

Racial Reconciliation in South Africa: Interracial Contact and Changes over Time

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Relying upon Gibson's (2004) theory equating lack of prejudice with interracial "reconciliation," we investigate racial attitudes based on a 2004 nationally representative survey of South Africans. We begin by documenting substantial group-based differences in intergroup prejudice, with Blacks being considerably less reconciled with Whites as compared to the three racial minorities' levels of reconciliation with Blacks. We also discover that the Black majority has become less reconciled with Whites over the period from Gibson's survey (in 2001) to the current survey (in 2004). Improvement in racial attitudes is observed among the other three groups. We next investigate intergroup contact as an explanation of differences in attitudes, finding some effects of mere contact and powerful effects of intimate contact. However, the consequences of contact differ across the various racial groups.

There can be little doubt that the future of South Africa's nascent democracy depends upon the development of cooperative rather than conflictual intergroup relations. South Africa is a multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual society, and it is inconceivable that this will change. As intergroup relations go, so goes the future of the country.

In recognition of the importance of intergroup attitudes, Gibson (2004) designated intergroup tolerance as one of his four pillars of reconciliation. The other three pillars are support for a human rights culture, political tolerance, and the extension of legitimacy to the institutions of the new political dispensation in the

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country. Based on a nationally representative survey conducted in 2001, he concluded that intergroup relations showed some signs of reconciliation—certainly in comparison to what must have been true in the apartheid past—but that a certain degree of intergroup prejudice, animosity, and intolerance continued to exist. In line with considerable extant literature, Gibson also concluded that interracial contact (of a particular sort) had some salutary consequences for the attitudes that South Africans hold about different racial groups. Gibson's findings thus provided at least some grounds for optimism as the country evolves into a full-fledged, multiracial democracy.

Gibson's analysis was drawn from a national survey conducted in 2001, which immediately raises the question of how interracial attitudes have evolved since then. Consequently, the first purpose of this article is to determine how the intergroup attitudes of South Africans have changed over the period from 2001 to 2004, with particular attention to whether change is uniform across South Africa's various racial groups. (For a guide to understanding the concept of race in South Africa, see Finchilescu & Tredoux, this issue; Gibson, 2004.) Much has changed in South African politics since 2001, ranging from growing resentment among some groups about affirmative action, to talk of widening ethnic conflict associated with Jacob Zuma's assumption of the presidency, to what some see as a miniresurgence of Afrikaans nationalism. It is therefore crucial that intergroup attitudes be reconsidered and compared across time.

The primary theoretical purpose of this article is to reinvestigate the hypothesis that more interracial contact, and more contact of an intimate sort, produces less racial animosity. We consider in this analysis several forms of intergroup interactions, distinguishing in particular between casual and intimate contact. Our general conjecture is that, as South Africa has become a more integrated, multiracial society, intergroup contact has become more common, and that this increased interaction has given way to less prejudiced attitudes. As we shall see, this hypothesis receives only mixed support from the data. The three demographic minorities show increased reconciliation with Blacks, driven in part by significant contact effects; yet Blacks exhibit decreased reconciliation with Whites, along with a weaker contact effect.

Racial Prejudice and Intergroup Contact

A venerable literature investigates the connections between intergroup contact and racial prejudice. The theory posits a straightforward process (Sigelman & Welch, 1993, p. 781): "Adherents of the contact hypothesis view racial segregation as a source of ignorance and ignorance as a breeding ground for derogatory stereotypes and racial hostility. If stronger social bonds could be forged between Blacks and Whites, they contend, racial attitudes would improve dramatically."

Gordon Allport, who first formulated this hypothesis, claimed that several conditions are necessary for contact to reduce prejudice, namely, (1) equal status between the individuals—the expectation and perception by the parties of equality in the interaction; (2) common goals—sharing a common objective (as in athletics or the military); (3) intergroup cooperation—interactions based around cooperative rather than competitive circumstances; and (4) support from authorities, law, or custom—the presence of authoritative norms encouraging acceptance (Allport, 1954). Over the decades since Allport wrote, a veritable industry of social scientists has investigated the various conditions under which contact might reduce prejudice.

Considerable empirical evidence supports the contact hypothesis. In an exhaustive metaanalysis of 60 years of research, consisting of 713 independent samples from 515 studies, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found a mean effect of $-.22$ (Pearson's r) of contact on racial prejudice. Furthermore, contact seems to reduce prejudice without requiring any of Allport's basic conditions, although all seem to facilitate the salutary effects of intergroup interactions.

The vast majority (92.2%) of the samples in this meta-analysis are from the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Thus, the preponderance of extant empirical evidence on the effects of contact on interracial prejudice is from advanced democracies and societies in which the politically and socially dominant group is a demographic majority. Little is known about the effects of contact in less democratic and less developed systems, not to mention the effects of contact for groups having minority status within such societies.

Regime structure and norms may be important sociopolitical moderators of the relationship between contact and intergroup animus. Societies with newer democratic systems and less industrialized economies are likely to have weaker state institutions, such that the burden of attitudinal shaping is undertaken through informal institutions and in relation to dominant cultural norms (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993). Moreover, Tropp and Pettigrew note a diminished contact effect for members of minority-status groups (2005). Their finding suggests a variety of questions requiring additional investigation: how does contact affect the interracial attitudes of minority-status groups within political systems in which the groups' formal status has recently changed, and, what is the effect when socioeconomic power (through norms and expectations) and formal political power (through the ballot box) work at crosspurposes?

South Africa is an ideal location for the investigation of these moderating or confounding factors. While the state has attempted to create a nonracial society, powerful and parochial norms of interracial prejudice are still commonplace. And unlike most other societies, socioeconomic power and formal political power are held by different groups. Furthermore, South Africa's fairly recent political transition allows us to examine the consequences of contact when the relative

power of groups is shifting and to some degree uncertain (Duckitt & Mphuting, 1998).

South Africa has long provided a rich testing ground for research on racial prejudice, beginning with Pettigrew's work in the 1950s. For instance, Duckitt and Mphuting (1998) investigated the interracial attitudes of Black South African students before and after the first democratic elections in 1994. Their respondents' attitudes toward Afrikaans Whites were negative, but attitudes toward Anglophone Whites were fairly positive. These affective differences were not mitigated or modified in any way after the election.

Using data from a national probability survey of South Africans, Gibson (2004) found that interracial contact was the most powerful predictor of individual White, Coloureds, and Indian prejudice toward Blacks, and Black prejudice toward Whites. Indeed, Gibson (2006) also established that contact was a better explanation of interracial prejudice than the strength and importance of ingroup identities. Furthermore, he found the highest levels of interracial prejudice among Blacks, and that the effect of contact in ameliorating prejudice was weakest among this segment of the population (2004, 2006). These findings recall Tropp and Pettigrew's (2005) conclusions regarding the diminished effect of intergroup contact for those of minority-status groups.

A number of researchers question the causal confidence we can place in observed relationships between contact and prejudice reduction (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Dixon et al., this issue; Durrheim & Dixon, this issue). While contact may reduce expressed interpersonal prejudice, it may not affect the deeper ideological orientations that sometimes sustain racial animosity and discrimination. Dixon et al. (2007) find that few Whites oppose interracial equality in principle, but significantly more oppose both compensatory (job training) and preferential (affirmative action) policies aimed at achieving equality. Their research suggests that the underlying causes of prejudice may not be altered by contact; indeed, these causes may even result in contact avoidance, thereby reversing the flow of causation.

In general, understanding the causal effect of contact on prejudice based on observational data requires that one consider the causal sequence problem, since any observed relationships between contact and prejudice may be accounted for by reversing the causal flow: that the unprejudiced seek out contact and the prejudiced avoid it. Several authors have devoted considerable attention to this causal sequence problem.

Wagner et al. (2003) study the relationships between neighborhood, contact, and prejudice in East and West Germany with data from three separate surveys. While it is conceivable that prejudice could determine either contact or neighborhood choice, or both, the authors find—using structural equation modeling—that the causal structure that best fits the data is one in which the neighborhood is modeled as increasing contact and contact is modeled as reducing prejudice. Moreover,

one of their samples is of German high school students, and while prejudice can, in principle, cause interethnic contact and neighborhoods, German parents are limited in choosing a school for their children, thereby reducing the possibility of a reverse effect from prejudice to contact.

Gibson (2004) tackled the issue of direction of causation within the South African context. Following Wilson (1996), he tested the effect of contact on prejudice controlling for a personality characteristic—xenophobia—that is commonly associated with prejudice but is causally prior and obdurate. This approach effectively controls for some of the reverse effect of prejudice on contact. Gibson finds that the strengths of the relationships between contact and prejudice for all South African race groups are virtually unchanged with the control, suggesting that contact is the causal factor and prejudice is the outcome.

Finally, the most thorough consideration of the causal sequence problem is Pettigrew and Tropp's meta-analysis (2006). They review studies that control statistically for participant selection bias, such as comparing the strength of paths in structural models, as well as studies using experimental methods that remove the opportunity for prejudice to influence participant choice over contact. Pettigrew and Tropp conclude that "although both sequences operate, the more important effect is that of intergroup contact reducing prejudice" (p. 753).

Thus, contact seems to matter for racial attitudes, and the preponderance of evidence suggests that intergroup contact shapes prejudice, rather than vice versa. What remains unclear is whether these relationships pertain in deeply divided polities such as South Africa, where memories of racial oppression are intense and recent, institutional influences are relatively weaker than in most other settings for contact research, and the minority status group—Blacks—is unique in that their devalued group status is coupled with recently acquired formal political power. Gibson (2004, 2006) investigated prejudice in South Africa using 2001 data. Our purpose here is to replicate his analysis using new evidence from 2004, an additional 3 years after the advent of democracy reconfigured the normative landscape of South African racial politics.

The 2004 Survey

In 2004, 4,108 interviews were completed, including 1,549 Blacks, 1,362 Whites, 738 Coloured respondents, and 459 South Africans of Indian origin. Two different sampling strategies were used in this survey, one for the large Black majority, the other for the three small racial minorities. Because the methodological issues involved are complicated, a methodological appendix is available from the authors. In summary, conclusions from the Black subsample warrant a great deal of confidence since the sample was selected via probability methods with a very high response rate; the Coloureds and Indian subsamples blend probability and quota methods, have a moderate response rate, and therefore deserve a moderate

degree of confidence; and the White subsample warrants relatively low confidence owing to the sampling methods, low response rates, and the need to correct nonrepresentativeness via fairly substantial poststratification. For earlier analyses of these data, see Gibson (2008, 2009, 2010).

In the analysis that follows, we strictly replicate Gibson's 2001 research, both conceptually and operationally. And while we do not have microlevel data on change (both surveys analyze representative cross-sections, not panels), one of our most important goals is to assess the trajectory of change in South African society.

Analysis

Measuring Intergroup Attitudes

Following Gibson (2004), the terms "racial reconciliation" and "racial prejudice" are equated, since an essential ingredient of intergroup reconciliation is the absence of prejudice. Reconciliation requires that South Africans of every race accept all their fellow citizens as equals, extending dignity and respect to them. The diminution of racial animosity implies that the races get along better with each other, that people come to interact with each other more, communicate more, perhaps ultimately leading to greater understanding and even acceptance, resulting in the appreciation and exaltation of the value of racial diversity. Thus, an elemental component of reconciliation is mutual respect, and a fundamental ingredient in mutual respect is the willingness to judge people as individuals, and not to brand them with group stereotypes. To the extent that South Africans do not respect and understand the various racial groups making up the country, are fearful of them, and subscribe to negative racial stereotypes, intergroup reconciliation has not been achieved. We will refer to this concept as interracial reconciliation—the amelioration of intergroup prejudice.

Thus, as an empirical matter, it is necessary to consider how ordinary people in South Africa feel about fellow citizens of other racial groups. The questions used to measure interracial reconciliation ask South Africans about their assessments of members of the "opposite race."

Selecting members of the "opposite race." In principle, it would be desirable to ask members of each major racial grouping their attitudes toward all other groups, as in asking Blacks to evaluate Whites, Coloured people, and those of Indian origin. In practice, such a strategy would require dozens of questions so we deemed it not practical to adopt that approach.

The optimal strategy for Black and White respondents was not difficult to identify: We asked Blacks their views of Whites; for Whites, our questions referred to Blacks. To ask those who were clearly superordinate and subordinate under

apartheid about each other makes perfect sense from the point of view of the future of interracial reconciliation in South Africa.

More complicated calculations were involved in selecting the optimal group about which to ask Coloureds and Indian respondents. Given the geographic concentration of Coloured people in the Western Cape (61% of the total Coloured population) and those of Indian origin in KwaZulu-Natal (72% of the total Indian population; Statistics South Africa, n.d.), we felt it unreasonable to query respondents from these two groups about each other. The choice then boiled down to asking them about either Whites or Blacks.

Instead of emphasizing historical relationships among South Africa's four main racial groupings, and following Gibson (2004), we chose to ask Coloured and Indian respondents about their opinions of the Black majority. Most extant literature on intergroup conflict would predict that economic and political competition between groups like Coloureds, Indians, and Blacks would be fairly substantial, especially in times of economic scarcity and retrenchment (as was true at the time of the survey). So while we do not deny that there is substantial conflict between Coloured people and Whites—especially over jobs—the possibility of significant interracial antipathy between Coloured and Black people exists. Consequently, our survey asks both Coloured and Indian respondents their views of the Black majority.

Indicators of interracial reconciliation. Table 1 reports the replies to nine propositions about the opposite racial group, in both 2001 and 2004. These statements represent people's feelings about the opposite race, as well as their willingness to accept stereotypes about the groups. Thus, for Blacks, the first item in the table asked the respondents to agree or disagree (in a 5-point Likert-type response set) with the statement "I find it difficult to understand the customs and ways of White people." In 2001, 68.0% of Black South Africans agreed with this assertion; this percentage grew to 73.1% in the 2004 survey.

The most general conclusion one should draw from the 2004 data is that attitudes toward racial reconciliation vary considerably depending upon the particular question asked. At one extreme, few South Africans believe their country would be better off were it racially homogeneous (see item #9). At the other extreme, many assert that it is difficult to understand the customs and ways of those from the opposite racial group (item #1). A majority of Blacks give prejudiced replies (*agree* and *agree strongly*) to five of the statements, whereas the comparable figures for Whites, Coloured people, and those of Indian origin, respectively, are one, one, and two. Not surprisingly, South Africans have fairly complicated and ambivalent views toward those of the opposite race.

The general pattern of change among Black South Africans is one of increasing prejudice toward Whites. None of the changes is especially large—in four of the nine items, the proportion of Blacks reporting unreconciled responses showed

Table 1. Interracial Prejudice, Opposite Racial Group, South Africa, 2001, 2004

	% Agree		χ^2 Test <i>p</i> value	Mean	
	2001	2004		2001	2004
1. Difficult to understand their customs and ways					
Black	68.0	73.1	.001	3.72	3.83
White	48.6	43.6	.234	3.14	2.98
Coloured	50.3	43.8	.074	3.16	2.90
Indian origin	54.3	42.2	<.000	3.17	2.90
2. They are untrustworthy					
Black	56.0	52.7	.054	3.56	3.49
White	33.4	29.0	.251	2.92	2.81
Coloured	26.6	21.9	.138	2.72	2.56
Indian origin	41.6	25.8	<.000	3.03	2.66
3. I often don't believe what they say					
Black	44.5	49.6	.003	3.21	3.33
White	35.9	37.1	.833	2.94	2.96
Coloured	29.5	30.5	.776	2.73	2.75
Indian origin	40.8	31.8	<.000	2.94	2.78
4. I feel uncomfortable around them					
Black	46.8	50.9	.018	3.14	3.29
White	34.7	27.8	.074	2.84	2.62
Coloured	24.3	18.9	.074	2.49	2.26
Indian origin	36.7	24.3	<.000	2.79	2.49
5. They are more likely to engage in crime					
Black	40.7	42.5	.307	3.22	3.26
White	59.2	49.3	.015	3.42	3.21
Coloured	40.2	34.9	.135	3.02	2.86
Indian origin	59.2	46.3	<.000	3.40	3.15
6. They are selfish, only look after their group interests					
Black	68.9	68.9	1.000	3.87	3.84
White	45.3	36.3	.026	3.17	2.95
Coloured	40.1	35.8	.235	3.03	2.83
Indian origin	45.7	29.1	<.000	3.07	2.74
7. Could never imagine being in a party made up mainly of them					
Black	58.5	59.3	.636	3.58	3.59
White	42.1	43.4	.798	3.08	3.13
Coloured	19.5	25.4	.049	2.47	2.54
Indian origin	29.8	18.8	<.000	2.66	2.45
8. Hard to imagine ever being friends with one of them					
Black	52.7	57.7	.003	3.33	3.46
White	18.5	22.7	.218	2.46	2.48
Coloured	12.8	11.5	.607	2.21	2.12
Indian origin	19.2	9.8	<.000	2.29	2.12

Continued.

Table 1. Continued

	% Agree		χ^2 Test <i>p</i> value	Mean	
	2001	2004		2001	2004
9. South Africa would be a better place without any of them					
Black	19.4	21.5	.136	2.38	2.42
White	19.1	18.8	.965	2.48	2.38
Coloured	5.7	8.4	.173	1.99	1.99
Indian origin	14.7	8.1	<.000	2.17	2.07

Note. For both 2001 and 2004, all crossrace differences in means are statistically significant at $p < .001$.

The difference of proportions test is a χ^2 test for whether the within-race, across time differences in the proportions agreeing with the statement are significant.

Higher mean scores indicate greater degrees of prejudice. Scores for Black refer to reconciliation with Whites; scores for all other groups refer to reconciliation with Black.

a statistically significant increase using a χ^2 difference of proportions test, with no significant change for the other five items. On the question of White trustworthiness (item #2), the data reveal a slight increase in reconciliation—but Blacks clearly did not become more reconciled in general with Whites during the period from 2001 to 2004.

With White and Coloured South Africans, there is no positive or negative trend in the data over time that can be discerned with the difference of proportions tests, save that Whites show a increase in reconciliation on two of the items, while there is an increase for one of the items among Coloureds. The results are more dramatic for South Africans of Indian origin, where we see significant increases in reconciliation for all nine of the items. For instance, in 2001, 41.6% of the Indian respondents asserted that they believed Blacks are untrustworthy (item #2); by 2004, this percentage dipped markedly to 25.8%. Thus, our tentative conclusion is that intergroup reconciliation decreased somewhat among Black South Africans, increased among Indian South Africans, and remained much the same among Coloured and White people.

A better sense of change in interracial attitudes can be gained from the summary measure of intergroup prejudice reported in Table 2. Following Gibson’s methodology in the 2001 study, we computed an index score indicating the degree of individual intergroup racial reconciliation. The index is especially valuable because it eliminates overreliance on interpreting the responses to any given question in the set of indicators, thereby increasing both the validity and reliability. The items show good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .84). Further, when factor analyzed, a strongly unidimensional structure is revealed. The index is simply the number of “reconciled responses” minus the number of “nonreconciled” answers. This index has several desirable properties (e.g., it is not related to the

Table 2. Levels of Interracial Reconciliation, by Race, 2001, 2004

	Respondent's Race							
	Black		White		Coloured		Indian Origin	
	2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004
Reconciliation index								
Mean ^a	-1.78	-2.36	.88	1.35	2.54	3.06	1.27	3.10
Standard Deviation	4.80	4.32	5.41	5.35	4.86	4.66	4.82	4.52
<i>N</i>	2,004	1,549	988	1,362	485	369	245	459

Note. ^aDifference of means, across race:

2001: $F = 138.29, p < .001, \eta = .32$.

2004: $F = 214.12, p < .001, \eta = .38$.

Differences of means, across time:

Black: $t = -3.78, p < .000$;

White: $t = 2.09, p = .037$;

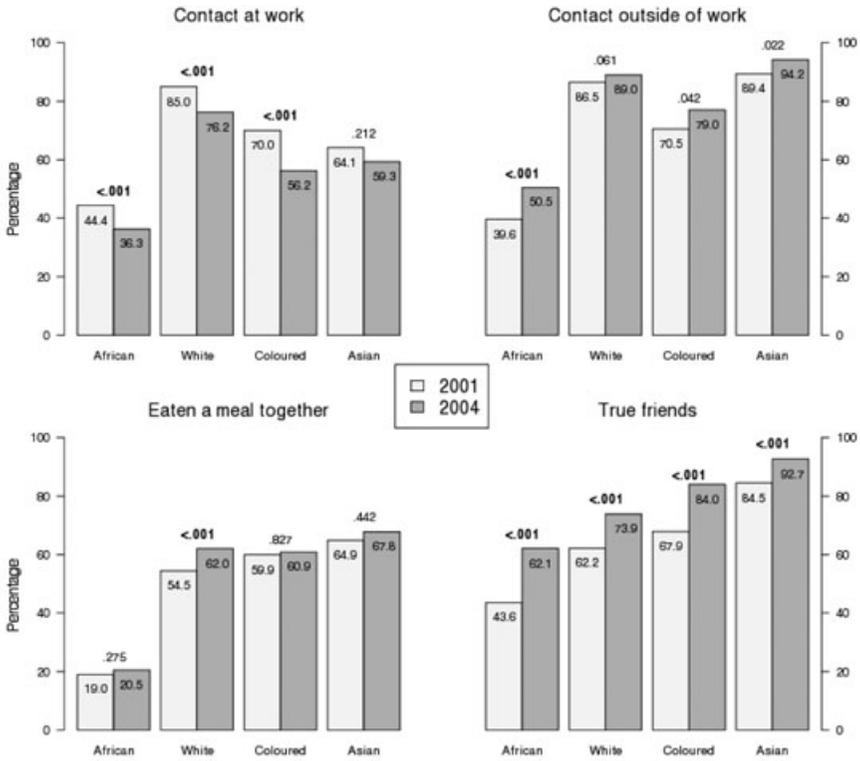
Coloured: $t = 1.58, p = .113$;

Indian origin: $t = 4.90, p < .000$.

number of “uncertain” or “don’t know” responses to these items: $r = -.04$), and it accommodates the fact that many people hold mixed views toward those of the opposite race. The index varies from -9 (all responses expressed racial intransigence) to $+9$ (all responses were reconciled). Table 2 reports racial differences in this measure of reconciliation attitudes.

The results confirm the findings reported above with regard to Black and Indian South Africans: using a t test to evaluate the strength of the change in reconciliation index over time, Blacks show a significant decrease in reconciliation between 2001 and 2004, while Indian South Africans exhibit a significant increase. As is the case in Table 1, there is no discernable change in reconciliation for Coloureds. The t test does indicate, however, that there is a significant increase in reconciliation among White South Africans. In sum then, our various measures indicate robust changes in reconciliation among Black, White, and Indian South Africans, with a decrease for the former group and increases for the latter two. A less robust increase in reconciliation is evident for Coloured South Africans.

We also observe considerable within-race variation on this index of racial reconciliation. For instance, the average reconciliation score for White English speakers is 2.78; for Whites speaking Afrikaans, the mean is a mere .23. A similar difference based upon home language can be found among Coloured South Africans. Among Blacks, the least reconciled are those who speak Xhosa as their primary language; the most reconciled are North Sotho speakers. We must reserve judgment about the meaning of these differences since home language is related to a variety of other important attributes (e.g., rural residence), but, at this point, we note the important caveat that substantial intraracial differences exist in interracial attitudes.



Note. Figures within the bars are percentages of the group having any of the type of contact depicted. Figures above the bars are the p values for difference-of-proportions χ^2 tests between 2001 and 2004, with the proportions compared across time within race and contact categories.

Fig. 1. Intergroup contact, 2001, 2004.

To what degree do changes in racial attitudes reflect changes in intergroup contact? In order to assess that relationship, rigorous and direct measures of contact are necessary.

Interracial Contact, 2001, 2004

We have measured the nature of interracial contact in the same manner as Gibson (2004), focusing on interactions both within and outside the workplace, whether the respondent had shared a meal with a person of the opposite race, and whether the respondent had any “true” friends of the opposite race. Although measured as polychotomous variables, a summary of changing levels of intergroup contact is depicted in Figure 1, where we report a simple dichotomy—some versus none—for each of the types of contact, within each of the two surveys.

The data in Figure 1 do not provide uniform conclusions about change across the various types of contact. In terms of the workplace, contact was significantly less frequent in 2004, often substantially so, for Blacks, Whites, and Coloured people ($p < .001$). In general, a majority of Whites, Coloured people, and those of Indian origin reported at least some contact with Blacks at their workplace in 2001, but, in 2004, only slightly more than one third of Blacks interacted with Whites at their workplace. However, it is important to note that this percentage is driven down by the fact that a large proportion of Blacks (47.2%) has no workplace (by virtue of being unemployed or not working outside the home or for other reasons) and therefore are precluded from experiencing any on-the-job interracial contact.

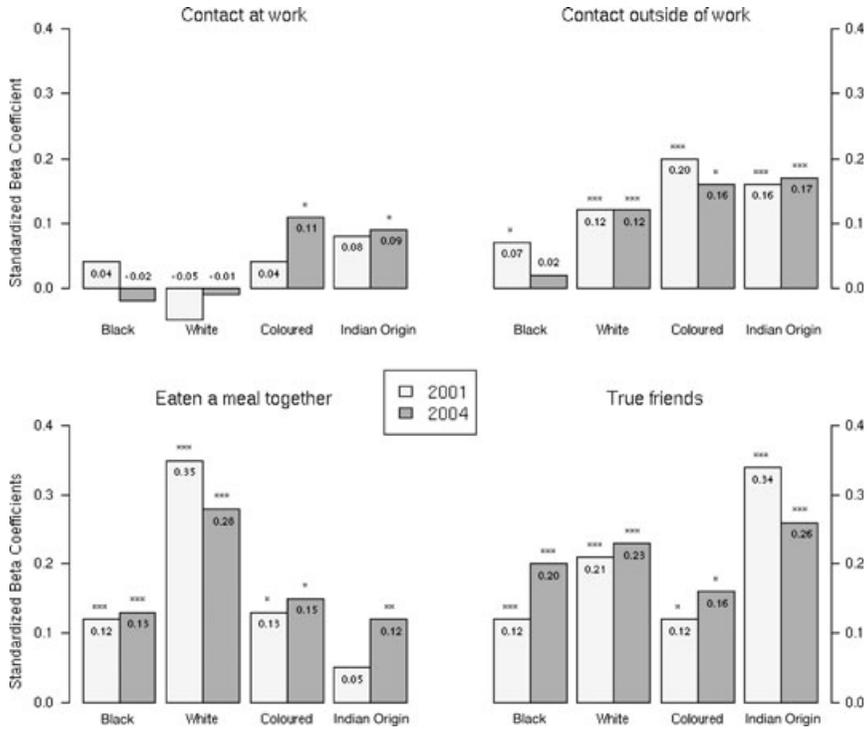
On the other hand, contact outside work increased for all groups between 2001 and 2004, with the change significant for all except White South Africans. Still, even in 2004, only a bare majority of Black South Africans had any contact with Whites outside their workplace.

The prevalence of sharing a meal with a person of the opposite race did not change between 2001 and 2004 for all groups, with the exception of Whites, among whom meal sharing became significantly ($p < .001$) more widespread. This type of interaction is especially rare among Black South Africans.

Finally, it became more common for South Africans to have friends of the opposite race in the period from 2001 to 2004, with significant increases in this form of contact for all racial groups ($p < .001$). The increase ranged from 8.2% points for Indian South Africans to 18.5% points in the case of Blacks.

Simply from the univariate frequencies, many Blacks purport to have White friends, even though they never dine with those friends. In fact, the percentage of Blacks who never share a meal with a White person varies substantially across the categories of prevalence of interracial friendships: 93.5%, 83.5%, 51.2%, and 30.8% of Blacks report not sharing a meal, for those who have no White friends, hardly any, only a small number, and quite a number, respectively. In comparison, among Whites reporting having quite a number of Black friends, only 9.4% has never shared a meal with them. From these data, it seems that Blacks are considerably more racially isolated than other South Africans, and that even when Blacks come in relatively close contact with Whites, these relationships are characterized by lower levels of intimacy.

Thus, we see in these data a bit of a paradox. Among Black South Africans, racial attitudes toward Whites hardened a bit between 2001 and 2004. At the same time, interracial contact, especially contact of the most valuable sort, seemed to become more prevalent. Of course, aggregate trends do not necessarily foretell microlevel patterns, but these data definitely indicate the need to examine the relationship between contact and prejudice in considerably greater detail.



Note. The bar graphs depict standardized regression coefficients (β) from a multiple regression in which all four indicators of intergroup contact are entered into the equation simultaneously. Higher positive beta coefficients indicate a stronger positive relationship between that form of contact and racial reconciliation. The asterisks above the bars indicate the level of significance for the standardized regression coefficients according to the following format:
 $*p \leq .05$, $**p \leq .01$, $***p \leq .001$.

Fig. 2. The impact of intergroup contact on racial reconciliation.

Connecting Interracial Contact and Racial Reconciliation

Figure 2 reports the results of two multiple regressions of the index of interracial reconciliation on the four types of intergroup contact, for both 2001 (see Gibson, 2004, p. 140) and 2004. In order to summarize a great deal of information, the figure reports only the standardized regression coefficients for the contact indicators, along with an indication of the degree of statistical significance of each coefficient.

The data are largely consistent across the two time periods: of the 16 pairs of within-race, across-time beta coefficients, 10 show no significant change using a *t* test. Of the significant changes, the effect of contact at work decreases for

Blacks, but increases for Coloured South Africans; there is no change in the effect of contact outside work; the effect of eating a meal decreases for Whites but increases for Indian South Africans; and the effect of being true friends shows an increase for Blacks but a decrease for Indians. With few exceptions, the data are consistent across the two time periods.

In general: (1) Interracial contact at work has no effect on racial attitudes among Whites and Blacks, but a small positive effect for Coloureds and South Africans of Indian origin. (2) Contact outside of work increases racial reconciliation moderately among Whites, Coloured people, and those of Indian origin, while among Blacks, contact outside the workplace has few consequences for racial attitudes. (3) The effects of more intimate contact are considerably more substantial. The “threshold” differs somewhat across the groups, with interracial contact only reducing prejudice when it reaches the point of “true” friendships for Blacks and those of Indian origin, while salutary effects begin to be observed among Whites and Coloureds at the level of sharing a meal together. (4) Change between 2001 and 2004 in the consequences of contact is not great. In general, the conclusions one draws from the 2001 analysis are about the same as those that should be drawn from the 2004 regression.

The contrasts in the effects of contact among White and Black South Africans are substantial and quite interesting. Among Whites, beyond simply working with people, increasing levels of interaction each contribute to more reconciled racial attitudes. Indeed, the contact variables can account for 25% of the variance in racial prejudice. Among Blacks, the relationships are markedly weaker: R^2 for the contact variables as a whole is only .08.

In order to simplify our additional analysis of the 2004 data, we have created two summary measures of interracial contact. “Total contact” is simply the sum of the frequencies of intergroup interactions within and outside the respondent’s workplace. The second index measures the intimacy of contact and reflects the interactions of friendships and dining together. For this “intimacy of contact” index, we have weighted the friendship responses by the frequency of sharing a meal, adding either no “bonus” points for those never sharing a meal with their friends of the opposite race, .5 additional points for those who dine with their friends, but not very often, and a full point for those who quite often eat with friends of another race. The resulting scale varies from 0 to 4, with 21.3% of the South African population scoring at 0, and 6.9% achieving an index score of 4. Substantial racial differences exist on both measures, with eta for the difference of means in total contact equal to .41 ($p < .000$), and with an eta for intimacy of contact of .32 ($p < .000$). Black South Africans score substantially below the three racial minorities in the country.

The intercepts in the equations in Table 3 represent the expected value of racial attitudes when both of the contact measures are scored at the total absence of contact (zero) with the designated outgroup. These intercepts demonstrate that

Table 3. The Effects of Interracial Contact on Racial Reconciliation by Race

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Black					1,549	.07
Intercept	-3.48	.16		<.001		
Total contact	-.00	.11	.00	ns		
Intimacy of contact	1.15	.13	.26	<.001		
White					1,362	.22
Intercept	-2.79	.31		<.001		
Total contact	.45	.13	.09	<.001		
Intimacy of contact	1.89	.13	.42	<.001		
Coloured					369	.19
Intercept	-.44	.45		ns		
Total contact	.75	.21	.20	<.001		
Intimacy of contact	1.08	.21	.29	<.001		
Indian origin					459	.19
Intercept	-1.57	.50		.002		
Total contact	.61	.18	.16	<.001		
Intimacy of contact	1.53	.21	.35	<.001		

Note. *b*: Unstandardized regression coefficient of ordinary least squares regression with racial reconciliation as the dependent variable.
SE: Standard error of regression coefficient.
 β : Standardized regression coefficient.
p: probability that *b* = 0.
N: sample size.
*R*²: coefficient of determination.

Coloured South Africans have the highest score on racial reconciliation in the absence of any contacts at all with Blacks. Conversely, in the absence of relations with White South Africans, Blacks hold quite unreconciled views toward Whites. Noteworthy as well is that total contact has the most salutary effects among Coloureds, and practically no influence among Blacks (the coefficient is not distinguishable from zero).

Also clearly documented in this table is the dramatically stronger influence of contact intimacy, especially among Whites. The effect of intimacy on racial attitudes is large, with the expected values ranging from -2.79 in the absence of any contact or intimacy to 4.77 when intimacy is at its highest observed value. These findings confirm that when intergroup contact achieves a level of intimacy compatible with meal sharing or true friendships, that contact has substantial consequences for the fostering of racial reconciliation. Thus, we conclude that interracial contact has a positive effect on racial attitudes, but that more intimate contact has more direct and powerful consequences, and that in general the three racial minorities are more affected by interracial contact than the racial majority.

Table 4. The Interactive Effects of Interracial Contact on Racial Reconciliation

Variable	<i>r</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Total interracial contact	.29	-.01	.08	-.00	ns
Intimacy of contact	.39	1.09	.09	.25	<.001
Whether White	.25	.59	.45	.04	ns
Whether Coloured	.19	3.09	.67	.13	<.001
Whether Indian origin	.15	1.98	1.08	.07	.067
Total interracial contact * Whether White	.28	.56	.20	.11	.005
Intimacy of Contact * Whether White	.32	.71	.19	.11	<.001
Total interracial contact * Whether Coloured	.19	.70	.32	.07	.031
Intimacy of contact * Whether Coloured	.20	-.12	.33	-.01	ns
Total Interracial Contact * Whether Indian origin	.16	.67	.41	.06	ns
Intimacy of contact * Whether Indian origin	.16	.33	.46	.03	ns
Intercept		-3.35	.12		
Standard deviation-dependent variable		4.92			
Standard error of estimate		4.27			
R^2				.23	<.001
<i>N</i>		3,771			

Note. *r*: Pearson's bivariate correlation of row item and racial reconciliation.

b: Unstandardized regression coefficient of ordinary least squares regression with racial reconciliation as the dependent variable.

SE: Standard error of regression coefficient.

β : Standardized regression coefficient.

p: probability that $b = 0$.

R^2 : coefficient of determination.

In terms of the basic interconnections between contact and racial attitudes, little has changed from 2001 to 2004.

As a summary of the 2004 results, Table 4 reports a single integrated equation incorporating racial dummy variables (with Blacks as the comparison group) and interaction terms between race and interracial contact. The first thing to note about the equation is that it does a reasonably good job of accounting for the variance in interracial reconciliation, with an R^2 of .23. As in the analysis above, total racial contact has little impact on Black South Africans, although the intimacy of contact does. The large coefficient attached to the Coloured dummy variables reinforces the conclusion that, *ceteris paribus*, Coloured South Africans are considerably more reconciled with Blacks, even in the absence of any intergroup contact.

The most important coefficients in Table 4 are those indicating the interactive effects. The analysis reveals that, as compared to Black South Africans, the effect of interracial contact is significantly different among White and Coloured South Africans, ($b = .56$ and $b = .70$), although the effect for those of Indian origin is also substantial ($b = .67$). The intimacy of contact has a large impact only among White and Black South Africans. Thus, the most important conclusions

from the analysis in this table are that contact with Whites is only beneficial to the attitudes of Black South Africans if it is intimate, and that contact increases racial reconciliation amongst Whites, Coloureds, and South Africans of Indian origin, regardless of its intimacy.

Concluding Thoughts

The most general conclusion of our research is that interracial contact does indeed contribute to the softening of interracial animus. The effects are not as strong across all groups; in particular, the effect of contact on diminished prejudice is weakest for Black South Africans. This replicates Gibson's (2004, 2006) results and echoes Tropp and Pettigrew's (2005) findings of weakened contact effects among minority-status groups. Our finding of the trivial effect of total contact on reconciliation coupled with a significant effect for intimate contact also recalls Tropp and Pettigrew's argument that contact works less well for minority-status group members because they are more conscious of their group identity and their group's devalued status (2005).

In addition, this article has offered a glimpse of the trends in racial prejudice in South Africa. While we see a moderation of racial views within all the minority groups, the majority Blacks exhibit a pattern of increasing prejudice. The strong effects of contact for all minority groups, coupled with their relatively higher exposure to contact, may be creating a virtuous spiral, where social integration leads to contact, which then decreases opposition to further integration, and so on. However, it seems that this process is not occurring in the same way for Blacks, no doubt because of their far lower levels of urban residence and high-status employment. Contact has the ability to produce reconciliation, but, as Allport cautioned a half-century ago, only if people can cooperatively interact as equals. For contact to reduce prejudice at the societal level, it would appear that adequate social integration is a necessary condition.

From the point of view of building a multiracial democracy in South Africa, these findings are decidedly mixed. We certainly do not argue that South Africa's future depends solely upon the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of ordinary people, which is good, since considerable intergroup animosity continues to exist. We do contend, however, that the future of democracy is not secure in this African nation without greater willingness of citizens to accept one another as fellow citizens in the Rainbow Nation, and that social scientists must do more to understand these important processes.

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