seven installations in the U.S. during the fall of 1973. The data from this project are still being analyzed, but two findings thus far are of particular interest:

a. On the average, black soldiers responded in much the same way to everyone, while white soldiers responded differently to the white and to the black and Spanish-American target persons.

b. For white soldiers, willingness to engage in informal social interactions with someone from another ethnic group was more affected by where the activity would take place (onpost vs. offpost) than it was for black soldiers.

In the spring of 1973 ARI began a project designed to help the Army find out more about its second largest minority, the Spanish-ethnic soldier.\textsuperscript{18} A questionnaire was constructed that asked about such things as self-acceptance, perceived problems and needs, and attitudes toward the Army. This questionnaire was printed in both English and Spanish and was administered to approximately 1,600 soldiers (about two-thirds of them from Spanish-speaking ethnic backgrounds) at nine installations (four in the U.S. and five in Germany) during the fall of 1973. The data from this project are still being analyzed.

Early in 1974 ARI initiated a project to identify verbal behaviors (e.g., slang and profanity) and nonverbal behaviors (e.g., gestures and gait) that have one meaning (usually positive) to the black or white individual who exhibits these behaviors but a quite different meaning

\textsuperscript{17}Boyd and Savell, in preparation, op. cit.

(usually negative) to an individual of the other race who witnesses these behaviors.\textsuperscript{19} A series of interviews and field observations obtained information which was used to construct a set of videotape and questionnaire materials. These materials were administered to approximately 550 male soldiers—black and white, officer and enlisted—at four U.S. installations during the summer of 1974. The results are complex, but they strongly confirm the initial hypotheses—viz., that there are indeed verbal and nonverbal behaviors—e.g., engaging in "dapping" (primarily black) and extended eye-to-eye contact (primarily white)—that, when exhibited by members of one racial group, are misunderstood by members of the other and reacted to with suspicion and hostility.

\section*{EVALUATION TECHNIQUES FOR USE IN RACE RELATIONS/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS}

A third area of research interest has been that of finding ways to evaluate RR/EO programs and practices. In one project\textsuperscript{20} ARI has conducted research to (a) develop an instrument that would estimate the impact of race relations programs in the several military services and (b) determine the potential usefulness of an existing instrument\textsuperscript{21} for this purpose. ARI modified and expanded the existing instrument, collected data on its reliability and validity as a measure of racial attitudes, and then sought to determine whether scores on the instrument are affected by the respondent's having received formal race relations training. The instrument that was finally constructed, the Racial Attitudes and Perceptions Survey (RAPS), included scales for measuring perceived discrimination against blacks, attitudes toward racial interaction, racial climate, and what was called "feelings of reverse racism."\textsuperscript{22} Combining scores from all four services but calculating them separately for blacks and for whites, the investigators obtained reliabilities (coefficient alpha) ranging from .70 to .94, with a median coefficient of .90. These reliability coefficients, plus other

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\bibitem{19} Taylor, O. I., Min, L., Spears, A., Stoller, P. A., and Savell, J. M. Problems in cross-cultural communications: A study of blacks and whites in the Army (In preparation.)
\bibitem{20} Hiett, R. L., McBride, R. S., Fiman, B. G., and Sevilla, E. R. Measuring the impact of race relations programs in the military. (In preparation.)
\end{thebibliography}
statistics that were calculated, suggest that the RAPS could be a useful instrument for the particular purpose of measuring the racial climate at a given installation; further refinement of the RAPS is planned by ARI.

To assess the potential usefulness of the RAPS as an instrument for measuring the impact of race relations training programs (i.e., the extent to which participation in the program causes a person to change) ARI administered the RAPS (supplemented by questions about such things as knowledge and opinions of RR/EO programs) to some 6,700 military personnel stationed at Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force installations around the world during the fall of 1973. In some cases, the respondents were classified according to whether or not they had received race-relations training and then compared with respect to their scores on the RAPS (a static-group comparison 23). In some cases, the respondents were administered the RAPS both before and after receiving race relations training, and the two sets of scores were compared with each other (a one-group pretest-posttest design 24). In another case, it proved possible to administer the RAPS on two separate occasions to two different groups—one which did and one which did not receive race relations training—and then compare the two groups both on their pretest and on their posttest scores (a nonequivalent control group design 25). Thus the possible impact of race relations training programs on RAPS scores was examined in several different ways; while none of these ways would be considered adequate by itself, their combination in a single study can be informative—particularly if, as in the present case, their conclusions tend to agree. The conclusion drawn from these several methods of examining the available data is that scores on the RAPS were not, to any important degree, affected by race relations training. This is not to say that this training is having no effect—the effort did not set out to determine this. What is needed in order to determine whether race relations training is having an effect is (a) to identify clearly the objectives the training is intended to accomplish and (b) to design an instrument specifically geared to these objectives.

ARI initiated one project 26 with the assumption that "institutional racial discrimination" 27 exists, in the Army as well as in other


24 Campbell and Stanley, 1963, op. cit.


institutions of society, and that meaningful indicators of such discrimi-
nation can be constructed. The underlying idea was that the institutions
of a society, in the normal course of their operations, sometimes develop
practices or policies which--without anyone's intending it--work to the
consistent disadvantage of a particular racial group. What ARI did in
this project was (a) conceptualize the idea of "institutional racial
discrimination" in a way that could be quantified, (b) develop a
mathematical formula that reflected this conceptualization, (c) identify
categories of Army institutional behavior (assignment to skill area,
promotion, selection for advanced school, etc.) that seemed important
to examine for positive or negative evidence of such discrimination, and
(d) apply the mathematical formula to each of these categories for the
period 1963-73 to see if any trends were evident. The results of this
research indicate that institutional racial discrimination, as defined
here, has diminished in some areas of Army practice but not in others.
One product of this research was a method of indexing the degree of
institutional racial discrimination at a particular point in time and,
more importantly, examining the relevant data for evidence of change.
ARI is currently seeking to develop a way of measuring institutional
racial discrimination at various organizational levels.

ARI conducted one research effort in response to a widely-expressed
concern that the Army's method of rating officers and NCOs on their
RR/EO performance is not very good. Perhaps the chief complaints that
had been voiced about this method were that the rating criteria were
not clear and that the format made it difficult not to give an inflated
rating. The project began by interviewing 3 soldiers at four
installations to get a preliminary idea as to how the present system is
perceived by those involved in it. On the basis of these interviews a
set of draft material for performance evaluation and counseling was
prepared and was distributed in the summer of 1974 to 46 soldiers located
at two installations. These soldiers were asked to evaluate the materials
with respect to clarity, value, the probability that the guidance
materials would actually be read, etc., and were subsequently interviewed
to learn their feelings about the materials that they had evaluated. On
the basis of these evaluations, a final set of rating material was
prepared: sample RR/EO performance rating, a set of accompanying
instructions to the rater, a set of guidelines for judging RR/EO performance
generally, and a set of guidelines for use by the supervisor who is
counseling with regard to RR/EO performance.

Another ARI project, done in the summer of 1972 and now being replicated,
investigated how well acquainted soldiers were with the various elements in
the Army's RR/EO program and also how valuable they considered the program.

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28 Brown, D. K., and Thomas, J. A. Research to develop guidance for
evaluation and counseling of individual performance in the Race Relations/
Equal Opportunity Area. (In preparation.)

29 Nordlie and Thomas, 1974, op. cit.
Three Army populations were identified for special attention in this investigation—enlisted personnel ($n = 3,656$), officers in command positions ($n = 127$), and officers and NCOs who had specific RR/EOT assignments ($n = 99$)—and data were gathered from them by means of self-administered questionnaires, individual interviews, or both. Some questions were asked of all three groups, while other questions were asked of only one or two of the groups. The results of this research are complex, but four findings were of particular interest:

a. White soldiers perceived far less racial discrimination in the Army than black soldiers did, with the difference in perception being especially strong for soldiers in the lower paygrades.

b. Black soldiers saw race relations in the Army as getting better, while white soldiers saw it as getting worse.

c. Officers at higher levels of command showed greater awareness of the nature of the Army's race problem and greater acceptance of the need for Equal Opportunity and Treatment programs than officers at lower levels of command.

d. Most soldiers, both black and white, said they thought race relations training was beneficial; only a few said they thought it made matters worse.

TECHNIQUES TO HELP COMMANDERS MANAGE RACE RELATIONS PROBLEMS

A fourth area of research interest has been that of finding ways to help those with command or supervisory responsibility deal with actual or potential race relations problems. For one effort in this area, a draft set of materials was prepared that contained information about Army RR/E0 policies, a discussion of several different views about the nature of the Army's race problems, a discussion of the most frequently voiced complaints, a recommended course of action, and a brief history of race relations in the Army. The materials were given a preliminary evaluation at major command levels and, in the spring of 1972, were submitted for further evaluation to 126 RR/E0 officers and enlisted personnel at 15 installations around the world. Reactions were almost entirely favorable; after a few revisions the materials were prepared for general distribution as DA Pamphlet 600-16, "Improving Race Relations in the Army - Handbook for Leaders."

A second effort in this area was based on a similar assumption—viz., that individuals with RR/E0 responsibility might find it useful to have immediately at hand a set of materials they could refer to as they carried out their race relations responsibilities. Accordingly, the available information about race relations problems, policies, and programs was
assembled in a form considered appropriate for potential users.  

ARI also conducted a preliminary study to determine whether a model could be developed that would aid in the prediction of racial crises in the Army. The approach taken was to construct two preliminary indexes of racial climate--one based on soldiers' perception of the racial situation on their post (e.g., environmental conditions, group solidarity, perceived hostility, and evasion of command authority) and the other based on existing records (e.g., Article 15s, correctional custodies)--and study them at four U.S. and four overseas installations during the summer and fall of 1973. The results of this preliminary effort were encouraging and suggested that the development of such a model is feasible; further research is in progress.

ARI sought to construct and evaluate an RR/EO training program for commanding officers. Interviews were conducted with 42 company-grade officers and 104 enlisted men at three U.S. and three overseas installations during the spring of 1973, to find out what soldiers thought the Army was doing and should be doing in race relations. The information obtained was used to develop a 36-hour curriculum that involved such topics as "Mexican American", "Interpreting Obvious and Subtle Dysfunction Indicators", and "Role Expectations of Blacks and Whites." The curriculum was tried out and evaluated at two U.S. installations during the summer of 1973.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH PLANNED FOR FY 75

The objectives of several additional projects are summarized below:

1. To evaluate, on an Army-wide basis, the impact of the Unit Racial Awareness Program (RAP) and to determine the extent to which this program is achieving its training objectives.

2. To describe the Spanish-surname segment of the Army with respect to its sociodemographic characteristics and, in addition, the conditions that present special problems for these soldiers as a group.


3. To identify and explain cultural factors with potential for influencing the outcome of verbal and nonverbal communication between Spanish-ethnic and other soldiers.

4. To construct an instrument suitable for measuring the quality of race and ethnic relations of various organizational levels of the Army.

5. To develop a better understanding of what is sometimes called "racial polarization."
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