

## The Changing Landscape of Intergroup Relations in South Africa

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*Apartheid laws and policies served to create a hierarchy of four apparently distinct races in South Africa, which were systematically segregated from each other and provided with unequal access to material resources. The apartheid state was dissolved in 1994, and a new, democratic government installed, under relatively peaceful conditions. This special issue of the journal will examine the effects of this major social and political transformation on intergroup relations in South Africa. The present article outlines the history and nature of the transformation, and contextualizes aspects of race relations that will be explored in articles in this special issue.*

Two decades ago, South Africa was a pariah state. The policy of apartheid was vilified across the world for its entrenchment of racial inequality (in favor of the minority White population), and systematic abuses of human rights. Yet, barely 15 years ago, the pariah state gave way to democracy, resulting in a majority, predominantly Black government coming to power in what has been hailed a “bloodless revolution.” The democratically elected government has faced the monumental task of transforming South African society. A start has been made in providing basic resources such as housing, running water, electricity, education, and health care to sectors of the population denied this in the past. Policies have been instituted to allow previously disadvantaged groups access to sociocultural resources and to fast-track their entry into the formal economy of the country (cf. The Presidency of South Africa, 2008; Sparks, 2003, 2007; Worden, 2007).

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While there have been a number of surveys aimed at monitoring macro-social and economic trends (e.g., the annual South African Survey by the South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007/2008; the report by the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Service, 2006), there has been relatively little focus on how transformation has affected intergroup relations. The political transformation of South Africa has destabilized the historic status relations between the groups and brought South Africans together in ways that were previously inconceivable. Interrogating how this has affected intergroup relations leads to questions such as: Has there been reconciliation between race groups? Can the injustices of the past be put aside? Are allegiances to racial and ethnolinguistic identities lessening in favor of a superordinate national identity? Have prejudice and negative attitudes to other groups decreased or changed in nature? Have intergroup contact and friendships increased, and have they contributed to changes in attitudes?

### Historical Overview

The racist system of apartheid was formally adopted when the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 (but it should be said that there had been racial discrimination in various forms in South Africa prior to this, including slavery). Over the next few decades, the government set about drawing up diabolic laws that would further entrench and extend racial discrimination and segregation. The Population Registration Act (1950) created a national register which identified and recorded the “race” of every person living in South Africa. The act in effect constructed four races—the Bantu (now termed Africans or Blacks, referring to people indigenous to the continent), Whites (people of European descent), Indians (people of Indian descent), and Coloureds (individuals who were descended from the slaves brought to South Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries from places such as Africa, East Asia, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia; or who were racially mixed offspring of the other three groups). The Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act (1949) and the Immorality Amendment Act (1950) forbade marriage or any sexual intercourse across these race lines. The Group Areas Act (1950) and Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953) enforced spatial separation of the race groups. These laws prevented different races from living in the same residential area, from attending the same educational institutions, travelling in the same buses and train carriages, and having access to the same natural resources (such as beaches and parks). Education for Blacks was severely limited by the Bantu Education Act (1953), which dictated in effect that Blacks should receive education that would fit them to work as laborers, and the Extension of University Education Act (1959), which prohibited Black, Coloured, or Indian people from attending “White” universities.

While the Nationalist government formalized and extended racial separation within apartheid policies, discriminatory laws and practices had actually been in

existence since the late 1800s and early 1900s (Beinart & Dubow, 1995; Davenport & Saunders, 2000). For instance, the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 had enforced urban segregation, and the Representation of Natives Act of 1936 abolished all forms of franchise for the African population.

Such discriminatory practices were not unique to South Africa and occurred in many countries and colonies across the world. By the 1970s, however, most colonies in Africa were liberated and were independent of their erstwhile colonial masters. Countries in the Western world uniformly rejected racial discrimination and treated it as abhorrent. However, while many countries were progressing to greater egalitarianism, the South African regime was maintaining and extending racial segregation and domination.

Freedom of movement around the country and particularly into “White” areas was severely curtailed. This was enforced by the “Pass Laws” legislation of 1952, which made it compulsory for Black people to carry identification documents at all times. In 1970, areas of land within the South African border were designated as “homelands” for particular Black groups (e.g., Transkei for the Xhosa), and Black South Africans were effectively exiled against their will and allowed back into “White” South Africa only to work as migrant laborers. Black communities were forcibly removed from areas in which they had lived for generations; Black and antigovernment political movements were banned, and there was mass censorship of dissenting voices. Resistance to this state of affairs grew in the Black population, and they were joined in this by a small number of dissenting Whites. The apartheid regime responded with increasingly repressive actions, as evidenced by incidents in Sharpeville in 1960 and in Soweto in 1976. In 1960, police fired on unarmed Black demonstrators who were objecting to the Pass Laws, killing 69 and injuring 180. In 1976, sustained student protest in Soweto against the enforced use of the Afrikaans language in Black schools was met by police violence, resulting in 451 deaths and 3,907 injuries, of which 2,389 were directly caused by police. This uprising marked the beginning of a more concerted resistance by the Black population, which was countered in turn by an escalation in repressive actions by the apartheid government. On the ostensible grounds of suppressing communism, antiapartheid and dissenting organizations were harassed or banned. Activists were arrested and imprisoned without trial, tortured and/or killed (e.g., Steve Biko, Neil Aggett, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, Ruth First, the Cradock Four, the Pebco Three, and many more).

In 1990, as a consequence of the combined pressure of antiapartheid resistance within the country, economic forces (of internal and external origin), and dissent internal to the ruling Nationalist party, including an about-face by the president at the time, F. W. de Klerk, the apartheid state capitulated. In February 1990, R. N. (Nelson) Mandela was released after 27 years in prison. An interim government was formed under the dual leadership of Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk. Then in April 1994, the first inclusive, democratic elections were held, bringing

the African National Congress (ANC) to power as the majority party. (For a more detailed account of these events, see Harvey, 2001; South African History Online, n.d. [<http://www.sahistory.org.za>]; Worden, 2007.)

### *Changes in Intergroup Relations*

The political and social landscape of South Africa has changed in multiple ways since 1994. In principle, all races now share the resources of the country and have equal rights to housing, health, and education, among other things. However, while rafts of discriminatory laws and practices have been removed from the statute books, and from civic and ordinary life, the material well-being of the overwhelming majority of Black people has not changed radically. Most Black South Africans still live in situations of extreme hardship, facing high levels of unemployment, lack of housing, inadequate education, poor levels of health care, and the scourge of HIV/AIDS—UNAIDS/WHO estimates HIV prevalence as being between 15.4% and 20.9% among adult South Africans, which is one of the highest rates in the world. The socioeconomic circumstances of most Black South Africans preclude their taking advantage of many of the changes and opportunities introduced through political transformation (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005).

There are, nevertheless, many signs of change. Both government and private sector transformation policies (e.g., Black Economic Empowerment and affirmative action) have produced a rapidly growing Black middle class, even if it is still relatively small, at approximately 2 million households. Many schools that were once reserved for the exclusive use of White, Coloured, and Indian children are now racially integrated (but many schools that were reserved in former times for the use of Black children, in poor, township areas, remain monoracial). Access to universities is no longer restricted, and selection is based on high school academic achievement, availability of finance, and affirmative action selection policies. However, due to the poor quality of primary and secondary schooling in Black (and Coloured, and Indian) townships, the numbers of Black, White, Coloured, and Indian South Africans enrolled in higher education are not proportionate to their demographic distribution in South Africa.

Many countries in the Western world have evidenced changes in intergroup relations over the past decades, including the United States and Europe. The trend (in the second half of the 20th century) was for an increasing rejection of overt prejudice and discrimination, though more subtle and hidden forms of prejudice have been argued to have emerged (Dovidio, 2001). No such trend was evident in South Africa. Indeed, Pettigrew (1993) suggested that “there is a 20- to 30-year lag in much of South African history compared to that of the American South” (p. 163). With the coming of democracy, and the removal of isolation, race relations in South Africa have had to leapfrog to a zeitgeist consistent with global norms.

In addition, it should be noted that intergroup research in the United States and Europe has been concerned with intergroup conflict, prejudice and discrimination against minority groups, who are minorities, both in terms of demographic representation, and access to political and economic power. In South Africa, the group that was previously subordinate, and that now holds political power, is very much in the numerical majority. The power hierarchy of the race groups is now in flux. In the face of this, and the very uneven transformation of material conditions, it is hard to predict how race relations in South Africa will change, and whether research conducted in South Africa will corroborate current theories and trends.

### *“Race” Groups*

The apartheid government reified four race categories—White, Black, Coloured, and Indian, with the latter three grouped under the term “non-White,” or “non-European.” Within the four race categories, which were given an artificial but powerful “social reality” by the policy of the apartheid government, subidentities were created, or exploited, to further divide the groups. Sometimes these were based on preexisting differences, and sometimes they were all but manufactured. For instance, there are many tribal and language differences within the Black African group. Particular languages (e.g., isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, isiSwati, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) are associated with particular ethnic subidentities (although these differences were artificially exaggerated under apartheid), as are the English- and Afrikaans-speaking categories within the White group. There are also religious subgroupings in each race category, which sometimes cut across the categories (e.g., different Christian denominations; the Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim religions; and subdenominations within those).

Social psychological investigations into intergroup attitudes in South Africa have focused on different groups at different times. Some of the earliest work in this area was conducted by I. D. MacCrone, one-time academic and administrative head of the University of the Witwatersrand. MacCrone monitored White (mainly university students’) attitudes toward Blacks at 2-year intervals from 1934 to 1944, using a Thurstone scale (MacCrone, 1949). In these studies, he divided Whites into those who were Afrikaans speaking, English speaking, or who were Jewish (although this division appears to confound religion with language and ethnicity, it ably represents three different “White” groups of significance in that period). MacCrone also investigated the social distance measures of English-speaking Whites to other groups (Afrikaans speakers, Jews, Blacks, Indians, and Coloureds; reported in Foster & Nel, 1991). The social distance comparisons toward English- and Afrikaans-speaking Whites, Jews, coloureds, and Indians continued in later surveys conducted by MacCrone, though in the period during the mid-1950s to 1960 a distinction was made between urban or city Blacks and tribal or rural Blacks. This distinction also appeared in the work

of Pettigrew (1960) and Van den Berghe (1962). Interestingly, after 1972 Jews ceased to be treated as a distinct category (cf. Foster & Nel, 1991). By then, Jews were no longer seen as immigrants, but a generation born and brought up in South Africa. They were perceived as integrated into the general White English-speaking society.

The findings from these (numerous) attitude studies, starting in the 1930s, through to the late 1980s, show remarkably consistent trends. White Afrikaans-speaking respondents were most prejudiced against the Black, Coloured, and Indian groups, with White English-speaking expressing slightly less prejudice. Both White groups showed extraordinarily high levels of prejudice in the early surveys by MacCrone, and more so toward Indian and Coloured South Africans than toward Black South Africans. The general level of prejudice was reciprocated to some extent by the Black, Coloured, and Indian groups, who were most negative toward Afrikaners, while being surprisingly positive toward English-speaking Whites in most instances. In some of these studies, Black groups exhibited a more positive attitude toward White English South Africans than to other Black South Africans.

### *Naming Race—A Contested Terrain*

The naming of the different “race” groups in South Africa has long been a matter of considerable contention in South Africa. In the early apartheid period, the indigenous Black population were variously called “Kaffirs” (which evolved into a highly derogatory term and fell into official disuse in the 20th century), “Natives,” and “Bantus,” while Whites were called “Europeans,” the mixed race group “Coloured” (which included the indigenous KhoiSan group, known as “Bushmen,” or “Hottentots” earlier in South African history), and those who originated from India, “Indians.” Collectively the indigenous Black population, Coloureds, and Indians were referred to as non-Europeans or non-Whites. During the liberation struggle of the 1970s and 1980s, it was common for many members of the so-called non-White groups to call themselves “Black,” as a statement of solidarity with each other. Since the fall of apartheid this has largely ceased. The national government of South Africa, although having rescinded the legislation (Population Registration Act) that gave a social and material reality to race categories, continues to recognize their importance in South Africa, particularly for purposes of redress.

The articles in this issue will use the following race group labels: Black, White, Coloured, and Indian. The use of these divisions does not in any way connote that the authors believe that “races” have essentialist properties. Despite their origins as a construction of the apartheid regime, these groups have a historical reality that has shaped the subjectivities and worldviews of the South African population.

### This Issue

The articles of this issue are organized under the headings, changes in identities and attitudes; mediators of contact; contact in desegregated educational institutions; and challenges for the contact hypothesis. The final article is an afterword by Thomas Pettigrew. The research presented in these articles consider some of the pressing questions in intergroup relations in South Africa—reconciliation, identity, attitudes, contact, segregation, and ramifications of desegregation.

#### *Reconciliation, Identities, and Attitudes*

The fall of apartheid in the period 1990–1994, and the ascendancy to power of the ANC government under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, marked the commencement of a period of reconciliation in South Africa. The thrust at that time was to entrench a superordinate national identity—South African—which would peacefully align the subidentities reified under apartheid. Desmond Tutu, the South African cleric who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, coined a phrase—“the Rainbow Nation”—to describe this reconciliatory ambition. The common ingroup identity model of Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastaso, Bachevan, and Rust (1993) would concur with the notion that the recategorization of racial identities into a superordinate, common identity helps to reduce the prejudice between racial groups. The article by Bornman (this issue) explores whether changes in social identity emerged in the period of this initiative. She reports the findings from three surveys conducted in 1994, 1998, and 2001 and traces patterns of national identification, as well as various racial and ethnic identities. In the final survey, the influence of globalization is considered, and identifications with Western and African culture are included. Her findings suggest that the political transformation has resulted in a strong South African identification among all race groups, but that this overarching identification is not stronger than the identification South Africans have with their own ethnic/race group. The results also reveal that Black South Africans, who are an overwhelming numerical majority, feel little identification with Western culture.

Other recent research (including Tredoux & Finchilescu, this issue) has attempted to relate strength of racial identification to race prejudice. This relationship is predicted by social identity theory and has been established in other research (Brown, 2000). However, South African research has generally failed to replicate this relationship, perhaps because levels of racial identification are uniformly high, as has been shown in several studies, and without variation in the levels of racial identification, such a relationship is hard to detect.

In their article, Gibson and Claassen (this issue) trace changes in intergroup attitudes in a slightly later period, on the basis of surveys conducted in 2001 and 2004. Gibson and Claassen move away from evaluations of race prejudice

and focus on attitudes around reconciliation and tolerance. One finding of their study is that Black South Africans have become less reconciled to Whites over time, whereas White, Coloured, and Indian South Africans have become more reconciled to Blacks. These trends are related to interracial contact and to political events occurring in South Africa in that period. Durrheim and Dixon's (this issue) article also considers changes in attitudes through secondary analyses of surveys over a longer period, focusing in particular on attitudes to racial integration. They, too, note the different effect of contact on attitudes among White and Black South Africans. Durrheim and Dixon's findings also demonstrate the principle-implementation gap in attitudes toward racial integration on the part of White South Africans—hostility toward other groups may have decreased, but at the same time there is resistance to policies and measures aimed at achieving equity.

### *Intergroup Contact*

Of all the changes in South Africa since the demise of apartheid, the one that is widely tipped to have the greatest impact on intergroup relations is the increased possibility of interracial contact. Foster and Finchilescu (1986) called South Africa under apartheid a "noncontact" society, not because there was absolutely no contact between the races at all, but because the contact that was permitted ensured that the domination of the White group was maintained, and extended. The past decade and a half in South Africa represents a distinct change in this state of affairs. People of all races are now able to mix freely, and formerly segregated institutions such as schools and universities are now open to all (but we note again that this "open access" is limited by socioeconomic, or class differences). It is thus not surprising that much of recent social psychological research in South Africa focuses on the question of intergroup contact, and its effects, from a range of perspectives.

Intergroup contact has long been considered to be an effective and perhaps essential requirement for improving intergroup relations. Allport (1954), in his well-known proposition, "the contact hypothesis," argued that prejudice will be reduced if members come into contact under a number of optimal conditions (i.e., contact of those with equal status, that is cooperative rather than competitive, that holds the potential for real acquaintanceship, and that is supported by social norms and authority). Allport acknowledged that intergroup contact can also have negative effects and potentially exacerbate hostile relations. Research that followed Allport's specification of the hypothesis produced mixed results. A signal problem was that researchers kept finding, and proposing, more and more "necessary conditions," effectively diminishing the ecological validity of the hypothesis, or the likelihood that it could occur outside of the laboratory. A useful contribution in this respect was made in 1998, by Thomas Pettigrew, in a restatement of some elements of contact theory. In particular, he integrated competing models of group categorization and decategorization and showed in this

theory how contact could generalize beyond the immediate contact situation. Importantly, he also highlighted the primary role that intergroup friendship plays in the genesis of intergroup contact effects. In a meta-analysis of the vast literature on intergroup contact, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) demonstrated that the relationship between contact and prejudice reduction was robust and assessed the evidence of the conditions under which contact best works to reduce prejudice. One of the important conclusions from their meta-analysis is that Allport's optimal conditions are facilitatory rather than necessary.

During the apartheid era in South Africa, the handful of studies conducted on interracial contact provided mixed results regarding the effectiveness of intergroup contact, with the majority providing no evidence that intergroup contact was associated with reduced levels of prejudice. Nevertheless, some studies did find that contact was associated with reduced prejudice, even if this was only on some of several measures, and for some groups but not for others (Finchilescu, 1988; Luiz & Krige, 1981, 1985). These findings, limited as they were, were remarkable given the active disapproval of interracial mixing apparent in both societal norms and the country's legal structures.

There is better reason to anticipate that contact in postapartheid South Africa will have positive effects on intergroup relations. For instance, the striking down of legally enforced segregation should result in more intergroup contact, of better quality, and this may be expected to lead to the breakdown of hostilities and a general improvement in intergroup relations. Considerable credence is given to contact theory by the research presented in the articles by Tredoux and Finchilescu, and by Swart, Hewstone, Christ, and Voci, in this issue. These authors report large-scale surveys of students and learners through which they seek to understand the moderating and mediating variables that influence the relationship between contact and prejudice reduction. Swart et al. focus on the relations between White, Coloured, and Black adolescents attending high schools, while Tredoux and Finchilescu report survey results of White and Black students at four universities. In both, intergroup anxiety features as an important mediator, underscoring the central role of this construct in work on contact theory in the last decade (e.g., Littleford, Wright, & Sayoc-Parial, 2005; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Voci & Hewstone, 2003).

Finchilescu (this issue) takes a different approach to investigating the question of obstacles to intergroup mixing. Following the work of Stephan and Stephan (1985), she focuses on factors associated with intergroup anxiety. Stephan and Stephan (1985) argue that intergroup anxiety is a central determinant in the avoidance or acceptance of contact, and how contact is experienced. Two factors that could affect intergroup anxiety are (1) the prior prejudice felt toward a group and (2) the stereotypes individuals think the other group holds about them (i.e., metastereotypes). A series of three experiments were conducted at different universities to investigate whether metastereotypes and prejudice explained the anxiety

felt in a (computer-simulated) contact situation. Finchilescu's results suggest that, in general, metastereotypes are a stronger predictor of intergroup anxiety than prejudice.

However, for the effect of contact to have real ecological validity, contact must take place in the everyday lives of citizens. The unfortunate reality is that, at present, it is not clear that much meaningful contact takes place between members of different race groups. Educational institutions, particularly universities, are some of the more promising sites for interracial contact. They come closer to meeting Allport's (1954) facilitating conditions than most situations. As students, the status of individuals from different races on campus is relatively equivalent; there is the potential for the development of friendships through a range of shared activities; and university institutions in South Africa are largely supportive of harmonious mixing. Yet there is a strong tendency for South African students of different races to self-segregate in public spaces such as plazas and dining halls (cf. Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu, 2005; Tredoux, Dixon, Underwood, Nunez, & Finchilescu, 2005). We should note that self-segregation at educational institutions has also been noted in a number of other countries with multicultural student bodies (Buttny, 1999; Clack, Dixon, & Tredoux, 2005). The reason for the persistence of informal segregation in ostensibly desegregated societies is a key question for understanding intergroup relations.

The demography and socioeconomic inequality of South Africa are obstacles to the potential positive effects of intergroup contact. More than 80% of the population is Black, and Black South Africans are highly overrepresented in both rural and poverty-stricken areas. Desegregation is thus largely localized to institutions in towns and cities, and particularly in wealthier areas.

The complexities of desegregation in South Africa, particularly in relation to educational institutions, are outlined in two articles in this volume. Soudien (this issue) focuses on South African high schools, demonstrating how privilege, in concert with race, is shaping identities in the postapartheid generation of schoolchildren. Alexander and Tredoux (this issue) use a multimethod approach to explore the seating patterns of entry-level university students in tutorial groups over an academic year. The racialized self-segregation that they observe, and the way this is perceived by students, provides insight into obstacles to interracial mixing. Yet, despite the racialized segregation of South African students observed by Alexander and Tredoux (among others), there is clear evidence from survey studies conducted in South Africa that contact is associated with more positive intergroup attitudes.

### *Challenges to Contact Theory*

While many of the criticisms of contact theory were ably addressed by Pettigrew (1998), more recent criticisms have focused on the ecological validity of

the theory. As a number of studies have demonstrated, including some reported in this issue, desegregation does not automatically lead to interracial contact. In fact, self-segregation may be a more common consequence of intergroup encounter than intergroup contact, especially when groups encounter each other in informal, and leisure spaces (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Tredoux & Dixon, 2009). There may be little opportunity for quality contact to take place, and for there to be an ameliorating effect on intergroup attitudes and behavior.

Another issue is raised in the articles by Dixon et al. (this issue), and Erasmus (this issue), regarding the consequences of contact for the transformation of the larger society. They point out that the effect of contact may not only be to reduce prejudice toward specific groups, but may also affect attitudes toward the individual's own group. The orientation to the ingroup is reduced, enlarging the individual's perspective on the world. This effect, termed "deprovincialization," is an important aspect of changing majority group members' attitudes (Pettigrew, 1997). A variation on this theme is to be found in the articles by Dixon et al., and Erasmus: they argue that contact may, in particular, have paradoxical effects on minority groups. For instance, in reducing hostility among Black South Africans toward Whites, contact also has the unexpected effect of decreasing Blacks' drive for structural transformation (cf. the Dixon et al. article, in particular). Erasmus, coming from a critical race theory perspective, argues that contact theory is by its very nature reformist and cannot be a force for transforming a nonegalitarian society.

The final article is a commentary by Pettigrew (this issue). In this article, he notes the dynamic role that South African research plays in social psychology—continuing the trend of global testing of currently held theories, and, through the complexities of its newly acquired multiracial status, extending our understanding of intergroup relations. He very elegantly draws out the significant findings from the research presented in this issue, relating their relevance to contemporary research trends, and inspiring future research questions.

### Conclusion

South Africa is, in many ways, a transformed society. The relatively peaceful transition from a pariah state, representing the vestige of White supremacy ideology, to a democratic, multiracial society in a handful of years has been astounding. However, the transformation is far from complete. The legacy of the past still casts many shadows, ranging from massive socioeconomic inequality to extremely high levels of violent crime.

The transformation from a rigid race hierarchy, where racial isolation and segregation were enforced by violence and subjugation, makes South Africa a fascinating site for social psychological research on intergroup relations. The political and economic changes over the past 15 years have inevitably affected

relations between groups. There are many signs that the old hierarchy of Whites as the dominant group and Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians the subordinate groups is no longer perceived to be the case. This, and the increasing contact between race groups, has brought changes in intergroup attitudes and behaviors, including group identities and subjectivities.

Much of the recent social psychological research in South Africa, as exemplified by the articles in this issue, has focused on prejudice and racism, with a view to improving intergroup relations. The question of whether intergroup contact can and will provide this solution runs through many of these articles. On the positive side, there is evidence that contact is associated with lower levels of prejudice, and with more tolerance and reconciliation. However, as has been found elsewhere, this relationship appears to be weaker for the (previously) subjugated groups, which in South Africa constitutes an overwhelming numerical majority.

In a more critical vein, some of the articles raise important issues, viz. (1) self-segregation appears to be an important entrenched aspect of current race relations. Members of the various race groups tend to avoid contact with members of other groups. (2) There are asymmetries in how the different races are expected to adapt to desegregation. (3) There may be paradoxical effects to intergroup contact, which may obstruct the transformation of South African society through removing the impetus to address structural racial inequalities. These issues point to the complexity of interracial contact. We need to understand when contact fails, or does not occur, and to more critically consider the social context in which intergroup relations are embedded.

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