A Paradox of Integration? Interracial Contact, Prejudice Reduction, and Perceptions of Racial Discrimination

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A random digit dialing survey (N = 596) investigated the relationship between quantity and quality of interracial contact and Black South Africans' perceptions of racial discrimination in postapartheid society. Results showed that harmonious contact was associated with lower levels of perceived collective discrimination, an effect that was mediated by racial attitudes and personal experiences of racial discrimination. The implications of the survey's findings are discussed in relation

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to two models of social change in social psychology (cf. Wright & Lubensky, 2008):
a model of change grounded in the rehabilitation of the prejudiced individual and
a model of social change grounded in collective awareness of, and resistance to,
systemic inequality.

The idea that contact improves relations between groups has become a truism
in the social psychological literature. Indeed, the "contact hypothesis" (Allport,
1954) is now the most important—and certainly the most intensively researched—
psychological perspective on how to build a more tolerant and integrated society. In
their metaanalytic review, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) boiled down a long history
of qualifications and supposedly mixed findings to a simple message: intergroup
contact reduces various types of prejudice, and it is particularly effective when it
unfolds under favorable conditions (e.g., conditions of equality, cooperation, and
institutional support).

Other reviewers have offered similar endorsements of the contact hypothesis
(e.g., Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawamaki, 2003), and
there is an emerging consensus that the promotion of intergroup contact should
be adopted as a universal ideal. Much current research is now devoted simply to
modeling the various mediators and moderators of positive contact effects, with
confidence that the contact hypothesis "has contributed greatly to the fact that psy-
chology is now in its best position ever to make a contribution to the advancement
of world peace by actively promoting intergroup tolerance" (Hewstone, Cairns,
Voci, Hamburger, & Niens, 2006, p. 100).

In South Africa, a society torn by a long history of antipathy and vio-
lence between groups, this message is deeply resonant. Whereas research on
the contact hypothesis conducted during the apartheid era yielded mixed findings
(see Foster & Finchilescu, 1986), research conducted in postapartheid society
has generally been supportive (e.g., Gibson, 2004; Holtman, Louw, Tredoux, &
Carney, 2005; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, this issue; Tredoux & Finchilescu,
this issue), echoing the optimistic trend of international work in the field. Indeed,
the contact–prejudice relationship documented by recent South African studies
is typically considerably stronger than the average effect size ($r = .21$) reported
in Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis. The contact hypothesis, it would
seem, is a highly promising framework within which to understand and promote
social psychological change this country.

Prejudice Reduction versus Collective Action Models of Social Change

In a recent critique, however, Wright and Lubensky (2008) have argued that
the social consequences of intergroup contact may be more complex than the
current literature suggests. They propose that there are two broad frameworks for

understanding (and promoting) social change in social psychology, which have developed largely in isolation.

The prejudice reduction framework focuses on decreasing negative intergroup attitudes and stereotypes to promote positive relations between groups. At the heart of this framework are prejudiced individuals, typically cast as members of historically advantaged groups (e.g., Whites in the United States), who require emotional and cognitive "rehabilitation." The underlying assumption is that by changing the hearts and minds of the advantaged we can reduce intergroup prejudice, thereby eroding broader patterns of discrimination and intergroup conflict.

The collective action framework, by contrast, focuses on (promoting) collective awareness of, and resistance to, institutionalized forms of injustice. Work in this tradition typically examines the reactions of historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., Blacks in the United States), exploring how, when, and why members of such groups come to recognize and challenge systemic inequalities. As such, rather than taking shifts in prejudice as their primary outcome measure, collective action researchers measure constructs such as perceived discrimination and relative deprivation, along with associated emotional and behavioral reactions such as anger, frustration, and political activism (see Dion, 2002). In this research tradition, moreover, conflict between minority and majority groups has been conceived not only (or even primarily) as a "problem" to be quelled, but also, to adapt Cooley's (1918) phrase, as the "fire under the boiler" of social change.

Wright and Lubensky's (2008) chapter provides an instructive lens through which to evaluate the contact hypothesis as a framework for understanding and facilitating social change. Most contact research has investigated prejudice reduction among members of advantaged groups, and minority group responses to socioeconomic inequality and discrimination have seldom been researched (see Tropp, 2006). Accordingly, its implications for a "collective action" model of social change have been underspecified.

The few published studies of direct relevance to this model have produced mixed findings. Poore et al. (2002) found that contact increased Inuit Indians' awareness of group discrimination; arguably, isolation from "mainstream" Canadian society encouraged Inuits to underestimate the extent of discrimination faced by their group. Tropp (2007) found little association between Black Americans' contact experiences and perceptions of discrimination, though such discrimination perceptions inhibited the extent to which positive contact predicted their emotional "closeness" to Whites. By contrast, Ellison and Powers (1994) found that having White friends reduced African Americans' estimates of racial discrimination, and Rodriguez and Gurin (1990) found that contact with "Anglo" Americans tended to decrease the extent to which people of Mexican descent treated the subordination of Mexicans in the United States as "illegitimate." Most recently, in a fascinating laboratory analogue, Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, and Pratto (2009) found that harmonious interaction with members of a more powerful group led members of

a less powerful group to overestimate the extent to which they would be treated equitably, fostering "false expectations" of distributive justice. In sum, contrary to the findings of Poore et al. (2002) and Tropp (2007), some studies suggest that both the quality (Ellison & Powers, 1994; Saguy et al., 2009) and the amount (Rodriguez & Gurin, 1990) of contact with a dominant group may reduce minorities' perceptions of ingroup discrimination.

Contact and Black South Africans' Perceptions of Discrimination

The present research answers Wright and Lubensky's (2008) call for a more politically reflexive understanding of relationships between contact and social change. The research consisted of a survey administered in postapartheid South Africa examining how contact affects perceptions of discrimination among Black South Africans, a group that has suffered a long (and ongoing) history of discrimination.

The survey had two aims. The first aim was to map the interrelations between contact and Blacks' perceptions of racial discrimination in South Africa. Based on the work of Saguy et al. (2009) and Ellison and Powers (1995), we hypothesized that positive contact with Whites would be negatively associated with perceptions of ingroup discrimination. The second aim was to explore some of the social psychological processes that might explain this relationship.

Personal experiences of discrimination.   We anticipated that interracial contact would shape perceptions of ingroup discrimination via its effects on perceptions of personal discrimination. Research on the person/group discrimination discrepancy (Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, & Lalonde, 1990) has shown repeatedly that the disadvantaged often rate the discrimination suffered by their group as more severe than the discrimination they suffer personally. In addition, some researchers have argued that personal experiences of discrimination may distort perceptions of group discrimination by creating a "false consensus effect" (see Taylor, Wright, & Ruggiero, 1992), a process that may be particularly important for understanding how contact shapes minority perceptions of ingroup discrimination. For instance, if a Black person's everyday interactions with Whites are overwhelmingly positive (e.g., cooperative and friendly), then this may reduce her awareness of being a victim of personal discrimination. Such reductions in perceived personal discrimination may, in turn, decrease her perceptions of discrimination at the group level.

Racial attitudes.   We also anticipated that interracial contact would affect perceptions of discrimination among Black South Africans via its impact on their racial attitudes toward Whites. After all, as Wright and Lubensky (2008) note, both the readiness to recognize injustice and the motivation to do something about it

require that the disadvantaged view the advantaged in a somewhat negative light—that is, as oppressors who have exploited others or at least been the complicit beneficiaries of a history of exploitation (Freire, 1970). Ironically, by encouraging Blacks to develop positive attitudes toward Whites, contact may suppress their readiness to recognize collective discrimination. As we elaborate in our conclusion, how one weighs this tension depends on the perspective on social change one applies.

Research Context

Before turning to the details of our study, we must sketch briefly the context in which it was conducted. As is well known, the system of racial apartheid that characterized South African politics officially ended in 1994, and a new era of integration and equality was ushered in. The African National Congress became the first democratically elected government in South African history. The legislative, socioeconomic, and political changes that have occurred subsequently form the immediate context of our work, though clearly the country's longer history of racism and colonial oppression remains vitally important. Indeed, it is impossible to understand the dynamics of interracial contact in the "new" South African in isolation either from its colonial past or from its recent history of transformation.

That history is essentially paradoxical. On the one hand, it is a history of progress toward racial equality. One might tell a celebratory story of, among other (wonderful) changes, the release of Nelson Mandela and his appointment as State President; the abolition of de jure segregation almost overnight; the construction of a new democratic, nonracial constitution; the adoption of several government policies of redress, including policies of affirmative action, land restitution, and Black economic empowerment; and the implementation of a massive program of infrastructural development in the townships, providing hundreds of thousands of people with potable water, electricity, roads, and systems of sewage.

On the other hand, the history of the new South Africa is also a history of ongoing racial inequality and discrimination (e.g., see Roberts, 2005). Thus, one can tell a story of widespread de facto segregation; continuing high levels of poverty, poor health care, and unemployment; and, above all, a massive economic gulf between the rich and the poor. Indeed, with a GINI index of just under 58, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world (Human Development Report, 2007/2008). Need one add that concrete examples of racial discrimination remain all too common in postapartheid South Africa? The mistreatment of Black cleaners in universities or spectators at rugby matches—to mention examples that have attracted recent attention in the media—testifies to the fact that:

> Still far away is the moment when South Africa will be able to recognize itself and be recognized as a truly ethical community. In fact, the dirty little secret of racial prejudice keeps breaking wide open, often in the guise of debates about things that, apparently, have nothing to do with race as such–poverty, identity, crime, corruption, HIV-AIDS, rape, or more recently the change of names of roads, dams, boulevards, avenues and public places, cities and airports or the erection of monuments commemorating past struggles or celebrating newfound freedoms (Mbembe, 2007).

The rationale for the research project of which the current study forms one part is to explore the social psychological factors that shape everyday understandings of discrimination and injustice. We also want to determine, a fortiori, what kinds of interventions might contribute to or impede ordinary South Africans' willingness to fight for social change and ultimately become the kind of "ethical community" to which Mbembe alludes.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants consisted of a sample of adult ($>$18 years) Black ($N = 596$) South Africans, recruited through a random digit dialing telephone survey. Coloured, White, and Indian South Africans were not included in this study. Black South Africans constitute around 80% of the country's population. In using this category, which is inherited from racial classification system employed during the apartheid era, we assume that it continues to define and underpin the lived experiences of ordinary people in South Africa, including experiences of material injustice and discrimination.

Respondents were selected via a countrywide sampling of cellular telephone numbers. Randomly generated cell phone numbers were drawn proportionally from all service providers and then screened with the aid of autodialing software to eliminate nonexistent numbers. Cellular phone surveys represent a relative efficient and inexpensive methodology for conducting surveys in South Africa. They are also more effective in securing a representative sample than conventional phone surveys. In 2007, only 23% of South Africans owned a landline, whereas cellular phone ownership ran at 56%, including some 52% of Black South Africans (South African Advertising Research Foundation, 2007).

This sample consisted of 273 males (46.3%) and 320 females (53.7%); and the mean age was 31.9 years ($SD = 10.62$). Relative to national demographics derived from the 2001 census (Statistics SA), the sample had a higher percentage of people with a monthly household income of less than R1,000 (38% sample vs. 17% nationally). Most of the rest of the sample were located in R2,000–5,000 (21%) and R5,000–10,000 (16%) income bands, with only a small proportion ($<$2%) falling in the highest income categories of R10,000–20,000 and above R20,000. In terms of regional distribution, most respondents resided in the provinces of

Gauteng (29%), KwaZulu-Natal (21%), Limpopo (15%), Mpumalanga (12%), and the Eastern Cape (7%).

The study employed a computer-assisted telephone survey procedure, implemented by a team of four multilingual interviewers. In an initial phone call, interviewers informed respondents that their phone numbers had been randomly selected and asked if they would be willing to participate anonymously in an interview about "race and transformation in South Africa." Respondents who agreed were called back and interviewed in their preferred language, with the majority of interviews taking place in isiZulu (44%), sePedi (23%), and English (20%). The cooperation rate was high, with over 65% of respondents who were successfully contacted eventually completing the survey. This may be because there were no costs to the individuals receiving the call, the survey topic was of considerable local interest, and cellular phone surveys remain rare in South Africa and thus respondents were not fatigued by unsolicited calls.

Their responses were recorded in real time using questionnaire software, which stored data within a common database. The research was screened and approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Human Sciences Ethics Committee.

Questionnaire

The survey instrument was developed in English and then translated into five other commonly spoken languages in South Africa (Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, sePedi, and seSotho). Each translation was completed independently by two fully bilingual mother-tongue speakers of a given language, who then met to resolve any discrepancies. Although a small proportion of South Africans speak a home language other than the six languages covered in the survey, the vast majority of these individuals are bilingual. We encountered no linguistic difficulties when administering the survey.

Contact.   Seven items measured respondents' interracial contact on 5-point scales. One item gauged how much interracial contact respondents experienced in their everyday lives on a 1 (*no contact*) to 5 (*frequent contact*) scale. The remaining items measured the perceived quality of such contact on various dimensions (friendly, cooperative, helpful, intimate, interesting, and equal in status). These items were averaged to yield a Quality of Contact Index ($\alpha = .75$), with higher scores indicating more positive contact experiences.

Racial attitudes.   The racial attitudes measure tapped feelings toward Whites (i.e., hostility, suspicion, coldness, negativity) on 7-point semantic differential scales, with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes. These four items were averaged to yield a racial attitude scale ($\alpha = .74$).

Discrimination.   Measures of perceived discrimination were similar to those employed by Poore et al. (2002). To assess personal discrimination, respondents were asked: "How often do you feel that you, personally, are discriminated against because of your race?" To assess group discrimination, respondents were asked: "How often do you feel that members of your race group are discriminated against in this country?" Both measures employed 5-point scales, with higher scores indicating greater perceptions of discrimination.[3]

Relative deprivation.   Although the focus of our research was on perceptions of group discrimination, for comparative purposes we included another widely used measure of injustice, namely relative deprivation, which was constructed using a Cantrill ladder technique. Respondents were asked to rate the socioeconomic circumstances of Whites and Blacks in South Africa on a 10-step "ladder," with the first rung of the ladder representing the lowest socioeconomic status and top rung representing the highest socioeconomic status. They were also asked to indicate where on the ladder that Blacks and Whites would stand if each group had its "fair and rightful share of wealth in the country." Relative deprivation scores for Blacks and Whites were then calculated by subtracting participants' estimations of each group's present standing on South Africa's socioeconomic "ladder" from their estimations of where that group should stand in a fair society. Scores varied between -9 and $+9$, with high positive scores indicating a higher degree of relative deprivation and high negative scores indicating that the rated group was "overbenefiting" in socioeconomic terms.

As an alternative measure, we estimated respondents' sense of comparative racial injustice, expressed in terms the magnitude and direction of the difference in the perceived relative deprivation experienced by Whites and Blacks. This measure was scaled so that higher scores indicated that Blacks were suffering comparatively more injustice that Whites.

Results

We initially screened data for possible nonnormality and to explore whether or not transformations were appropriate. Descriptive analysis of data, and inspection of graphical displays, suggested data were mostly approximately normal. Some skewness was evident in the distribution of the personal and group discrimination variables, but this was not of sufficient degree to warrant concern. Log transforms made little tangible difference to the general pattern of results, and we decided against using transformed data for the final analysis. In addition, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the contact items and discrimination items. The results suggested that the two items measuring personal and group discrimination loaded on a unique factor, and the contact items on a separate factor.

Perceptions of Discrimination and Relative Deprivation

We first examined the general pattern of scores for perceived discrimination. As expected, ratings of perceived personal discrimination ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.39$) were significantly lower than ratings of group discrimination ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.30$), reproducing the person-group discrepancy, $t(594) = 9.79$, $p < .0001$, $d = .42$. In terms of their approximation to scale categories, these means suggest that Black South Africans perceive themselves to be personally targeted for discrimination "rarely," but their group to be thus targeted "sometimes."

Again as expected, ratings of the degree of relative deprivation suffered by White and Black South Africans differed significantly and this was a strong effect, $t(558) = 37.72$, $p < .000$, $d = 1.9$. The mean discrepancy between the actual and fair socioeconomic standing of Blacks was 3.69 (on a -9- to $+9$-point scale), suggesting a fairly substantial degree of perceived relative deprivation ($SD = 2.25$). The mean discrepancy between the perceived actual and fair socioeconomic standing of Whites was $-.89$ ($SD = 2.41$), the negative figure indicating that on average Blacks believe that Whites remain (slightly) "overbenefited" in South Africa.

*Correlations between Contact and Perceived Discrimination and Relative Deprivation*

The correlations presented in Table 1 support the hypothesis that contact is negatively related to Blacks' perceptions of racial discrimination in postapartheid South Africa. These results indicate, however, that the frequency of interracial contact is far less important in this context than the quality of such contact. Specifically, more positive interactions with Whites are associated with lower estimates of both personal and group-level discrimination. Quality of contact is also significantly correlated with the comparison measures included in the survey, having an inverse relationship with estimates of Black relative deprivation and comparative racial injustice, but a positive relationship with estimates of White relative deprivation.

Mediators of the relationship between contact quality and perceptions of group discrimination Table 1 also presents the intercorrelations of contact and group discrimination with the two variables identified earlier as potentially mediators, namely personal discrimination and racial attitudes. It suggests that the higher respondents' sense of personal discrimination and the stronger their negative attitudes toward Whites the greater their perceptions of group discrimination. Quality of interracial contact is inversely related to racial attitudes and, as reported already, is also inversely associated with personal discrimination. This table of correlations thus confirms the feasibility of the mediation model outlined in our introduction.

Table 1. Intercorrelations between Contact, Racial Attitudes, Perceived Personal Discrimination, and Perceived Group Discrimination

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Contact quantity	—							
2. Contact quality	.41***	—						
3. Personal discrimination	−.05	−.32***	—					
4. Racial attitudes	−.03	−.42***	.28***	—				
5. Group discrimination	−.04	−.22***	.47***	.23***	—			
6. Black relative deprivation	.00	−.13**	.11**	.09*	.09*	—		
7. White relative deprivation	−.04	.12**	−.05	−.07	.01	.04	—	
8. Comparative racial injustice	.02	−.18***	.12**	.01	.05	.67***	−.71***	—

Note. $*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.$
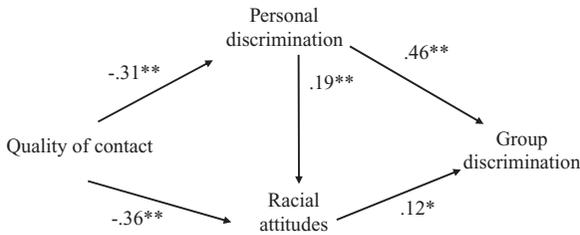
Note. Tests of fit of model: $\chi^2(1) = .24, p > .61$; root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) $< .01$; Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) $= .998$. Path coefficients in the diagram are standardized.

Fig. 1. Path analytic model for indirect effects of contact quality on perceptions of group discrimination.

To test for mediation, we conducted a path analysis, the results of which are shown as Figure 1. The analysis showed that the direct relation between contact quality and perception of group discrimination was better left out of the model: without this relation, the fit of the model was very good, $\chi^2(1) = .24, p > .6$; root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) $< .01$; Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) $= .998$, and when it was forced into the model, the corresponding coefficient was small and not significant (-0.021, asymptotic $z = -.05, p > 0.624$). To test specifically the significance of the mediating role of personal discrimination and racial attitudes, we conducted a multiple mediation analysis, following the guidelines set down by Preacher and Hayes (2008). The

total indirect effect of quality of contact on perceived group discrimination was statistically significant ($Z = -6.77$, $p < .001$), as were the indirect effects through racial attitudes ($Z = -2.6$, $p < .01$), and through personal discrimination ($Z = -6.3$, $p < .01$). A contrast of the two indirect effects showed that the path through personal discrimination was stronger ($Z = -3.13$, $p < .002$).

We also considered an alternative path model, interchanging group and personal discrimination as predictor and outcome, but leaving the rest of the model structure unchanged. The fit of this model was poor, however, suggesting that it was not a feasible alternative, $\chi^2(1) = 17.99$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .18; AGFI = .84. Similarly, on the suggestion of an anonymous reviewer, we considered an alternative model that postulated that experience of personal and group discrimination precede prejudice (racial attitudes). In other words, we tested the model shown in Figure 1 with "Racial Attitudes" and "Group Discrimination" interchanged. Model fit for this alternative, however, was poor, $\chi^2(1) = 72.48$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .36; AGFI = .4.

Finally, we repeated the path analysis while controlling for respondents' average monthly household income (a proxy of socioeconomic status). The fit of the model remained good, $\chi^2(1) = .13$, $p > .72$; RMSEA < .01; AGFI = .998, suggesting that socioeconomic status does not account for the mediational relationships represented in Figure 1.

Discussion

Interpretation of the surface pattern of our results is straightforward; interpretation of their deeper social psychological implication less so. In simple terms, our data suggest that the more positive contact Blacks have with Whites, the lower their perceptions of group discrimination and relative deprivation (cf. Ellison & Powers, 1994; Saguy et al., 2009). They suggest, too, that the relationship between contact and group discrimination is indirect, being mediated by racial attitudes and personal experiences of discrimination. Of the two mediators, personal discrimination seems to be more important. Although the design of the present study does not permit us to draw causal inferences and is subject to the limitations of telephone survey methods, we believe that future research will confirm a sequence in which harmonious interactions with Whites reduces Blacks' personal sense of being targets of prejudice, which then informs their assessments of group discrimination (cf. Taylor et al., 1992). As such, in this context, the continuity between assessments of personal and group discrimination may prove to be more important than the discrepancy on which most research on perceived discrimination has focused.

This way of framing our results seems at once straightforward and (we feel) intuitive. However, its simplicity belies a series of deeper dilemmas of interpretation. Building on the work of Wright and Lubensky (2008), we wish to conclude

by relating two rather different interpretations of our results, which capture some of the underlying tensions between "prejudice reduction" and "collective action" models of social change.

The Benefits of Integration: Contact, Perceived Discrimination, and Racial Solidarity

From a prejudice reduction perspective, our results provide a straightforward elaboration of the contact hypothesis. Just as positive interracial contact improves Blacks' attitudes toward Whites on standard indices of prejudice (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), so too it reduces their sense of living in a society characterized by racial discrimination and socioeconomic injustice. One might draw connections here with work on the positive effects of contact on other forms of moral evaluation, such as trust and forgiveness (Hewstone et al., 2006) and the attribution of racial motives to others' behaviors (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008).

The model presented in Figure 1 can be viewed as strengthening this line of argument. The mediating role of personal discrimination, for example, might be viewed as exemplifying a broader process of "reeducation" whose benefits have been extensively discussed in the contact literature (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 1984). Having positive personal encounters with Whites may reduce Blacks' reliance on overgeneralizations about intergroup relations and thus temper their beliefs about racial discrimination. In a similar way, the mediating role of racial attitudes might be viewed as exemplifying another of the many, well evidenced, benefits of prejudice reduction. By encouraging greater emotional acceptance of Whites, contact reduces Blacks' readiness to believe that Whites would treat their group unfairly.

Ironies of Integration: Contact, Discrimination, and Political Resistance

If one's model of social change is based on the idea of getting people to like one another more in order to reduce the likelihood of intergroup conflict, then this interpretation makes a lot of sense. However, a collective action perspective on social change invites a rather different interpretation of our results. From this perspective, social change occurs primarily via the mobilization of members of disadvantaged groups, a process aimed at destabilizing unjust institutions and challenging the status quo (Klandermans, 1997). A psychological precondition of such mobilization is that members of exploited groups recognize the injustice of their situation (Dion, 2002) and thus have the motivation to actively support change. The metaphor of a "struggle" is often invoked in this context because those involved in collective action quickly recognize that material and political advantage is rarely surrendered lightly (Freire, 1970).

Seen in this light, our finding that interracial contact with Whites re-duces Black South Africans' perceptions of group discrimination becomes less self-evidently beneficial to the fight against racism. To the contrary, it suggests that certain forms of racial integration may have the "ironic" side effect of di-minishing Blacks' recognition of ongoing systemic injustice. In a similar vein, collective action researchers might inspect the mediation models presented in Figure 1 and infer that it is precisely because favorable contact with Whites fos-ters warmer interracial bonds and reduces perceptions of personal discrimination, that it encourages Blacks to underplay the continuing legacy of apartheid.

The term "underplay," of course, glosses over a series of complex questions that cannot be resolved in the present analysis. How does one decide, for instance, if interracial contact has encouraged group members to hold a more or less "accurate" view of political realities? In the laboratory study devised by Saguy and her colleagues (2009), the means of resolving this problem were inscribed within the experimental scenario itself. By the end of their experiment, it was evident that harmonious contact had engendered false optimism amongst members of a less powerless group regarding the allocation of rewards by members of a more powerful group. In the messy, ideologically contested landscape of South Africa, as in most real life situations, ascertaining the validity of a given set of social and political evaluations is rarely, if ever, this straightforward.

Ultimately, we cannot hope to adjudicate between the prejudice reduction and collective action models of social change in this brief article (for some further discussion see Pettigrew, this issue). In any case, we believe that the implications of these models of social change cannot be evaluated meaningfully in "either-or" terms. Rather, they must be assessed in terms of the roles they play within particular historical, economic, and political circumstances. Our own reading of the current South African context is that both relative and absolute levels of racial injustice remain cripplingly high, and any strategies used to promote racial integration must also recognize the paramount importance of collective action to challenge racial discrimination. Interventions that reduce racial prejudice at the cost of weakening the social psychological basis for such action therefore must be evaluated with due caution (cf. Reicher, 2007, pp. 830–831).

At the same time, the South African context points to another way of thinking about the relationship between contact and social change, which further com-plicates how our study's implications are interpreted. As noted throughout this article, research on the contact hypothesis has focused mainly on the impacts of contact on the racial attitudes of members of historically advantaged groups. To a lesser extent, it has explored the impacts of contact on how the disadvantaged feel about the advantaged. However, what about the role of contact in transforming relations between members of groups that share a history of disadvantage?

In postcolonial societies such as South Africa, where state sponsored policies of "divide and rule" were widely employed in the past—segregating so-called

Coloureds, Indians, and Blacks from one another as well as from Whites—this question is deeply resonant. Indeed, it allows us to anticipate a politically radical version of the contact hypothesis. What is important about the effects on contact among members of historically oppressed groups, after all, is not simply that it encourages them to like each other more, but also that it allows them to build political alliances that are necessary if they are to act collectively to challenge the status quo. This idea seems to us to take contact research in a promising new direction.

We conclude, then, by recommending that future researchers consider more fully how the two models of social change discussed in this article might relate to one another, what they might reveal about the dynamics of stability and change in specific societies, and how they might inform the struggle for racial equality.

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