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CONTENTS **PAGE**

Articles

Call for Editor ii

Leisure and Family: Perspectives of Male Adolescents Who Engage in Delinquent Activity as Leisure 335
Brenda J. Robertson

Convergence and Divergence in Leisure Style among Whites and African Americans: Toward an Interracial Contact Hypothesis 359
Myron F. Floyd and Kimberly J. Shinew

Are We Welcome? African American Racial Acceptance in Leisure Activities and the Importance Given to Children's Leisure 385
Steven F. Philipp

Heterogeneous Visitors and the Spatial Limits of the Travel Cost Model 404
Joe Kerkvliet and Clifford Nowell

Central Park as a Model for Social Control: Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth-Century America 420
Dorceta E. Taylor

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Convergence and Divergence in Leisure Style among Whites and African Americans: Toward an Interracial Contact Hypothesis

Myron F. Floyd
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University

Kimberly J. Shinew
Department of Leisure Studies
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Drawing upon structural theory and social group perspectives, this study examined two propositions developed to explain the relationship between interracial contact and leisure preferences among African Americans and Whites. The first proposition stated that as interracial contact increases, the greater the probability of observing similarity in the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites. The second stated that the probability of observing similarity in the leisure preferences will be greater *among* Whites with high or low interracial contact than observing similarity *among* African Americans with high or low interracial contact. Data to evaluate the propositions came from an on-site survey of Chicago (IL) park users. As hypothesized, Black and White respondents with high interracial contact reported very similar leisure preferences. Also, among African Americans, there was little similarity in the leisure preferences between individuals with high interracial contact and those with low interracial contact. Further, as expected, there was high similarity among Whites with high or low interracial contact. In general, the results of the study highlight the importance of considering social interaction, and interracial contact specifically, in explaining racial differences in leisure participation. The study also demonstrates the importance of examining internal differentiation of African Americans and its implications for leisure lifestyle choices.

KEYWORDS: *Race, ethnicity, personal community, interracial contact, lifestyle, social groups*

Introduction

Over the past two decades an increasing amount of scholarship has been devoted to identifying key factors and social forces that contribute to divergent patterns of leisure preferences among African Americans and Whites.[1]

Myron Floyd is an associate professor in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2261. Kim Shinew is an associate professor in the Department of Leisure Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL 61280. Ordering of author names does not reflect ranked authorship. The research reported in this manuscript is the result of joint effort by the authors with the support of the USDA Forest Service North Central Research Station NC-4902), Evanston IL. Opinions expressed in the manuscript reflect the views of the authors solely. The authors wish to acknowledge the helpful comments from the associate editor and anonymous reviewers. Direct correspondence to Floyd.

[1]For this article, the terms "Black(s) and African American(s) are used interchangeably.

Relying heavily on Washburne's (1978) analysis, research has generally centered on two primary factors: marginality and ethnicity. Marginality emphasizes socioeconomic differences between Blacks and Whites associated with historical patterns of discrimination as the key determinant of differences in preference and/or participation. Ethnicity refers to different patterns of preferences or participation that can be explained by divergent values, norms, and socialization practices associated with Whites and Blacks, independent of socioeconomic factors. The conventional approach to testing the ethnicity hypothesis has been to interpret residual differences in preference ratings or participation rates between Blacks and Whites found after controlling for socioeconomic status as ethnic or subcultural effects. Increasingly, scholars have recognized the limitations of these explanations (e.g., Floyd, 1998) and have called for alternative approaches that further understanding of specific processes and mechanisms underlying racial and ethnic variation in leisure behavior.

West (1989), Phillip (1994), and Floyd (1998) have voiced the need to recognize the role of historical and contemporary race-based discrimination as a major force in shaping and constraining leisure participation among African Americans. Despite progress on a number of social and economic fronts (e.g., voting rights, housing, access to education, and more tolerant attitudes among Whites), African Americans—irrespective of socioeconomic mobility—are still subject to interpersonal and institutional forms of racism and discrimination (Feagin & Vera, 1995; Massey & Denton, 1993). The physical separation of African Americans and Whites in a variety of social settings, such as friendships, occupations, and residential areas, serves as a distinct marker of the current state of U.S. race relations (Jackman & Crane, 1986). Extensive documentation has been made of residential segregation in the U.S. Massey and Denton (1993) provided a detailed treatment of the historical and contemporary forces leading to the rise and persistence of residential segregation in American society. Their poignant characterization of current levels of black segregation in the largest U.S. cities as "American Apartheid" aptly describes the social distance between White Americans and African Americans. In an analysis of segregation patterns in 232 metropolitan areas for the period of 1980-1990, Farley and Frey (1994) found that while "modest declines" in segregation were observed for metropolitan areas with substantial black populations, segregation of African Americans remained much greater than for Hispanic and Asian Americans. They concluded:

> most whites are uncomfortable when numerous blacks enter their neighborhoods. Also, few whites will move into neighborhoods with many black residents. The conservative attitudes of whites and their fear of becoming a minority in a neighborhood limit the desegregation than can occur (p. 40).

Because there is a general tendency for Blacks and Whites to be spatially separated, there is a greater chance of social isolation, particularly with regard to Blacks, and fewer opportunities for interracial social interaction (Massey & Denton, 1993; Sigelman, Bledsoe, Welch, & Combs, 1996). No

previous study in the leisure studies literature has considered the impact of this cleavage on leisure preferences or participation.

The purpose of this study was to explore the question of whether interracial contact holds significant implications for explaining differences in leisure activity preferences among African Americans and Whites. Two propositions were developed to outline a conceptual link between interracial contact and leisure activity preferences. Only recently have researchers begun to consider how social group concepts can be used to explain relationships between race and leisure participation (Floyd & Gramann, 1993; Phillip, 1998). The first proposition addressed black-white differences in leisure activity preferences. It follows the comparative approach (e.g., Black-White, Anglo-Hispanic, etc.) employed in the majority of race and ethnic studies in leisure research. The second proposition addressed intragroup patterns in preferences. More attention has been given to intragroup variation in recent years, highlighting the occurrence of significant class and gender differences among African Americans (e.g., Outley, Floyd, & Shinew, 1997; Shinew, Floyd, McGuire, & Noe, 1996; Woodard, 1988) and patterns of assimilation among Mexican Americans (Floyd, Gramann, & Saenz, 1993). Following the presentation of the theory and concepts, the results of an empirical evaluation of the study propositions are reported. In the empirical analysis, we documented the extent of interracial contact within a sample of Chicago residents, observed the association between interracial contact and leisure activity preferences among African Americans and Whites, and within subgroups of African Americans and Whites.

Theory and Concepts

The theoretical framework for this study incorporates elements of Blau's (1977) structural theory, concepts from Bourdieu (1977, 1984) and the personal community hypothesis (Burch, 1969). The study also builds on the concept of status group dynamics (West, 1977, 1985). The former provides a conceptualization of social group processes and influence on leisure preferences. They guided the development of a proposition that ties racial variation in leisure preferences to interracial contact. Status group dynamics facilitated the development of a bridge between *intra-racial* variation in leisure preferences and interracial contact. The work of Bourdieu also informs this portion of the analysis.

Structural Theory

Blau's (1977) structural theory states that the rate of social contact between people with different social characteristics (e.g., race) is affected by the distribution of that characteristic (heterogeneity) in the population. As a population increases in heterogeneity on a social characteristic such as race, there are barriers to social integration because strong pressure for outgroup association is lacking. At a critical point, however, increasing hetero-

geneity results in reduction in social barriers and increases the chances of social contact between people who differ on that characteristic. As Blum (1985) observed, people without in-group preference cannot engage in outgroup associations in an homogeneous environment. Thus, when enough differentiation occurs, people begin to prefer outgroup associates to having no associates at all. Blum (1985) concluded "that macrosocial structure exerts constraints on interpersonal interactions by providing or limiting opportunities for such interactions. Intergroup relations are enhanced more in heterogeneous environments than in less diverse ones, even in the presence of in-group preferences that engender in-group ties" (pp. 520-521). Given such structural effects, a fundamental assumption in the present study is that higher interracial contact provides increased opportunities for social interaction.

Cultural Capital and Habitus

In theorizing on how social inequality is created and reproduced by cultural institutions, Bourdieu (1977, 1984) employed two concepts that are useful to the present study, *habitus* and *cultural capital.* He stated that habitus "expresses first the *result of an organizing action,* with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a *way of being, a habitual state* (especially of the body) and in particular, a *disposition, propensity, or inclination*" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 214, italics in the original). As interpreted by Lechte (1994, p. 47), habitus can be described as "a kind of grammar of actions which serves to differentiate one class (e.g., dominant) from another (e.g., the dominated) in the social field." Cultural capital refers to tangible and symbolic resources mobilized for class differentiation and social and cultural exclusion (Holt, 1997; Wall, Ferrazzi, & Schryer, 1998). At an abstract level, it consists of "a set of generic transposable characteristics—dispositions, skills, sensibilities, embodied knowledges concerning the body, beauty, creativity, individuality, achievement and so on—that together compose the habitus of cultural elites" (Holt, 1997, p. 96.). Having access to cultural capital means being connected through social networks involving family, educational institutions, memberships in formal and informal organizations, and individuals and groups that possess these "transposable characteristics." Cultural capital becomes manifest through styles of consumption in a variety of social fields, including leisure, sport, and travel (Holt, 1997; Munt, 1994).

It is assumed that interracial contact and increased interracial social interaction increases the probability that Whites and African Americans will have a similar habitus and comparable access to cultural capital. To the extent that Whites and African Americans share similar dispositions, propensities, or inclinations (embodied in the habitus), they are more likely to have comparable access to various forms of cultural capital and styles of deploying cultural capital. As a result, greater similarity, or convergence, in leisure styles (preferences) is expected among Whites and African Americans with high

levels of interracial contact. Among African Americans, we might expect greater dissimilarity (divergence) between those with high interracial contact and those with low interracial contact because their habitus is likely to differ and differential access to cultural capital (via interracial contact).

It is important to recognize that social reproduction in Bourdieu's theory, and the expected patterns of convergence in leisure preferences among Whites and African Americans, reflect social and cultural hegemony rather than mere conscious emulation or assimilation. According to Holt (1997, p. 95), "dominant social classes reproduce the social structure in accord with their interests not because they impose a uniform conception of the world on the rest of society, but because they are able to articulate commonsensical ways of understanding class differences such that there potential antagonism is neutralized."

Personal Community Hypothesis

Understanding of social groups and social interaction provides critical insight into leisure choices and meanings. This notion took hold during the late 1960s following the appearance of Burch's (1969) "Social Circles of Leisure" in the first volume of the *Journal of Leisure Research*. In this article, Burch articulated the personal community hypothesis, stating:

> [t]he personal community hypothesis assumes that gross social issues and psychological drives are significantly filtered and re-directed by the social circles of workmates, family and friends . . . The values which attract and are imposed upon the individual . . . may predispose him towards a general pattern of leisure action (pp. 138 and 143).

Theoretically grounded in interactionism, the personal community hypothesis positioned the individual within a dynamic web of primary and secondary relationships, involving socialization, communication, and role playing (Stokowski, 1990). It addresses context and structure in which norms, sanctions, identities, and expectations emerge, bringing to light the impact of associations centered around leisure and other social contexts. In general, social group research has drawn attention to the less dynamic aspects of social groups by focusing almost exclusively on the social organization of on-site participation and leisure co-participants (Hartmann, 1988; Stokowski, 1990). The focus on on-site participation ignores the wider circle of influences off-site that comes through other spheres of activity (e.g., church, work, neighborhood).

The personal community hypothesis suggests that (micro)social contexts and interactions would be influential in the formation of leisure preferences. The extent to which Black's and White's social circles intersect and overlap increases or decreases opportunity for shared leisure experiences and preferences. Stamps and Stamps (1985) used this notion as the basis for hypothesizing that the leisure preferences of middle class Blacks and Whites should be similar due to interaction in leisure and occupational settings afforded by middle class status.

Empirical evidence of a relationship between ethnic social integration and leisure participation exists in the literature. Floyd and Gramann (1993) observed a significant relationship between primary structural assimilation among Mexican Americans and outdoor recreation participation. Primary structural assimilation was defined as the degree of interaction in warm and intimate ties between minority group members and members of the majority group (Aguirre, Saenz, & Hwang, 1989). They reported that Mexican Americans with the highest rate of primary structural assimilation were similar in terms of frequency of participation to Anglo-Americans across five types of recreation activities. On the other hand, Mexican Americans with the lowest rate of assimilation differed from Anglo-Americans in three of the five activity types. Gramann, Saenz, and Floyd (1993) examined the effect of primary structural assimilation on perceived benefits of outdoor recreation among Anglo-Americans and Mexican American. They found that there were no significant differences between Mexican Americans with the highest rate of assimilation and Anglos in the importance of 12 of 13 benefit items. Among the Mexican American group with lowest degree of assimilation, four significant differences were observed. Five significant differences were observed among an "intermediate" group of Mexican Americans having primary relationships with both Anglos and other Mexican Americans.

Physical proximity, however, is a precursor to social interaction within personal communities. Primary relationships, such as friendships, are more likely to form among individuals who have contact with one another (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950; Bersheid & Walster, 1969). Racially diverse areas provide many more opportunities for interracial contact than areas that are racially homogeneous. Proximity is likely to foster acquaintances and friendships and lead to interracial contact in churches, schools, civic organizations and neighborhood activities (Jackman & Crane, 1986). Using a 1975 national survey sample, Jackman and Crane (1986) found that physical proximity was related to interpersonal contact between Whites and Blacks. Among Whites with no previous neighborhood proximity to Blacks, only 10% reported Black acquaintances. Among Whites whose current neighborhood was mostly white and had no previous neighborhood proximity to Blacks, only 18% ever engaged in "neighborly activities" with their black neighbors. In contrast, 60% of Whites with previous neighborhood proximity to Blacks and whose neighborhoods were more than half black engaged in neighborly activities. Only 9.4% of Whites reported having a good friend who was black and 21.4% had at least one Black acquaintance. Sigelman and Welch (1993) reported more recent national data on interracial friendships showing 61% of Whites have a close friend who is black. Seventy-four percent of Blacks reported having a white good friend. Sigelman et al. (1996) found that Blacks were more likely to live in neighborhood with Whites, visit the homes of Whites, and to engage more frequently in interracial conversations than were Whites. For Blacks to have more interracial contact with Whites (than vice versa) should not be surprising given the greater numerical chances of Blacks (a minority group) encountering Whites than of Whites encountering

proximity, contact, and social interaction, relationships (casual or intimate) are not likely to develop.

Those who experience interracial contact have more opportunity to interact and develop relationships that could lead to integrated personal communities than those who experience little interracial contact. Accordingly, as personal communities become integrated by race, we would expect some convergence in leisure values, norms, and lifestyles. That is, to the extent that personal communities serve as a context for leisure socialization, Blacks and Whites with high levels of interracial contact should exhibit more similarity than dissimilarity in leisure preferences.

Status Group Dynamics

The key assumption in our framework that permits us to posit an association between interracial contact and leisure preferences within racial groups is based on the concept of "status value." Ridgeway (1991) indicated that nominal social characteristics such as race and gender have status value when "consensual beliefs indicate that persons who have one state of the characteristic (e.g., Whites or males) are more worthy in the society than those with another state of the characteristic (Blacks and females). Race clearly has status value in American society (Floyd, 1998; Bonilla-Silva, 1997). As Ridgeway noted, a number of studies about stereotyping and attribution have shown that males and Whites have more status value than females and Blacks. Hence, a simple premise undergirds this part of the theoretical framework: race has status value, with Blacks and Whites being differentially valuated in the U.S. society.

The second foundational element rests on status group dynamics (West, 1977, 1982). West demonstrated that outdoor recreation demand is influenced by status group structures such that stability and change in participation rates over time correlate with status symbols that in turn correlate with socioeconomic standing. In his approach, there are two concepts that inform the present study: pecuniary emulation and status-based diffusion. Pecuniary emulation, derived from Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class,* suggests that lifestyle and consumption patterns of high status groups are emulated by members of lower status groups as a means of social mobility. West noted that the importance of pecuniary emulation lies in its ability to provide social mobility where mobility may be blocked by ascribed status characteristics. Central to leisure studies, as he suggested, is the use of leisure lifestyles as a means of conveying and projecting social status. More central to our analysis is the concept of status based diffusion which he defined as:

> The process in which the leisure and recreation patterns of one (usually higher) stratum are emulated and adopted by other (usually lower) strata as a means of status enhancement, thus creating a spread (diffusion) of the leisure style across strata and a corresponding growth in the overall participation rate (West, 1977, p. 198).

These dynamics have been demonstrated empirically in regional and nation-

The utility of the status group dynamics approach for advancing a statement about intragroup variation in leisure preferences among African Americans and Whites derives from its perspective in anticipating within-group similarity and dissimilarity among African Americans and Whites with different degrees of interracial contact. West's approach demonstrated that diffusion flows downward to lower status groups. Therefore, assuming that Whites (relative to African Americans) are the higher status group, assimilation of leisure lifestyles should trend toward them. Keep in mind, however, that the objective is to explain *intragroup* variation. Among African Americans then, individuals with high interracial contact are subject to experience a "pull" toward Whites created by status differences associated with race (as a nominal characteristic that is differentially valuated). This dynamic (i.e., the pull of Blacks with high interracial contact) toward Whites, creates the probability of differentiation and dissimilarity *among* African Americans with low interracial contact. Further, it is argued that this dynamic is only salient for African Americans. Within the framework being developed, there is no strong rationale for expecting significant dissimilarity among Whites with low or high interracial contact, simply because Whites (with low or high interracial contact) represent the high status reference group or "leading stratum" to use West's terminology.

Incorporating elements of Bourdieu's non-emulationist theory and West's emulationist-based models appears contradictory. However, both perspectives help to elucidate tensions among African Americans created by social reproduction and status group dynamics that possibly create patterns of divergence in their leisure preferences. According to the former, reproduction principles of habitus operate "*below the level of consciousness and discourse*" [italics added] (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 468). Tensions arise as the habitus of African Americans with extensive social contact with Whites becomes increasingly dissimilar from that of African Americans with low social contact with Whites. In Veblen's theory of status employed by West, members of lower status groups *consciously* recognize and accord respect to the practices of higher status groups (Holt, 1997). As stated previously, status group adoption among African Americans with high interracial contact accounts for divergence.

Edward's (1981) investigation of racial variation in leisure preferences offers empirical support for this expecting incongruity in preferences among Blacks. She compared the leisure preferences of Blacks living in predominantly black residential neighborhoods to Blacks living in predominantly white neighborhoods. Significant differences were observed across eight types of leisure activities (outdoor recreation, public recreation services, club memberships, crafts, exercise, wildland activities, skills classes and dance instruction) controlling for demographic and socioeconomic background. Moreover, she reported that residential setting (predominant race in the neighborhood) explained between 14 and 43% of the variance in leisure preferences. Most central to the development of our framework is her interpretation of her findings: regarding Blacks residing in predominantly white

residential areas, she suggests that Blacks may be "expressing a desire to emulate the values that are perceived to be held by the larger society" (p. 109). We suggest that this exposure comes through interracial contact and results in the divergence in lifestyle choices within the African American population.

Theoretical Summary

The theoretical framework suggests the following. Through interracial contact opportunities are increased for social interaction, shared habitus and integration of personal communities. Consequently, the probability of exposure to outgroup norms and shared frames of references regarding leisure lifestyles is enhanced. Therefore, as interracial contact increases, the greater the probability of observing similarities in the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites, irrespective of socioeconomic status. Regarding intraracial leisure preference patterns, differential valuation of racial groups in the U.S. and the tendency for lifestyle choices to be patterned along lines of power (hegemony) and prestige (status) result in divergent patterns of leisure preference among African Americans with either high or low interracial contact. Divergence is expected since Blacks with high interracial contact are subject to status group dynamics not experienced by their Black counterparts with low interracial contact. Our framework can now be summarized as follows:

Assumption 1: Higher interracial contact provides increased opportunities for social interaction (Blau, 1977).

Assumption 2: Increased social interaction, following interracial contact, provides increased opportunities for cultural exchange and common frame of references (exposure to outgroup norms and preferences) (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Burch, 1969).

Proposition 1: As interracial contact increases, the greater the probability of observing similarity in the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites.

Assumption 3: Race has status value, such that African Americans and Whites are differentially valuated in society (Ridgeway, 1991).

Assumption 4: In stratified systems, patterns of assimilation of lifestyle choices are patterned by location of social power and prestige (West, 1977; 1982).

Proposition 2: The probability of observing similarity in the leisure preferences will be greater *among* Whites with high or low interracial contact than the observing similarity *among* African Americans with high or low interracial contact.

Research Setting

For several reasons, Chicago offers an appropriate setting in which to examine the association between interracial contact and leisure activity pref-

erences among African Americans and Whites. In 1970, Chicago was 18% black and 81% white. In 1980, the percentage of Blacks and Whites was 20 and 80 respectively. In 1970 62.2% of Whites lived in suburbs, only 10% of Blacks lived in suburbs. In 1980, 73% of Whites lived in suburbs with 15.8% of Blacks living in the suburbs (Massey & Denton, 1988). By 1990, the distribution of Blacks and Whites in Chicago stood at 32% and 56%.

The Chicago SMSA is among the 16 "hypersegregated" metropolitan areas in the U.S. according to Massey and Denton's (1993) analysis. Hypersegregated areas are those where the spatial separation of racial groups make it unlikely that Blacks and Whites will encounter members of another race in their own neighborhood or in surrounding neighborhoods. A key measure of hypersegregation is the extent of isolation. It refers to the degree of potential contact, or possibility of interaction between minority and majority group members. A maximum value of 100% occurs when all Blacks live in all Black neighborhoods with no opportunity for residential contact with Whites. Chicago's isolation score, the highest of the 16 hypersegregated cities, was 82.8.

Finally, racial conflict has played a large role in the racial composition of Chicago neighborhoods. As African Americans migrated to Chicago during the 1920's, attempts to integrate white neighborhoods were confronted with violence initiated by white residents. The Commission on Race Relations (1922: 122-135) recorded 58 fire bombings in Chicago's southside between 1917 and 1921 aimed at thwarting blacks attempts to move into white neighborhoods. Following WWII, the Truman Committee on Civil Rights estimated that 80% of Chicago's real estate was covered by deed restrictions that barred sales to African Americans, Asians, and other "undesirable" minorities. Hirsch (1983, 1995) documents several instances of violence targeting blacks attempting to integrate white neighborhoods.

Data and Methods

The data to evaluate the study propositions come from a survey of Chicago park users conducted during the spring and summer of 1996. The survey was designed to provide information on a wide range of issues including park use patterns, leisure preferences, perceived constraints, information use, and demographic characteristics. The parks where the survey was conducted were chosen in order to achieve a sample with an adequate number of black and white respondents from high, middle and low income areas. Accordingly, a sample of "community areas", stratified by race and income, was used to select parks for the survey. Chicago has 75 community areas, which are used as "statistical units for the analysis of varying conditions within the City of Chicago" (A. Salazar, personal communication, December 12, 1995). The 1990 Census Population of Housing was used to identify percentages of black and white populations within these community areas. Community areas identified as having 70% or more of one race were labeled as either a predominantly Black or a predominantly White community area.

Community areas that contained 20% or more of both racial groups were labeled a "racially mixed community". The 70% figure was selected in order to ensure that the areas included both upper and lower income areas since all community areas where the population was 80% or more White had less than a 5% poverty rate. Therefore, to identify a lower income area within the White communities, the percentage was lowered to 70%. The 20% figure used as a criterion for the racially mixed communities was selected for similar reasons.

Once the community areas were stratified by race, they were then divided to assure income diversity. To determine higher and lower income community areas, the percentage below poverty rate, average incomes, and median incomes were considered. The higher income communities were determined by identifying the "White", "Black", and "Mixed" communities with the *lowest* percentage below poverty. This was then confirmed by examining the average and median income figures. To determine the lower income areas, communities with the *highest* percentage below poverty were identified, and again, this information was confirmed by examining average and median income figures. This procedure yielded six community areas representing the following characteristics: two predominantly Black areas (representing lower and upper income areas); and, two "Mixed communities" (representing lower and upper income areas); and two "White" areas (representing lower and upper income areas).

The Chicago Park District Parkland Needs Analysis was used to identify all parks within the jurisdictions of the six selected community areas. Parks within each community area were compared in terms of existing facilities and acreage. Visitation records were also examined. After on-site visits, one park from each of the six community areas was selected. The six parks selected were considered comparable parks. It should be noted, however, that it could not be assumed that the park users were residents of the community area in which the park was located. Thus, respondents were asked questions about frequency of park use, why they were in the park that day, and which community park they used most often. They were also asked, "by what major cross-streets do you live?"

Field personnel were hired and trained to administer the on-site survey. The racial background of the field personnel matched the dominant user group of each park. Data collection dates and times provided coverage of weekday, weekend, morning, afternoon, and early evening use. During the on-site survey, field personnel gave the respondent a laminated response card that provided the scales used to measure their responses. The purpose of the card was to facilitate the survey process. Park users were selected systematically by approaching every *n*th person in designated locations within the park. Efforts were made to provide coverage of the spatial variation in park activities occurring in each park. A total of 807 park users were contacted on-site; 612 completed an interview (Blacks = 271, Whites = 311, other groups = 30) making for a response rate of 75.8%. Only African Americans and Whites are included in the current study. Sample characteristics by race

are shown in Table 1. African Americans and Whites differed significantly with regard to educational status, income, employment status, number of years lived in Chicago, and age.

Measures

A list of 25 leisure activities was included in the survey, and respondents were asked to indicate, "How much do you like . . . . ". The response options included "not at all", "very little", "some", "quite a bit", and "a lot". Again, the respondent had a laminated card that listed the 25 leisure activities as well as the response options. It should be noted that while the list of activities

TABLE 1
Sample Characteristics

	Frequency (%)		
Education Level	*Blacks* (n = 269)	*Whites* (n = 310)	χ^2
< high school	36 (13.4)	10 (3.2)	67.61***
high school	89 (33.1)	52 (16.8)	
some college	76 (28.3)	81 (26.1)	
graduate from college or university	44 (16.4)	107 (34.5)	
some graduate work	7 (2.6)	25 (8.1)	
completed graduate work	17 (6.3)	35 (11.3)	
Income Level	*Blacks* (n = 264)	*Whites* (n = 289)	χ^2
0-$7,499	73 (27.7)	16 (5.5)	112.20***
$7,500-14,999	28 (8.7)	11 (3.8)	
$15,000-24,000	27 (10.2)	17 (5.9)	
$25,000-34,999	27 (10.2)	22 (7.6)	
$35,000-44,999	36 (13.6)	29 (10.0)	
$45,000-64,999	48 (18.2)	59 (20.4)	
$65,000-84,999	17 (6.4)	60 (20.8)	
$85,000 and over	13 (4.9)	75 (26.0)	
Gender	*Blacks* (n = 265)	*Whites* (n = 310)	χ^2
Male	137 (51.7)	157 (50.7)	.06
Female	128 (48.3)	153 (49.3)	
Employment Status	*Blacks* (n = 260)	*Whites* (n = 305)	χ^2
Full-time	120 (46.2)	165 (54.1)	24.22***
Part-time	30 (11.5)	66 (21.6)	
Not employed	110 (42.3)	74 (24.3)	
Number of years lived in Chicago	*Blacks* (n = 251)	*Whites* (n = 302)	*F value*
	24.58	29.68	13.22***
Number of years at Present Resident	*Blacks* (n = 263)	*Whites* (n = 304)	*F value*
	10.04	10.66	.59
Age (in years)	*Blacks* (n = 260)	*Whites* (n = 307)	*F value*
	33.66	39.09	20.73**

*** $p < .001$.

included several informal core activities (Kelly, 1980), some common activities were omitted (e.g., television viewing, listening to the radio, cooking). Also, the activities do not consider the setting in which activities take place. For example, for camping, there were no questions regarding the type (car vs. primitive camping) or setting (e.g., state park or wilderness) for camping.

An interracial contact measure was based on four items from survey questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate, "How often do you talk face-to-face to [Whites, if the respondent is Black/Blacks, if the respondent is White] in the situations listed on Card D?" The situations included "in your neighborhood", "in your home", "in your church", and "in the park". Their response options were "never", "once/twice a month", "once/twice a week", "daily", and "not applicable". These situations were chosen to represent settings that were somewhat intimate (e.g., home and church) to situations more impersonal (e.g., neighborhood and park). Similar items were used by Sigelman and Welch (1993). Respondents were not questioned about their history of interracial contact (e.g., contact during childhood).

Responses from the four indicators were used to form two groups of respondents: those with *high* interracial contact and those with *low* interracial contact. Respondents who indicated that they "never" talk face-to-face with other-race individuals in their neighborhood, church, home, and park were designated as having "low interracial contact" and those who indicated that they talk face-to-face to other-race individuals "at least once/twice a month" *or more* in all situations were designated as having "high interracial contact."

Statistical Procedures

The association between interracial contact and leisure preferences was assessed by analysis of variance procedures. Multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if, in general, African Americans and Whites differed in terms of leisure preferences. Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to determine differences between subgroups (between and within racial groups) on individual activities. The association between interracial contact and leisure preferences was observed while controlling for age, education, and income.

Results

Extent of Interracial Contact

In light of previous findings regarding interracial contact and residential segregation, substantial social distance was expected between African Americans and Whites. The extent of interracial contact for sample respondents is shown in Table 2. Among white respondents, interracial contact with Blacks (face-to-face conversation) was least likely to occur in their home, at church, in the neighborhood, and in parks. Over 60% of Whites reported never having contact with Blacks in the homes; 50% reported having contact with Blacks at church. Over one-third reported never having contact with

TABLE 2
Level of Reported Interracial Contact

Contact with Blacks reported by Whites				
	Frequency (%)			
Response	Neighborhood	Church	Home	Park
Never	107 (34.9)	153 (50.0)	191 (62.4)	83 (26.9)
Once/twice a month	66 (21.5)	67 (21.9)	62 (20.3)	89 (28.9)
Once/twice a week	70 (22.8)	46 (15.0)	36 (11.8)	79 (25.6)
Daily	63 (20.5)	6 (2.0)	15 (4.9)	53 (17.2)
Not applicable	1 (0.3)	34 (11.1)	2 (0.7)	4 (1.3)
Contact with Whites reported by Blacks				
	Frequency (%)			
	Neighborhood	Church	Home	Park
Never	157 (58.6)	162 (60.4)	192 (71.9)	155 (58.1)
Once/twice a month	37 (13.8)	40 (14.9)	41 (15.4)	52 (19.5)
Once/twice a week	24 (9.0)	24 (9.0)	12 (4.5)	27 (10.1)
Daily	44 (16.4)	13 (4.9)	11 (4.1)	25 (9.4)
Not applicable	6 (2.2)	29 (10.8)	11 (4.1)	8 (3.0)

Blacks in their neighborhood and 27% reported no interracial contact in parks. Approximately 20% interact with Blacks in their neighborhoods on a daily basis.

Among black respondents, the same pattern can be observed: interracial contact was least likely to occur in the home, followed by church, neighborhood, and in parks. About 72% of Blacks reported never having contact with Whites in their homes. Sixty percent reported never interacting with Whites in church. Nearly 60% of respondents experience no interracial contact in the neighborhood or in parks. It appeared that moderate amounts of interracial contact (monthly and weekly) was reported more frequently by Whites. This may result from a tendency for Blacks to be socially isolated from Whites in Chicago (Massey & Denton, 1993). It is also reasonable to expect that social desirability contributed to reports of higher rates of contact with Blacks on the part of white respondents.

Black-White Differences in Leisure Preferences

The MANOVA results indicated that African Americans and Whites significantly differed in their preferences for the leisure activities ($F = 9.36$; $p < .001$). Univariate analysis (one-way ANOVA) indicated that African Americans' and Whites' ratings were statistically different on 14 of the 25

TABLE 3
Comparison of Leisure Preference Reported by Blacks and White

Leisure Preferences	F value	Means	
		Blacks (n = 250)	Whites (n = 295)
Play Baseball/Softball	2.06	3.30	3.11
Play Basketball	.01	2.74	2.64
Gardening	8.43**	2.00	2.39
Visit with Friends	14.37***	3.72	4.10
Go Hiking	44.05***	1.79	2.63
Go Jogging/Running	2.39	2.93	2.78
Go to Galleries/Museums	4.14*	2.76	3.13
Listen to Music	.37	4.22	4.12
Observe/Photograph Nature	5.63**	2.45	2.76
Go on Picnics	.65	3.31	3.21
Relax/Do nothing	.02	3.81	3.76
Go Shopping	30.96***	3.66	2.97
Go to Sporting Events	.09	3.33	3.36
Go Swimming	35.56***	2.81	3.59
Travel/Go on Vacation	2.65	3.65	3.92
Go for Walk	8.55***	3.58	3.86
Visit State Parks	30.77***	2.25	2.89
Cards/Table Games	1.74	3.16	2.83
Camping	15.28***	2.17	2.54
Visit with Family	.03	3.71	3.81
Go Drinking	34.49***	2.08	2.58
Go Bird watching	4.28*	1.61	1.81
Go Fishing	.73	2.28	2.11
Visit Forest Preserves	18.73***	2.67	3.26
Go to Church	15.93**	3.44	3.16

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. Note. Means are based on the question "how much do you like to" with response options ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("a lot"). Analysis controlled for the effects of age, income, and education.

speaking, the results are consistent with previous research. For example, African Americans indicated a greater preference for shopping, and going to church. Whites reported greater preference for gardening, visiting friends, hiking, nature observation/photography, going to a museum, swimming, going to state parks, camping, and visiting forest preserves. No significant differences were observed for sports (baseball/softball, basketball, running/jogging), listening to music, relaxing, picnics, attending sporting events, visiting family, birdwatching, card/table games, travel/vacations and fishing.

Interracial Contact and Leisure Preferences

Before examining the association between interracial contact and leisure

TABLE 4
Comparison of Leisure Preferences reported by Blacks and Whites with Low Interracial Contact

Leisure Preferences	F value	Means	
		Whites (n = 46)	Blacks (n = 117)
Play Baseball/Softball	.21	3.40	3.42
Play Basketball	7.88**	3.04	2.60
Go Bird watching	.04	1.49	1.45
Go Camping	8.49**	2.38	1.93
Play Cards/Table Games	.54	2.51	3.13
Go to Church	9.21**	3.29	3.45
Go Drinking	24.34***	2.91	2.08
Visit with Family	7.02**	4.04	3.42
Go Fishing	.88	2.18	2.06
Visit Forest Preserves	9.59***	3.27	2.47
Visit with Friends	13.09***	4.24	3.54
Gardening	.65	2.44	1.85
Go Hiking	49.07***	2.58	1.46
Go Jogging/Running	.05	2.98	2.76
Go to Galleries/Museums	6.11**	2.89	2.48
Listen to Music	.02	4.20	4.12
Observe/Photograph Nature	3.64*	2.56	2.25
Go on Picnics	1.04	3.11	3.08
Relax/Do nothing	.01	3.91	3.71
Go Shopping	9.24**	2.73	3.49
Go to Sporting Events	16.10***	3.62	3.13
Visit State Parks	33.97***	2.82	1.88
Go Swimming	14.66***	3.78	2.58
Travel/Go on Vacation	23.46***	4.18	3.25
Go for Walks	7.02**	3.78	3.32

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
Note. Means are based on the question "how much do you like to" with response options ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("a lot"). Analysis controlled for the effects of age, income, and education.

varies with interracial contact. Among respondents with low interracial contact, African Americans and Whites differed significantly in terms of their education level (χ = 27.01, $p < .001$) and income level (χ = 79.09, $p < .001$). African Americans reported lower income and lower educational attainment than did Whites. Similar results were found among respondents with high interracial contact. Again, African Americans reported significantly lower levels of educational attainment (χ = 17.69, $p < .001$) and income (χ = 31.23, $p < .001$) than did their White counterparts. Given these differences in socioeconomic status, and in order to observe more directly the association between interracial contact and leisure preferences, statistical

The first set of comparisons paired African Americans and Whites with low interracial contact (Table 4). Proposition 1 guided this portion of the analysis. The MANOVA results indicated that the leisure preferences of Whites and African Americans with low interracial contact were significantly different ($F = 5.84$, $p < .001$). The leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites significantly differed on 16 of the 25 leisure activities. Activities with significant mean differences (in order of magnitude according to the F-statistic) were hiking, visiting state parks, travel/vacation, drinking, attending sporting events, swimming, visiting friends, shopping, camping, visiting forest preserves, church activities, walking, visiting family, visiting museums, basketball, and nature observation/photography. Of the 16 significant differences, Black respondents reported higher preferences on church and shopping. Thus, in line with our expectations regarding the association between interracial contact and leisure preferences, African Americans and Whites with low levels of interracial contact were more likely than not to differ in their leisure preferences.

A greater degree of similarity in leisure preferences was observed among African Americans and Whites with high levels of interracial contact (Table 5). Although the MANOVA results indicated a significant difference between their leisure preferences ($F = 3.87$, $p < .001$), the univariate ANOVA results indicated that the leisure preferences of the two groups differed on only 8 of the 25 leisure activities. African Americans with high interracial contact reported a greater preference for church, picnics, shopping, visiting with family members, and travel/vacations. Whites with high interracial contact exhibited greater preferences for swimming, hiking, and going drinking. It is noteworthy that among African Americans with high or low interracial contact church emerged as an activity that was preferred and was significant relative to Whites' preference for this activity. Also, in the previous two comparisons (Table 3 and 4), Whites rated visiting family as most important. However, African Americans with high interracial contact exhibited stronger preference for visiting family. These findings are placed in the context of the current literature in the discussion section.

In summary, when African Americans and Whites with low interracial contact were compared, there was more dissimilarity in the leisure preferences than similarity. Conversely, when African Americans and Whites with high interracial contact were compared, a greater degree of similarity in leisure preferences was observed. Consistent with the study's theoretical framework, it is assumed that the pattern of congruity among African Americans and Whites with high interracial contact can be attributed to intersecting personal communities involving primary and secondary social relationships resulting from interracial contact.

Intragroup Comparisons

The second proposition developed for this study suggested that Black individuals with low and high interracial contact will exhibit patterns of dis-

TABLE 5
Comparison of Leisure Preferences reported by Blacks and Whites with High Interracial Contact

Leisure Preferences	F value	Means	
		Whites (n = 78)	Blacks (n = 45)
Play Baseball/Softball	1.31	2.94	3.45
Play Basketball	3.07	2.65	3.20
Go Bird watching	.00	1.92	2.12
Go Camping	2.05	3.03	2.75
Play Cards/Table Games	.46	3.10	3.45
Go to Church	9.08**	3.04	3.83
Go Drinking	9.30**	2.60	2.03
Visit with Family	8.17**	3.74	4.28
Go Fishing	1.04	2.12	2.65
Visit Forest Preserves	.92	3.27	3.03
Visit with Friends	.34	4.10	4.15
Gardening	1.18	2.30	2.40
Go Hiking	6.38**	2.68	2.15
Go Jogging/Running	2.19	2.97	3.53
Go to Galleries/Museums	.03	3.12	2.93
Listen to Music	.17	4.25	4.43
Observe/Photograph Nature	2.85	2.83	3.20
Go on Picnics	4.54*	3.34	3.88
Relax/Do nothing	2.71	3.69	4.18
Go Shopping	11.40***	3.26	3.95
Go to Sporting Events	3.51	3.30	3.75
Visit State Parks	1.38	2.95	2.73
Go Swimming	12.06***	3.83	3.15
Travel/Go on Vacation	10.02**	3.83	4.30
Go for Walks	.81	3.87	4.13

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
Note. Means are based on the question "how much do you like to" with response options ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("a lot"). Analysis controlled for the effects of age, income, and education.

dents with low and high interracial contact did not differ significantly with regard to socioeconomic status. Results from MANOVA showed that the two group's ratings of the 25 activities were statistically different ($F = 2.95$; $p < .001$). Univariate ANOVA indicated that African Americans with low and high interracial contact differed on 22 of the 25 leisure activities (Table 6). The only activities in which the two groups did not statistically differ were baseball/softball, cards/table games, and going drinking. Moreover, in almost every case where there was a statistically significant difference, individuals with high interracial contact consistently reported a greater preference

TABLE 6
Comparison of Leisure Preferences reported by Blacks with Low and High Interracial Contact

Leisure Preferences	F value	Means: Low interracial contact (n = 117)	Means: High interracial contact (n = 45)
Play Baseball/Softball	.50	3.42	3.45
Play Basketball	7.54**	2.60	3.20
Go Bird watching	9.23**	1.45	2.12
Go Camping	9.62**	1.93	2.75
Play Cards/Table Games	2.55	3.13	3.45
Go to Church	3.70*	3.45	3.83
Go Drinking	.05	2.08	2.03
Visit with Family	23.79***	3.42	4.28
Go Fishing	3.72*	2.06	2.65
Visit Forest Preserves	5.22*	2.47	3.03
Visit with Friends	14.15***	3.54	4.15
Gardening	4.88*	1.85	2.40
Go Hiking	12.07***	1.46	2.15
Go Jogging/Running	12.23***	2.76	3.53
Go to Galleries/Museums	3.71*	2.48	2.93
Listen to Music	8.12*	4.12	4.43
Observe/Photograph Nature	13.88***	2.25	3.20
Go on Picnics	18.37***	3.08	3.88
Relax/Do nothing	6.83**	3.71	4.18
Go Shopping	9.07**	3.49	3.95
Go to Sporting Events	14.69***	3.13	3.75
Visit State Parks	12.49***	1.88	2.73
Go Swimming	10.96***	2.58	3.15
Travel/Go on Vacation	32.20***	3.25	4.30
Go for Walks	14.32***	3.32	4.13

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
Note. Means are based on the question "how much do you like to" with response options ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("a lot"). Analysis controlled for the effects of age, income, and education.

for the leisure activity than did their counterparts with low interracial contact. The position being advanced in this article is that Bourdieu's notion of habitus and status group dynamics can be used to anticipate and interpret this pattern of results.

While a proposition concerning differences among Whites with low and high interracial contact was not offered, the expectation was that few differences would be observed among Whites due to their position as a high status group (within the theoretical framework of this article). The expectation was that the status group dynamics thought to be salient among African Ameri-

cans would not be present for Whites. This was the case as indicated by the results from both the MANOVA (F = 1.93, NS) and the univariate ANOVA (see Table 7). The univariate tests showed that Whites with low and high interracial contact differed on only 5 of the 25 leisure activities. The only activities in which the two groups *did* statistically differ were baseball/softball, camping, cards/table games, drinking, and shopping. These findings are in line with our theoretical expectations.

Discussion and Implications

Current explanations for Black-White differences in leisure preferences do not identify specific dimensions of race and ethnic relations to account for patterns of interracial variation. Neither do they offer reasons for in-group variation within the African American population. The present study sought to address these gaps in the literature through an application of structural theory and social group perspectives from which two research propositions were developed. First, it was proposed that African Americans and Whites with high interracial contact are more likely to exhibit similar leisure preferences than African Americans and Whites with low levels of interracial contact. Data on leisure preferences were consistent with this notion. Means comparisons procedures involving African Americans and Whites (undifferentiated on interracial contact) resulted in 16 statistically significant differences out of 25 leisure preference items. When the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites with high levels of interracial contact were compared, just eight significant differences were observed. Second, based on status group dynamics (West, 1977; 1982), it was proposed that greater similarity would be observed among the leisure preferences of Whites with high or low interracial contact than similarity among African Americans with high or low interracial contact. A comparison of mean differences in leisure preferences for African Americans with high and low interracial contact showed that these subgroups differed on 21 of 25 activities. Among Whites, only four significant differences were observed. Both set of analyses (proposition 1 and 2), were performed controlling for socioeconomic status.

It would appear that viewing black-white differences in leisure preferences from a "social group" perspective yields significant insight into the influence of social interaction on interracial and intra-racial variation in leisure preferences. While tentative, the significance of obtaining these results while controlling for socioeconomic status should not be understated. As noted earlier, black respondents reported lower incomes and educational attainment than did Whites. The same holds for black respondents with high interracial contact and their white counterparts. Therefore, the convergence in the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites can not be attributed to socioeconomic status. Likewise, the divergence in leisure preference patterns among African Americans can not be attributed to socioeconomic status. It is reasonable to argue, given our theoretical perspectives, that interracial contact is a key mechanism in the convergence of leisure

TABLE 7
Comparison of Leisure Preferences reported by Whites with Low and High Interracial Contact

Leisure Preferences	F value	Means: Low interracial contact (n = 46)	Means: High interracial contact (n = 78)
Play Baseball/Softball	4.04*	3.40	2.94
Play Basketball	2.96	3.04	2.65
Go Bird watching	2.04	1.49	1.92
Go Camping	4.24*	2.38	3.03
Play Cards/Table Games	6.00*	2.51	3.10
Go to Church	.97	3.29	3.04
Go Drinking	4.95*	2.91	2.60
Visit with Family	1.00	4.04	3.74
Go Fishing	.53	2.18	2.12
Visit Forest Preserves	.01	3.27	3.27
Visit with Friends	1.38	4.24	4.10
Gardening	.39	2.44	2.30
Go Hiking	.01	2.58	2.68
Go Jogging/Running	.57	2.98	2.97
Go to Galleries/Museums	.89	2.89	3.12
Listen to Music	.07	4.20	4.25
Observe/Photograph Nature	.84	2.56	2.83
Go on Picnics	.19	3.11	3.34
Relax/Do nothing	.95	3.91	3.69
Go Shopping	4.72*	2.73	3.26
Go to Sporting Events	3.36	3.62	3.30
Visit State Parks	.65	2.82	2.95
Go Swimming	.05	3.78	3.83
Travel/Go on Vacation	1.60	4.18	3.83
Go for Walks	.12	3.78	3.87

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
Note. Means are based on the question "how much do you like to" with response options ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("a lot"). Analysis controlled for the effects of age, income, and education.

rican Americans. Interracial contact enhances the probability of social interaction of individuals across racial lines and increases exposure to outgroup norms and shared frames of reference.

The direction of convergence among the leisure patterns of African Americans and Whites with high interracial contact is also noteworthy. An inspection of the mean values in Tables 5 and 7 shows that for several activities (camping, visiting forest preserves, visiting state parks, gardening, visiting galleries and museums, and walking) it appears that African Americans' preferences tend to become more like those of Whites, rather than vice versa.

walking the mean preference ratings for African Americans exceed those of Whites. This pattern of results is significant in the following respect. First, it is consistent with Edwards's (1981) and Shinew et al.'s (1995) interpretation of their findings. Edwards observed that the Black leisure styles in situations of interracial contact are shaped by "anticipatory socialization," whereby African Americans express "a desire to emulate values that are perceived to be held by the larger society" (p. 109). Shinew et al., 1995 interpreted a similar pattern of results as evidence of effort by upwardly mobile African Americans to solidify their status positions. In other words, the convergence of the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites and the divergent patterns among African Americans should be viewed as one example of how leisure activities are tied to social relations and power dynamics associated with race. A reasonable conjecture, in light of status group dynamics and cultural capital, concerning "convergence/divergence" suggests that African Americans are not merely choosing to assimilate, but may be amassing cultural and symbolic resources that convey power and prestige less attainable through other means (e.g., ascribed status).

Our findings also bear out assumptions underlying Stamps and Stamps (1985) study of the association of race, class, and leisure preferences. In their study they assumed that middle class status provided opportunities for Whites and African Americans to interact in work and nonwork settings. They suggested that this interaction leads to similarity in leisure lifestyles. Further, they assumed that the greater social distance between African Americans and Whites, the less likely similar lifestyles would be observed between the two groups. They approached this from a social class perspective, hypothesizing "a high association" in the rank order of leisure preferences between middle class African Americans and Whites and "a low association" in the rank order of leisure activity preferences between middle and lower class African Americans. Contrary to their hypothesis, there was little association between the leisure preferences of middle class African Americans and Whites in their study and significant association between middle and lower class African Americans. However, it is interesting to note that their assumptions were based on interracial contact and the data from the present study are consistent with their assumptions.

What is not clear from our research is the specific interaction processes and dynamics surrounding interracial contact as measured in the present study. It was noted that direct measures of such factors were not available. While interracial contact was measured by single-item indicators across five different settings (home, neighborhood, church, job, and parks), respondents were not queried on the nature of their outgroup contacts. Jackson and Crane (1986) asked their respondents if they could name a "good friend" and "acquaintance" who was of a different racial group (black or white). Further, they queried their respondents on participation in "neighborly activities" with members of other racial groups. Such questioning provides insight into the nature or conditions under which interracial contact is made. Social network concepts would be especially helpful in understand-

ing the nature of interracial contact and interracial relationships and their impact on leisure choices. Stokowski (1990) outlines interactional and structural criteria which target the kind of data needed to augment our data. Clearly, additional insight can come through greater specification of these processes and structures. Further work on this issue is strongly encouraged.

Three additional sets of research findings also deserve highlighting. First, interracial contact appeared to moderate differences in preferences for outdoor recreation or nature-based activities. Of the nine activities that could be categorized as such, African Americans and Whites with high interracial contact differed only on hiking. Again, this was observed before and while controlling for socioeconomic status. This set of results is somewhat at odds with data reported by Dwyer and Hutchison (1990). In their study of black and white Chicago households, they concluded that the "most significant underlying dimension in the differences between the recreation participation and preferences of black and white Chicago households is the stronger urban orientation of black households" (p. 59). While our analyses are not directly comparable due to differences in samples (households vs. park users) and dependent variables (participation rates and setting preference), our findings suggest that when interracial contact is taken into account most (with the exception of hiking) of the differences between African Americans and Whites on outdoor recreation preferences disappear. A high degree of similarity was also observed for urban-oriented activities. The similarity in the leisure preferences of African Americans and Whites with high interracial contact counters the general perception that African Americans are more strongly oriented toward urban and social leisure, and less oriented toward outdoor recreation activities.

Second, the importance of religion and church among African Americans seems to be reflected in our data. Robinson (1998) reported that since 1965 African Americans spend more that twice the amount of time in church activities than Whites. Several studies have documented the importance of churches in lives of African Americans (e.g., Ellison & Gay, 1989; Krause & Tran, 1989; Taylor & Chatters, 1991). For this activity, the mean rating for African Americans was significantly greater than Whites'. Also, African Americans with high interracial contact rated this activity significantly higher than Whites with high interracial contact and African Americans with low interracial contact. Surprisingly, under conditions of low interracial contact, Whites rating of church was greater than African Americans. One possible explanation for this finding is that church for this group of African Americans (with low interracial contact) does not assume as large a role as a social buffer or emotional haven as it does in the lives of African Americans with high levels of interracial contact. Another interpretation of this finding is that the importance of church activity among African Americans with high interracial contact may reflect its status as a cultural core within the African American sub-society. Gramann et al. (1993) found that leisure benefits associated with core Mexican American cultural values were resistant to assim-

ilation pressures. A similar phenomenon may underlie the constancy of the preference for church under conditions of high interracial contact.

A final thought relates to the divergence of leisure preferences among African Americans. Shinew et al. examined the effect of "class polarization" among African Americans on leisure preference in their 1996 study. Their findings suggested that attention should be directed at understanding class cleavages within the black population as well as between Whites and African Americans. In this study, interracial contact appears to demonstrate more emphatically the implications of a wide social distance between African Americans with greater and lesser degrees of interracial contact. A consequence of class bifurcation is that African Americans at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder increasingly face barriers to upward mobility. African Americans with low interracial contact may be disadvantaged by lack of access to cultural and social capital which come through interracial contact and interpersonal networks per se, and networks associated with leisure (Wall et al., 1998; Coleman, 1988). Lack of accessibility to key social networks limits exposure not just to activities, but to activities laden with numerous social and cultural benefits as well (Bixler & Morris, 1998).

Practical Implications

A key issue emerging from the data in this study is that planning for leisure services must consider patterns of interaction among different racial and ethnic groups. Where there is extensive interracial contact in primary social relationship and some secondary relationships, there *may be* less need to differentiate programs and services. On the other hand, the opposite approach—greater differentiation—may be true in situations with low interracial contact. With respect to patterns of dissimilarity among African Americans, a straightforward planning implication is that the diversity within this population segment must be recognized.

There is also a need to focus policy discussions on the concept of "just recreation" (Henderson, 1997). Henderson argued that leisure and recreation contribute to social justice and *in*justice. This idea becomes relevant in that the findings of this study suggests that the leisure activity preferences of African Americans with low interracial contact are impacted by the extent of interracial contact *and* the social and cultural capital potentially available from these contacts. In other words, as Henderson suggested, much needs to be learned about how "just" programming and planning can be empowering and how it can address issues of equity and diversity.

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