

THE LABELING THEORY: AN EMPIRICAL TEST

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Many times every day people encounter the need to identify an object, be it animate or inanimate, by using a label. The choice of a label affects the meaning generated, even though such may not be the users intention. This project is an attempt to test the thesis that a difference in the label used to denote a social object will affect the social meaning that label symbolizes. Specifically, the inquiry seeks to answer the question, do differences in minority group labels--Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black--have differential effects on the perception of this racial category in terms of the responses (cognitive, affective, and action dispositions) elicited from subjects in reaction to these labels. The four labels--Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black--were chosen because the present exploratory research project is operationalized on a formal rather than an informal level. When Newsweek asked a random sample of Americans of African descent which names they liked most, the four labels that are employed in the present research effort--Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black--received 87 percent of the positive choices (Simpson and Yinger, 1972:32). Therefore the use of ethnophaulisms--derogatory terms used by the members of one ethnic group to describe the members of another (Rose, 1966:102)--such as "nigger," will not be used in this research effort because their usage haven't generally been accepted on a formal level.

The use of a racial category as the object of the labeling process has special import owing to the polemical use of racial labels because of the assumed connotations (Adoff, 1968:24; Simpson and Yinger, 1972:32; Human Behavior, 1973:38). Due to these assumed connotations, certain organizations have been involved in efforts to change the labels used to denote their race, an effort based on a belief in the symbolic significance attached to various labels (Rose, 1970:374). However, relative to whites, blacks lack the power of legitimate authority attached to official agents of social control to reverse the meaning attached to labels. Therefore, an attempt to change labels by blacks probably lacks the efficacy of officialdom (Garfinkel, 1956:420-424). Furthermore, it may be argued that Blackness, in as much as it is a "tribal stigma" (Goffman, 1963:4), is a shared trait from which virtually no black can escape, thereby providing a cause celebre for actively responding to negatively perceived labels and the stereotypes implied therein. The aforementioned logic for the choice of a racial category as the object of the labeling process is not intended to indicate that a racial category is exclusive and unique in this respect. For example, one might explore the problem of the elderly or women in society in light of the labeling perspective.

Proponents of labeling theory argue that the labels we use to identify things are not merely harmless words, but, in fact, shape and control experience to some degree (Goffman, 1963). The labels that we use to identify objects or people have both denotative and connotative meanings: meanings which are both socially generated and shared and which, therefore, facilitate a common universe of discourse within

a particular cultural milieu. To label someone or something is to assign that person or thing a meaning and a value; that is, an identity (Foote, 1950:16). The label "book," for example, means something to read and it has value for that purpose. Moreover, because we create an identity by labeling, the label that we use will have implications for, and indeed, to a large extent dictate, both our feelings and behavior toward that object or person. Once the psychiatrist decides that a patient is "schizophrenic," that label (schizophrenic) creates an identity which has social meaning and will greatly influence not only what other people think of that patient, but also how they relate to him interpersonally.

There are those, however, who seem to disagree with the labeling theorists. W. E. B. Dubois, for example, in reply to a criticism of the use of the label "Negro" argued that, "Names are only conventional signs for identifying things. Things are the reality that counts. If a thing is despised, either because of ignorance or because it is despicable you will not alter matters by changing the names. If men despise Negroes, they will not despise them less if Negroes are called 'Colored' or 'Afro-American'" (Adoff, 1968:24).

In as much as our problem is to test a major proposition of labeling theory, the ensuing review of literature will focus on various aspects of the labeling perspective.

#### Review of the Literature

Labeling theorists traditionally have focused upon deviant behavior as its subject matter. Such authors as Thomas Scheff (1964;

1966), Thomas Szasz (1961), R. D. Laing (1962; 1967), and Erving Goffman (1961) have utilized the mentally ill as objects of the labeling perspective. Criminal behavior as the object of the labeling perspective has been employed by authors such as Tannenbaum (1938), Lemert (1951; 1967), Schur (1971), Matza (1969), Kitsue (1964), and Becker (1963).

Tannenbaum first expressed the viewpoint of the labeling perspective when he stated: "the process of making the criminal, therefore, is a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making conscious and self-conscious; it becomes a way of stimulating, suggesting, emphasizing, and evoking the very traits that are complained of. The person becomes the thing he is described as being" (Tannenbaum, 1938:19-20).

Edwin McCarthy Lemert elaborated upon the aforementioned statement by Tannenbaum by proposing "the concept of secondary deviation to call attention to the importance of societal reaction in the etiology of deviance, the forms it takes, and its stabilization in deviant social roles or behavior systems" (Lemert, 1967:62). By introducing the term of secondary deviation in his book Social Pathology, Lemert further explicates this process mentioned by Tannenbaum. The process leading to secondary deviation, according to Lemert, is as follows: "(1) primary deviation; (2) social penalties; (3) further primary deviation; (4) stronger penalties and rejections; (5) further deviation, perhaps with hostilities and resentment beginning to focus upon those doing the penalizing; (6) crisis reached in the tolerance quotient, expressed in formal action by the community stigmatizing of the deviant;



(7) strengthening of the deviant conduct as a reaction to the stigmatizing and penalties; (8) ultimate acceptance of deviant social status and efforts at adjustment on the basis of the associated role" (Lemert, 1951:77). In describing this as an ongoing process Lemert suggests that when a crisis has been reached in the tolerance quotient and the individual has been stigmatized (labeled) then any further deviation is secondary deviation and is based upon that role. Most important to this thesis is Lemert's suggestion that secondary deviation, being based upon a deviant role, is preceded by a change in the label. Lemert refers to all other deviant activities prior to this label change as primary deviation and hence it is not based on a deviant role. Nelson Foote also speaks of "commitment to a particular identity or series of identities," but as a process, he states, it proceeds by naming (Foote, 1950:19). Howard Becker most succinctly states this position by asserting: "The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied" (Becker, 1963:19).

The actual manifestation of the labeling process, during which the individual encounters agents of social control, is effectively explained by the occurrence of a "degradation ceremony." In outlining characteristics of degradation ceremonies, Garfinkel refers to labeling of the individual when he states "what he is now is what, 'after all,' he was all along. This refers not to a 'behavior type' but a 'motivational type' in a complete 'total identity' shift by disregarding any other identification the individual may have held" (Garfinkel, 1956:420-424). Therefore, it follows that "labeling theorists in seeking to study the most obvious and clearcut examples of the phenomenon

of deviant-formation by labeling . . . examine these situations in which the labelee is brought into contact with such highly formalized agencies as the school, mental hospital, or the prison" (Schervish, 1973:48). In being brought before these highly formalized agencies of social control it should be noted that there is not a similar ritual to remove the label. So that after a criminal or mental patient is released he still retains the stigma.

Erving Goffman, in his book Asylums, treats the process of becoming a mental patient similar to Lemert's treatment of criminal offenders. Prior to the mental hearing (which in Garfinkel's terminology would be a degradation ceremony) the mental patient who is committed by the court and eventually hospitalized, is likely to have had a long series of ineffective actions taken against him, analogous to Lemert's concept of primary deviation (Goffman, 1961:127-136).

During the prepatient phase, which Goffman defines as the period prior to entrance into the hospital, the alleged mental patient (especially during the court hearing) may find that he is treated as if he were not present in the room or, if you will, like a non-person. Questions concerning his background are asked but these questions are not directed at the patient but to other individuals. After the individual is committed and transported to the institution, and thereby enters the inpatient phase, the "patient suddenly finds that he and his next-of-relation have not been accorded the same roles" (Goffman, 1961:138). In other words, through the process of a court commitment he recognizes he has been labeled.

Erving Goffman lists, in his book Stigma, three different types of characteristics that are stigmatized. First are the various physical deformities such as lameness and blindness. Second are the blemishes of individual character such as weak will, mental disorder, imprisonment, and others. The third type includes factors of race, nation and religion, characteristics that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminating all members of a family (Goffman, 1963:4). Therefore, Goffman states, one might have a virtual social identity, that which we believe it to be, and an actual social identity, that which it really is. The type of identity a person has depends on the information he releases, the information that is known about him and the actual process of managing his stigma (Goffman, 1963:2). In the case of the stigma of race, this trait, as opposed to that of individual character previously mentioned, cannot be as easily concealed. Blackness, in as much as it is a tribal stigma, is that trait with which the present study is concerned.

In the previous discussion of acquiring the label of mental patient or criminal, it can be seen that the end result of this detailed process terminates with an attached stigma. However, those who are identifiable by a tribal stigma attain this stigma simply by being born. An important point to keep in mind for all categories of stigma is that "an individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse possesses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that his other attributes have on us (Goffman, 1963:5). In other words, these stigmas (racial, physical or individual) might have an effect

upon any future social interaction. Specifically then, the present research project is concerned with the differential "stigmatizing" effect of a racial group being identified by various labels.

The aforementioned comments on the labeling of the mental patient and criminal are to be taken as representative of the labeling perspective and, as such, have been criticized for having an "emphasis on the passivity of the labelee" and a "focus on the individual rather than the group as a unit being labeled" (Schervish, 1973:50). The focus on the individual and his passivity is clearly seen in the studies concerning the mental patient and criminal. This is most succinctly stated by Goffman when he speaks of mental disorders and imprisonment as blemishes of the individual character.

According to Schervish the process of defensive label-resistance or aggressive counter-labeling have been explored, on an individual basis, by Goffman, in Stigma and Asylums where he speaks of "processes respectively of 'stigma management' and 'secondary adjustment' by which an individual appears to follow the rules while secretly resisting an expected routine . . . . But these studies fail to come to grips with the politics of power that groups use when seeking to resist and counter an 'enemy's label'" (Schervish, 1973:51). Furthermore Schervish notes that, "even though some labeling theorists manifest an appreciation for the aspects of conflict whereby labels are negotiated, neutralized, resisted or countered, they still fail to consider cases where the negotiation of labels occurs between two groups rather than between two individuals or an individual and a group" (Schervish, 1973:52). The notion of utilizing the individual

as the unit of analysis, as well as his passivity, will be further discussed in Chapter III.

In short, this thesis will examine the effect that various labels elicit when used to identify blackness as a stigma. Also the use of various labels to identify the same shared stigma would seem to indicate that there are labels present which were not created by those in power, hence a resistance to labels and counterlabeling.

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH DESIGN

In attempting to measure proposed differentiating responses elicited by the use of varied minority group labels, prejudice was measured for each label employed. In addition, different aspects of prejudice were measured, consistent with the conceptualization of Bernard Kramer that "it is incumbent upon the researcher to measure different aspects of prejudice separately in order to show whether or not a particular factor is related consistently to all aspects, orientations toward the minority group should be measured on three levels: (a) cognitive; (b) emotional; and (c) action" (Kramer, 1949:393).

The cognitive dimension, "involves the question of how the individual perceives the group--what he believes about the group" (Kramer, 1949:394). The emotional dimension, "refers to the emotions evoked in the individual by the actual or symbolic stimulus of the minority groups" (Kramer, 1949:394). The action dimension, "refers to the tendency, disposition, or desire to act in certain ways toward a minority group. The emphasis is on tendencies for specific action" (Kramer, 1949:394). It is to be stressed that this dimension, and therefore its measurement, does not refer to behavior but rather the "tendency, disposition, or desire" to behave toward a minority group.

### Population

The survey population for this study was defined as all persons listed in the Roanoke City Directory, which includes residents of Roanoke, Salem and Vinton, Virginia. This area was chosen primarily for its geographical convenience. The area includes the urbanized area of Roanoke, a medium size metropolitan area, Salem, and a smaller community, Vinton.

### Sample

Various studies have indicated that certain variables are related to prejudice. The relationship of age to prejudice, while viewed as not being related in a consistent manner (Noel and Pinkney, 1964: 609), has been found to manifest itself in a direction such that young adults from 21 to 35 exhibit less prejudice than older age cohorts, perhaps due to the growing number of educational opportunities open to them (Saenger, 1953:99). It has also been shown that the higher the level of educational attainment, the less likely the acquisition of ethnic prejudice (Ehrlich, 1973:162; Allport, 1954:79; Simpson and Yinger, 1973:82; Angel, 1962:660). Social class has also been shown to be related to prejudice but in an inverse manner, that is, the higher the social class the lower the prejudice (Simpson and Yinger, 1973:132; Allport, 1958:78; Hodge and Treiman, 1966:93-102). Sex has been shown to be related to prejudice in a variety of ways. While one study indicates no relationship, another will assure us that women or men are more prejudice (Allport, 1958:77). Since the literature reveals that various characteristics are related to prejudice,

in order to ensure against any systematic bias the sample was chosen by process of randomization.

Due to the limited resources and the exploratory nature of this study, a sample of 800 people was drawn from persons listed in the Roanoke City Directory. The total survey population was divided by the proposed sample size resulting in every  $n^{\text{th}}$  name in the Roanoke City Directory being selected. The 800 sample size was then randomly divided into four segments of 200, each group receiving a questionnaire employing only one of the four different labels being used in this study (see Appendix A).

Of the original sample size of 800, a total of eighty-eight questionnaires were returned as undelivered mail, revealing that the addressee had "moved;" address unknown; former resident left no forwarding address. At the end of four weeks a random sample of 112 non-respondents were chosen (due to limited resources, a complete second mailing was impossible) and a second questionnaire, identical to the first with the exception of a new cover letter (see Appendix B), was mailed. Of the first mailing a total of 228 questionnaires were returned and 20 were returned after the second mailing. A total of 248 questionnaires yielded a return rate of approximately 35 percent. Of the 248 questionnaires, twelve were eliminated due to incomplete responses to the questionnaires. Since the questionnaire was designed to measure prejudice of the non-black segment of the population, the 14 questionnaires returned by blacks were deleted, leaving a total of 222 completed usable questionnaires. Table I illustrates the respondents' age, sex, education, social class



TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

	Mean Age	Sex		Mean Years Education	Mean Social Class*	Percent of Total Return
		Male	Female			
Negro	43.73	31	33	13.39	2.254	28.8 (N=64)
Colored	37.36	21	23	13.73	2.116	19.8 (N=44)
Afro-American	42.15	26	28	13.37	2.241	24.3 (N=54)
Black	41.61	35	25	13.00	2.137	27.0 (N=60)
Total	41.51	113	109	13.35	2.187	100% (N=222)
	$\chi^2=17.81$	$\chi^2=1.82$	$\chi^2=20.35$	$\chi^2=4.286$	$\chi^2=4.09$	
	DF=3	DF=3	DF=18	DF=6	DF=3	
	p<0.27	p<0.61	p<0.31	p<0.64	p<.25	

\*Hollingshead's Two Factor index of social position was employed (being condensed from a 5 point scale to a three point scale: 1 representing high social position, to 3 representing low social position) indicating that this group is lower middle class.

characteristics, and the return percentage of each form of the questionnaire against the total return. The chi square computed for age, sex, education, social class and return percentage are also represented in Table I. They indicate that the four-subsamples do not statistically differ in the distribution of age, sex, education, social class and return percentage.

### The Instrument

The three page questionnaire contained thirty-one items, eleven questions measuring the cognitive level of prejudice of the respondent, eleven measuring the emotional level, and nine measuring the action level. These items were selected, using a panel of judges to determine the items most salient to the problem under study, from items suggested by Bernard Kramer (Kramer, 1948:411-448). The questionnaire also included a section dealing with background information, asking the respondents for information concerning their educational attainment, religious affiliation, race, age and sex.

The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter of introduction briefly stating the purpose of the study, asking cooperation on the part of the respondent, and assuring the respondent that the information gathered would be held in strict confidence.

The four forms of the questionnaire differed only in the use of the following minority group labels: Negroes, Colored People, Afro-Americans, and Blacks. The items contained in the questionnaire could be answered on a six point scale from a -3 (I disagree very much) to a +3 (I agree very much).

In constructing the sub-scales--cognitive, emotional, and action-- a factor analysis was run yielding inter-item correlation coefficients for the items contained in each sub-scale. Following the suggestion of Nunnally, those items that had a zero order interaction at .30 or less were eliminated (Nunnally, 1967:355-356). For the eleven items measuring the cognitive level of prejudice (see Appendix A, items 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 18, 27, 28, 31) by the process of factor analysis item 3 was deleted (see Appendix C). For the eleven items measuring the emotional level of prejudice (see Appendix A, items 2, 4, 5, 12, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25) by the process of factor analysis item 12 was deleted (see Appendix D). For the nine items measuring the action level of prejudice (see Appendix A, items 1, 6, 8, 14, 17, 23, 26, 29, 30) by process of factor analysis item 14 was deleted (see Appendix E). The cognitive sub-scale correlated .95 to the total scale, the emotional .93, and the action .92. Thus, the total scale included twenty-eight items designed to elicit cognitive, emotional, and action orientations to various minority group labels: Negro, Colored, Afro-American, and Colored.

### The Hypothesis

The "Review of the Literature" suggests the formulation of one general exploratory research hypothesis. The research hypothesis may be formally stated as follows: Responses to statements concerning a minority group will vary depending on the label used to identify that group.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the data collected from the respondents will be analyzed and discussed with reference to the hypothesis stated in Chapter II.

Table II describes the mean prejudice scores for the total and each treatment group. Although there is a noticeable difference in the treatment group using the label 'Colored,' it was found not to be significant at the .05 level. Table III represents the mean prejudice scores by dimension (cognitive, emotional, action) for each treatment group and total dimension. These were also found to be not significant at the .05 level. Since there is no significant difference found in the mean prejudice scores by the use of varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black), this indicates that the null hypothesis (that attitudes toward a minority group will not vary depending on the label used to identify that group) is not rejected.

Table IV represents a two way analysis of variance utilizing sex as a control for prejudice by label (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). Since the interaction error term, 1.041, proved to be not significant at the .05 level, the total error term was employed in the analysis (Blalock, 1972:343). The resulting F ratio, 1.284, proved to be not significant at the .05 level. Therefore the use of varied labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black) has a non-significant effect on prejudice controlling for sex.

TABLE II  
MEAN PREJUDICE SCORES FOR THE TOTAL AND EACH TREATMENT GROUP

	Negro	Colored	Afro-American	Black	Total
Mean	72.11	64.64	75.56	73.92	71.99
S.D.	33.99	29.58	34.10	32.01	32.66
Number of Cases	64	44	54	60	222

Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square
Between Groups	2389.4375	3	1096.4790
Within Groups	232474.5625	218	1066.3970
Total	235764.000	221	

F = 1.0282

TABLE III

## MEAN PREJUDICE SCORES FOR SUB-SCALES

	COGNITIVE		EMOTIONAL		ACTION		No. of Cases
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Negro	29.063	12.781	21.422	12.169	21.625	11.001	64
Colored	26.909	13.516	18.795	9.525	18.932	8.495	44
Afro Am.	32.370	14.006	22.352	12.038	20.833	10.024	54
Black	30.967	12.403	22.667	11.774	20.283	10.767	60
TOTAL	29.955	13.191	21.464	11.560	20.536	10.222	222

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

	Degrees of Freedom		Sum of Squares		Mean Square		Degrees of Freedom		Sum of Squares		Mean Square	
	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom
Between Groups	835.7734	3	278.5911	3	442.8281	3	147.6094	3	197.8320	3	65.9440	
Within Groups	37619.9141	218	172.5684	218	29090.4219	218	133.4423	218	22893.4805	218	105.0160	
TOTAL	38455.6875	221			29533.2500	221			23091.3125	221		

F = 1.6144 N.S.

F = 1.1062 N.S.

F = 0.6279 N.S.

TABLE IV

TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITH SEX AS A CONTROL VARIABLE

Sources	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between Sex Groups	14237.00	2-1=1	14237.50	
Between Label Groups	3907.50	4-1=3	1302.50	F=1.2836
Error (with sex by label groups).	211071.50	208	1014.76	
TOTAL	229216.00	213-1=212		

Table V represents a two way analysis of variance utilizing age as a control for prejudice by label (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). Age consisted of five categories: 25 and under, 26 through 35, 36 through 45, 46 through 55, and 56 and older. Since the interaction error term, .6814, was found to be not significant at the .05 level, the total error term was employed in the analysis (Blalock, 1972:343). The resulting F ratio, 1.264, proved to be not significant at the .05 level. Therefore the use of varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black), controlling for age, has no significant effect on prejudice.

Table VI describes a two way analysis of variance utilizing education as a control for prejudice by label (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). Education consists of six groups: graduate professional training (17 years or more), standard university education (16 years), partial college education (13-15 years), high school (12 years), partial high school (10-11 years), and junior high school or less (9 years or less). Since the interaction error term, .7505, was found to be not significant at the .05 level, the total error term was employed in the analysis (Blalock, 1972: 343). The resulting F ratio, 1.2639, proved to be not significant at the .05 level. Therefore the use of varied labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black) has no significant effect on prejudice controlling for education.

Table VII represents a two way analysis of variance utilizing social class as a control for prejudice by label (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). August B. Hollingshead's two factor index



TABLE V

TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITH AGE AS A CONTROL VARIABLE

Sources	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between Age Groups	14043.81	5-1=4	3510.95	
Between Label Groups	3907.50	4-1=3	1302.50	F=1.2639
Error (with age by label groups)	211264.69	205	1030.56	
TOTAL	229216.00	213-1=212		

TABLE VI

TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITH EDUCATION AS A CONTROL VARIABLE

Sources	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between Education Groups	11567.69	6-1=5	2313.54	
Between Label Groups	3907.50	4-1=3	1302.50	F=1.24314
Error (with education by label groups)	213740.81	204	1047.75	
TOTAL	229216.00	213-1=212		

TABLE VII

TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITH SOCIAL CLASS AS A CONTROL VARIABLE

Sources	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between SES Groups	10694.69	3-1=2	5347.34	
Between Label Groups	3907.50	4-1=3	1302.50	F=1,25629
Error (with SES by label groups)	214613.81	207	1036.78	
TOTAL	229216.00	213-1=212		

of social position was employed (Hollingshead and Redlich, 1958: 398-407). Since the interaction error term, .2594, was found to be not significant at the .05 level, the total error term was employed in the analysis (Blalock, 1972:343). The resulting F ratio, 1.2563, was found to be not significant at the .05 level. Therefore the use of varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black), controlling for sex, has a non-significant effect on prejudice.

Table VIII describes a two way analysis of variance utilizing return date as a control for prejudice by label (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). Return date was divided into three groups; respondents returning questionnaires during the first week; respondents returning the questionnaire during the second week; and the remainder of the respondents. Since the interaction error term, 1.551, was found to be not significant at the .05 level, the total error term was employed in the analysis (Blalock, 1972:343). The resulting F ratio, 1.201, proved to be not significant at the .05 level. Therefore the use of varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black) has no significant effect on prejudice controlling for return date.

#### Summary of the Findings

It was found that there was no significant difference at the .05 level in responses elicited, reported as mean prejudice scores, by the use of varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). It was further found that there was no significant

TABLE VIII

TWO WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITH RETURN DATE AS A CONTROL VARIABLE

Sources	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F
Between Return Date Groups	737.06	3-1=2	368.53	
Between Label Groups	3907.50	4-1-3	1302.50	F = 1.201
Error (with return date by label groups)	224571.44	207	1084.89	
TOTAL	229216.00	213-1=212		

difference at the .05 level in the mean prejudice score when each dimension (cognitive, emotional, action) was used as a separate measure of prejudice. Thus the null hypothesis, that attitudes toward a minority group will not vary depending on the label used to identify that group, was not rejected. It was further found when age, sex, education, social class and return date were utilized as control variables, they produced no significant effect at the .05 level. Therefore no matter which control variables are utilized, label makes no difference in the prejudice scores of the respondents.

### Conclusions

Traditionally, labeling theorists have approached the labeling process from the point of view of those in power positions. The attention has been focused on the judge labeling the criminal or the psychiatrist labeling the mentally ill and it was therefore suggested that the labeling process had primary implications for those persons being labeled. That is, the labeling perspective has "emphasized the passivity of the labelee" and "focused on the individual rather than the group as a unit being labeled" (Schervish, 1973:50).

Jules Feiffer spoke of a series of six identical black faces, with the following commentary: "As a matter of racial pride, we want to be called 'Blacks'--which has replaced the term 'Afro-American'--which replaced 'Negroes'--which replaced 'Colored People'--which replaced 'Darkies'--which replaced 'Blacks'" (Feiffer, 1969). The following passage is also deemed relevant:

A large and vocal group is pressing an aggressive campaign for the use of the word 'Afro-American' as the only historically accurate and humanly significant designation of this large and pivotal portion of the American population. This group charges that the word 'Negro' is an inaccurate epithet which perpetuates the master-slave mentality in the minds of both black and white Americans. An equally large, but not so vocal, group says the word 'Negro' is as accurate and as euphonic as the words 'black' and 'Afro-American.' This group is scornful of the premises of the advocates of change. A Negro by any other name, they say, would be as black and as beautiful--and as segregated. The times, they add, are too crucial for Negroes to dissipate their energy in fratricidal strife over names. But the pro-black contingent contends that names are of the essence of the game of power and control. And they maintain that a change in name will short-circuit the stereotyped thinking patterns that undergrid the system of racism in America. To make things even more complicated, a third group, composed primarily of Black Power advocates, has adopted a new vocabulary in which the word 'black' is reserved for 'black brothers and sisters who are emancipating themselves,' and the word 'Negro' is used contemptuously for Negroes 'who are still in Whitey's bag' and 'Who still think of themselves and speak of themselves as Negroes' (Rose, 1970:373-374).

According to Schervish, although "labeling theorists recognize the aspects of conflict whereby labels are negotiated, neutralized, resisted or countered, they fail to consider cases where the negotiation of labels occurs between two groups . . .", he adds "theorists should begin to explore group, organizational and societal levels of labeling conflict" (Schervish, 1973:53-55). The literature not only questions the notion of passivity of a racial category as the object of labeling but denotes an aggressive group resistance to labels and the counter application of labels.

This thesis has been a test of a major proposition of labeling theory utilizing varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black) to identify that minority group. If labeling theorists

were to employ this framework they would designate the white population as the dominant power group, or in other words, those who generate the labels. With this in mind, the four labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black) used to identify that minority group were employed to elicit responses from the white population. Differences in responses elicited by the use of these four labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black) proved to be statistically non-significant (see Table II). Therefore, if labeling theorists were to credit the white population with the initiation of these four labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black), then why do they elicit statistically non-significant responses?

It is not disputed that the white population has initiated labels for minority groups, but the literature also reveals that the black population has actively and aggressively sought acceptance for various labels to identify themselves. Rose (1970) speaks of various factions within the minority group vying for a preferred label to identify themselves. And Feiffer (1969) mentions, in developmental stages, the labels with which the minority group, at different times, wished to be identified. Therefore, the notion of the black population passively accepting labels initiated by the white population is instead replaced by the notion that the minority group does reject labels and initiates counter-labels by which they desire to be identified.

This is not a simple process by which the white population creates a label, which is rejected by the minority group, which initiates a counter-label, which the white population accepts or rejects and counters with a new label. This is not only an ongoing



process but also multi-dimensional. It may include various segments of the white population, at the same time, accepting, rejecting and countering various labels initiated by both the white population and the minority group as well as various segments of the minority group accepting, rejecting and countering various labels initiated by both the white population and the minority group.

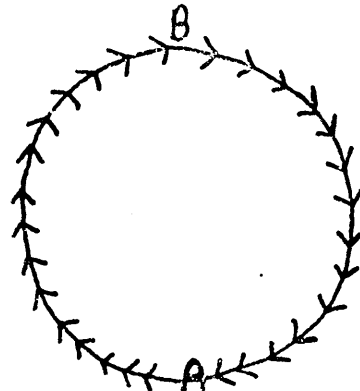
In light of this process of group labeling and counter-labeling, the following model serves to explicate this process. In order to facilitate a better comprehension of this process, the reader must keep in mind that this process is presented unidimensionally. In step one, power group A labels group B. In step two, group B accepts the label. This if taken in light of the labeling perspective is as far as one may speculate, in as much as the imputed labeler is both passive and stands alone as an individual. But in the case of minority groups, the minority group might reject the label whereupon the process enters into Phase II. In step three, group B, in this case a minority group, rejects the label imposed upon them by those in power, be it the white dominant population or various segments of their own group, and initiates a counter-label. In step four those in power reject this label and the process begins again at step one. In step five power group A accepts the counter-label whereupon the process moves into a successful label change through the process of counter-labeling and into Phase III (see Fig. I).

Therefore, instead of finding a difference in responses elicited by the use of varied minority group labels, as labeling theorists would expect, one finds no significant difference. A suggested

FIGURE I

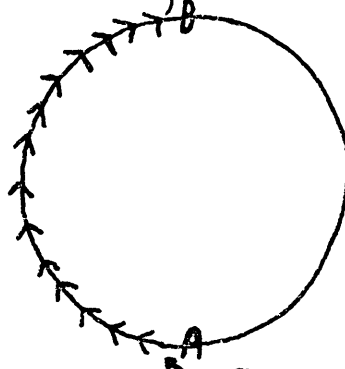
## PROCESS OF GROUP LABELING AND COUNTER-LABELING

IV. Label Change Successful



III. Meaning Establishment Process

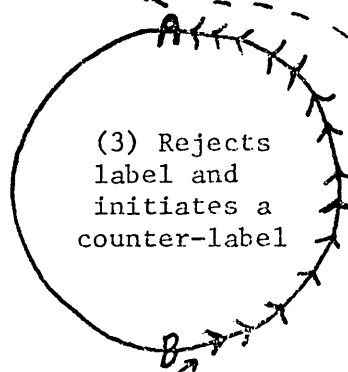
(5) A accepts label



II. Power Gap

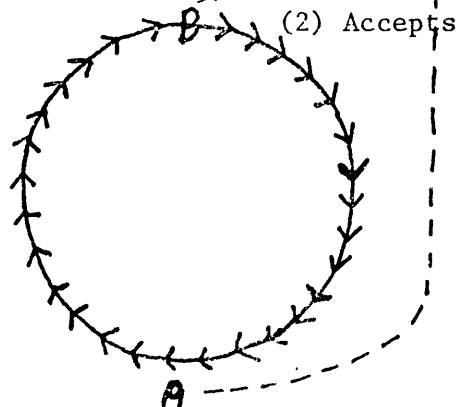
(3) Rejects label and initiates a counter-label

(4) A rejects counter-label. No meaningful change for Power A-- back to step (1)



I. Power

(1) Label



reason for this finding is partly due to the fact that this study is comparing groups which cannot be designated as passive and which not only generate new labels but attempt to impose new meanings on old labels. The appearance of new labels and meanings generated by the minority group which are reacted to and countered by the white population brings to bear a processual problem.

"In the face of new situations or new experiences individuals, groups, institutions and societies find it necessary to form new definitions. These new definitions may enter into the repertoire of stable meanings. . . . Conventional procedure is to identify something which is presumed to operate on group life and treat it as an independent variable, and then to select some form of group activity as the dependent variable. The independent variable is put at the beginning part of the process of interpretation and the dependent variable at the terminal part of the process . . . The intervening process is ignored . . . or taken for granted as something that need not be considered" (Blumer, 1969:133-134). The proposed model, which should be viewed as an ongoing process in as much as it contains many opportunities for the generation of new meanings for old labels, new labels for old meanings or new labels for new meanings, illustrates that there has been ample opportunity, within the context of black-white relationships in American society, to dilute any distinctive meaning that these labels individually once might have held, rendering responses to these labels unidimensional.

Blumer states, "If there is anything we do know, it is that an object, event or situation in human experience does not carry its

own meaning. The meaning is conferred on it" (Blumer, 1969:134). This "intervening process," as suggested by Blumer, should be interpreted as an "intervening variable" (Blumer, 1969:135). Therefore, in recognizing this "intervening variable" as a possible reason for eliciting non-significant responses from the white population by the use of the four minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black), it is suggested that to the white population these labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black), as argued by W. E. B. Dubois, are only "conventional signs for identifying things (Adoff, 1968:24).

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## APPENDIX A

### Four Forms of the Questionnaire



Public Opinion Survey

Dear Resident of Southwest Virginia:

The following questionnaire is a part of a public opinion survey being conducted in the Southwestern Virginia area. Your name was randomly selected from the Roanoke County Directory for inclusion in the survey.

As you know, many changes have taken place in American race relations during the past several years. It is the purpose of this survey to determine how the public feels about these changes.

It is not necessary that you sign your name to the questionnaire and, therefore, your answers will not be identified with you personally in any report of this survey. It is extremely important that you answer all of the questions as honestly as you can.

When you have finished filling out the questionnaire, please return it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. We very much appreciate your time and cooperation in helping us to complete this survey of public opinion. Please return the questionnaire at your earliest possible convenience.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Scheig  
Assistant Professor  
VPI&SU

The following inventory is designed to help you tell me your ideas and opinions quickly and easily. I have tried to cover many different points of view. You may agree strongly with some statements, disagree just as strongly with other statements, and perhaps be uncertain about others. Whether you agree or disagree with any statements, you can be sure that many other people feel the same way you do.

Please mark each statement in the left-hand margin according to how much you agree, or disagree with it. Please mark every one. Write +1, +2, +3 or -1, -2, -3, depending on how you feel in each case,

+1: I agree a little.

-1: I disagree a little.

+2: I agree pretty much.

-2: I disagree pretty much.

+3: I agree very much.

-3: I disagree very much.

- \_\_\_ (1) I would work in the same office as Negroes.
- \_\_\_ (2) Negroes have nothing about them that I can admire.
- \_\_\_ (3) A Negro is capable of profiting by education as much as a white man.
- \_\_\_ (4) Negroes should not hold offices of trust or honor.
- \_\_\_ (5) I feel that Negroes deserve the same social privileges as whites.
- \_\_\_ (6) I would eat in the same restaurants as Negroes.
- \_\_\_ (7) A good many Negroes become overbearing, officious, and disagreeable when given positions of responsibility and authority.
- \_\_\_ (8) I would have Negroes as speaking acquaintances only.
- \_\_\_ (9) Negroes take care of things, such as new houses, when they have them.
- \_\_\_ (10) Negroes work hard so that their children can get a better education than they had.
- \_\_\_ (11) Negroes would rather have someone tell them what to do than make decisions themselves.
- \_\_\_ (12) I am afraid to walk through Negro neighborhoods.
- \_\_\_ (13) The Negro does not have the same capacity for reasoning as the white man.
- \_\_\_ (14) I would marry a Negro.
- \_\_\_ (15) One reason why racial prejudice still exists today is the fact that many Negroes are dirty, loud, and generally offensive in their ways.

- \_\_\_(16) It would anger me if a Negro ran for public office.
- \_\_\_(17) I would have Negroes as close friends.
- \_\_\_(18) I do not think that the Negro can be relied upon in a position of trust or responsibility.
- \_\_\_(19) It makes me angry to think of what Negroes are trying to do in this country.
- \_\_\_(20) I would be willing to trust Negroes.
- \_\_\_(21) Negroes as a race are repulsive to me.
- \_\_\_(22) The idea of contact with Negroes excites horror and disgust in me.
- \_\_\_(23) I would support Negro integration in schools.
- \_\_\_(24) The sight of a Negro almost always frightens me.
- \_\_\_(25) I am not in sympathy with Negro people.
- \_\_\_(26) I would live in a neighborhood with Negroes.
- \_\_\_(27) I think that the Negro, if he were given the chance, would prove just as good as the white man.
- \_\_\_(28) Give the Negro a high position in society, and he will show himself equal to it.
- \_\_\_(29) I would eat at the same table with Negroes.
- \_\_\_(30) I would vote for a Negro for public office.
- \_\_\_(31) Negroes are dignified and well-mannered people.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Would you please provide the following background information:

(a) Your occupation (please be specific, for example, brakeman with the railroad, not railroad employee): \_\_\_\_\_

(b) The highest number of years of formal education that you have completed: 1 2 3 4 5 6 / 7 8 / 9 10 11 12 / 13 14 15 16 / 17 or more

(c) Your religious affiliation: (d) Your race:

\_\_\_ Protestant

\_\_\_ Black

\_\_\_ Catholic

\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_ Jewish

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ None

(e) Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Your sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP.

Public Opinion Survey

Dear Resident of Southwest Virginia:

The following questionnaire is a part of a public opinion survey being conducted in the Southwestern Virginia area. Your name was randomly selected from the Roanoke County Directory for inclusion in the survey.

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Please mark each statement in the left-hand margin according to how much you agree, or disagree with it. Please mark every one. Write +1, +2, +3 or -1, -2, -3, depending on how you feel in each case.

+1: I agree a little.

-1: I disagree a little.

+2: I agree pretty much.

-2: I disagree pretty much.

+3: I agree very much.

-3: I disagree very much.

- \_\_\_ (1) I would work in the same office as Afro-Americans.
- \_\_\_ (2) Afro-Americans have nothing about them that I can admire.
- \_\_\_ (3) An Afro-American is capable of profiting by education as much as a white man.
- \_\_\_ (4) Afro-Americans should not hold offices of trust or honor.
- \_\_\_ (5) I feel that Afro-Americans deserve the same social privileges as whites.
- \_\_\_ (6) I would eat in the same restaurants as Afro-Americans.
- \_\_\_ (7) A good many Afro-Americans become overbearing, officious, and disagreeable when given positions of responsibility and authority.
- \_\_\_ (8) I would have Afro-Americans as speaking acquaintances only.
- \_\_\_ (9) Afro-Americans take care of things, such as new houses, when they have them.
- \_\_\_ (10) Afro-Americans work hard so that their children can get a better education than they had.
- \_\_\_ (11) Afro-Americans would rather have someone tell them what to do than make decisions themselves.
- \_\_\_ (12) I am afraid to walk through Afro-American neighborhoods.
- \_\_\_ (13) The Afro-American does not have the same capacity for reasoning as the white man.
- \_\_\_ (14) I would marry an Afro-American.
- \_\_\_ (15) One reason why racial prejudice still exists today is the fact that many Afro-Americans are dirty, loud, and generally offensive in their ways.

- \_\_\_(16) It would anger me if an Afro-American ran for public office.
- \_\_\_(17) I would have Afro-Americans as close friends.
- \_\_\_(18) I do not think that the Afro-American can be relied upon in a position of trust or responsibility.
- \_\_\_(19) It makes me angry to think of what Afro-Americans are trying to do in this country.
- \_\_\_(20) I would be willing to trust Afro-Americans.
- \_\_\_(21) Afro-Americans as a race are repulsive to me.
- \_\_\_(22) The idea of contact with Afro-Americans excites horror and disgust in me.
- \_\_\_(23) I would support Afro-American integration in schools.
- \_\_\_(24) The sight of an Afro-American almost always frightens me.
- \_\_\_(25) I am not in sympathy with Afro-American people.
- \_\_\_(26) I would live in a neighborhood with Afro-Americans.
- \_\_\_(27) I think that the Afro-American, if he were given the chance, would prove just as good as the white man.
- \_\_\_(28) Give the Afro-American a high position in society, and he will show himself equal to it.
- \_\_\_(29) I would eat at the same table with Afro-Americans.
- \_\_\_(30) I would vote for an Afro-American for public office.
- \_\_\_(31) Afro-Americans are dignified and well-mannered people.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Would you please provide the following background information:

(a) Your occupation (please be specific, for example, brakeman with the railroad, not railroad employee): \_\_\_\_\_

(b) The highest number of years of formal education that you have completed: 1 2 3 4 5 6 / 7 8 / 9 10 11 12 / 13 14 15 16 / 17 or more

(c) Your religious affiliation:

(d) Your race:

\_\_\_ Protestant

\_\_\_ Black

\_\_\_ Catholic

\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_ Jewish

\_\_\_ Other (Please specify)

\_\_\_ Other (Please specify)

\_\_\_ None

(e) Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Your sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP.

Public Opinion Survey

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+1: I agree a little.

-1: I disagree a little.

+2: I agree pretty much.

-2: I disagree pretty much.

+3: I agree very much.

-3: I disagree very much.

- \_\_\_ (1) I would work in the same office as Blacks.
- \_\_\_ (2) Blacks have nothing about them that I can admire.
- \_\_\_ (3) A Black is capable of profiting by education as much as a white man.
- \_\_\_ (4) Blacks should not hold offices of trust or honor.
- \_\_\_ (5) I feel that Blacks deserve the same social privileges as whites.
- \_\_\_ (6) I would eat in the same restaurants as Blacks.
- \_\_\_ (7) A good many Blacks become overbearing, officious, and disagreeable when given positions of responsibility and authority.
- \_\_\_ (8) I would have Blacks as speaking acquaintances only.
- \_\_\_ (9) Blacks take care of things, such as new houses, when they have them.
- \_\_\_ (10) Blacks work hard so that their children can get a better education than they had.
- \_\_\_ (11) Blacks would rather have someone tell them what to do than make decisions themselves.
- \_\_\_ (12) I am afraid to walk through Black neighborhoods.
- \_\_\_ (13) The Black does not have the same capacity for reasoning as the white man.
- \_\_\_ (14) I would marry a Black.
- \_\_\_ (15) One reason why racial prejudice still exists today is the fact that many Blacks are dirty, loud, and generally offensive in their ways.



- \_\_\_(16) It would anger me if a Black ran for public office.
- \_\_\_(17) I would have Blacks as close friends.
- \_\_\_(18) I do not think that the Black can be relied upon in a position of trust or responsibility.
- \_\_\_(19) It makes me angry to think of what Blacks are trying to do in this country.
- \_\_\_(20) I would be willing to trust Blacks.
- \_\_\_(21) Blacks as a race are repulsive to me.
- \_\_\_(22) The idea of contact with Blacks excites horror and disgust in me.
- \_\_\_(23) I would support Black integration in schools.
- \_\_\_(24) The sight of a Black almost always frightens me.
- \_\_\_(25) I am not in sympathy with Black people.
- \_\_\_(26) I would live in a neighborhood with Blacks.
- \_\_\_(27) I think that the Black, if he were given the chance, would prove just as good as the white man.
- \_\_\_(28) Give the Black a high position in society, and he will show himself equal to it.
- \_\_\_(29) I would eat at the same table with Blacks.
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- \_\_\_(31) Blacks are dignified and well-mannered people.

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(c) Your religious affiliation:

(d) Your race:

\_\_\_ Protestant

\_\_\_ Black

\_\_\_ Catholic

\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_ Jewish

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ None

(e) Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Your sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP.

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-1: I disagree a little.

+2: I agree pretty much.

-2: I disagree pretty much.

+3: I agree very much.

-3: I disagree very much.

- \_\_\_ (1) I would work in the same office as a Colored person.
- \_\_\_ (2) Colored people have nothing about them that I can admire.
- \_\_\_ (3) A Colored person is capable of profiting by education as much as a white man.
- \_\_\_ (4) Colored people should not hold offices of trust or honor.
- \_\_\_ (5) I feel that Colored people deserve the same social privileges as whites.
- \_\_\_ (6) I would eat in the same restaurants as Colored people.
- \_\_\_ (7) A good many Colored people become overbearing, officious, and disagreeable when given positions of responsibility and authority.
- \_\_\_ (8) I would have Colored people as speaking acquaintances only.
- \_\_\_ (9) Colored people take care of things, such as new houses, when they have them.
- \_\_\_ (10) Colored people work hard so that their children can get a better education than they had.
- \_\_\_ (11) Colored people would rather have someone tell them what to do than make decisions themselves.
- \_\_\_ (12) I am afraid to walk through Colored neighborhoods.
- \_\_\_ (13) The Colored person does not have the same capacity for reasoning as the white man.
- \_\_\_ (14) I would marry a Colored person.
- \_\_\_ (15) One reason why racial prejudice still exists today is the fact that many Colored people are dirty, loud, and generally offensive in their ways.

- \_\_\_(16) It would anger me if a Colored person ran for public office.
- \_\_\_(17) I would have Colored people as close friends.
- \_\_\_(18) I do not think that the Colored person can be relied upon in a position of trust or responsibility.
- \_\_\_(19) It makes me angry to think of what Colored people are trying to do in this country.
- \_\_\_(20) I would be willing to trust Colored people.
- \_\_\_(21) Colored people as a race are repulsive to me.
- \_\_\_(22) The idea of contact with Colored people excites horror and disgust in me.
- \_\_\_(23) I would support Colored integration in schools.
- \_\_\_(24) The sight of a Colored person almost always frightens me.
- \_\_\_(25) I am not in sympathy with Colored people.
- \_\_\_(26) I would live in a neighborhood with Colored people.
- \_\_\_(27) I think that the Colored person, if he were given the chance, would prove just as good as the white man.
- \_\_\_(28) Give the Colored person a high position in society, and he will show himself equal to it.
- \_\_\_(29) I would eat at the same table with Colored people.
- \_\_\_(30) I would vote for a Colored person for public office.
- \_\_\_(31) Colored people are dignified and well-mannered people.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Would you please provide the following background information:

(a) Your occupation (please be specific, for example, brakeman with the railroad, not railroad employee): \_\_\_\_\_

(b) The highest number of years of formal education that you have completed: 1 2 3 4 5 6 / 7 8 / 9 10 11 12 / 13 14 15 16 / 17 or more

(c) Your religious affiliation:

(d) Your race:

\_\_\_ Protestant

\_\_\_ Black

\_\_\_ Catholic

\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_ Jewish

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ None

(e) Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Your sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP.

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter for Second Mailing

Public Opinion Survey

Dear Resident of Southwest Virginia:

Some time ago you received a questionnaire which has not yet been returned to us. We are aware that it is sometimes difficult for you to make time for such things. We apologize for imposing on you and making demands on your time.

We would like to emphasize that only you can provide us with information we seek. Let us again stress that the information you give us will be held in strictest confidence.

For your convenience, we are enclosing another questionnaire along with another stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you would please complete and return it at your earliest convenience, we would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you for your special help.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Scheig  
VPI&SU

## APPENDIX C

Inter-Item Correlation Coefficients for Cognitive Sub-Scale

## INTER-ITEM CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR COGNITIVE SUB-SCALE

Item	03	07	09	10	11	13	15	18	27	28	31
03											
07	.26										
09	.34	.53									
10	.35	.49	.62								
11	.20	.39	.43	.44							
13	.47	.53	.51	.40	.51						
15	.13	.55	.43	.35	.39	.53					
18	.41	.56	.49	.48	.46	.59	.43				
27	.51	.52	.61	.62	.52	.62	.42	.63			
28	.46	.55	.68	.68	.50	.56	.39	.67	.82		
31	.36	.46	.61	.61	.47	.49	.49	.46	.69	.64	



#### APPENDIX D

#### Inter-Item Correlation Coefficients for Emotional Sub-Scale

## INTER-ITEM CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR EMOTIONAL SUB-SCALE

Item	02	04	05	12	16	19	20	21	22	24	25
02											
04	.65										
05	.57	.57									
12	.36	.25	.19								
16	.65	.64	.57	.28							
19	.57	.43	.43	.45	.55						
20	.61	.54	.61	.29	.51	.47					
21	.64	.62	.55	.31	.64	.52	.50				
22	.65	.66	.57	.37	.71	.59	.57	.73			
24	.49	.46	.36	.37	.47	.48	.40	.49	.55		
25	.55	.44	.37	.31	.45	.56	.50	.52	.56	.43	

## APPENDIX E

### Inter-Item Correlation Coefficients for Action Sub-Scale

## INTER-ITEM CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR ACTION SUB-SCALE

Item	01	06	08	14	17	23	26	29	30
01									
06	.78								
08	.42	.38							
14	.20	.20	.28						
17	.52	.47	.61	.37					
23	.56	.47	.40	.26	.50				
26	.51	.42	.43	.35	.55	.61			
29	.70	.64	.44	.28	.62	.54	.47		
30	.64	.57	.49	.25	.63	.59	.59	.69	

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the scanned document**

# THE LABELING THEORY: AN EMPIRICAL TEST

by

Thomas Edward Cohn

(ABSTRACT)

Proponents of labeling theory argue that the labels we use to identify things are not merely harmless words, but, in fact, shape and control experience to some degree. Others, such as W. E. B. Dubois, argued that names only identify things and if one changes a label by which a thing is identified the meaning will not be changed. The major aim of the present study was to determine if there were any significant differences in responses elicited from a random sample of the white population of Roanoke, Virginia, by using varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). The random sample of 800 was divided into four groups of 200, each receiving a different form of the questionnaire. Proposed differentiation responses were measured by the use of mean prejudice scores on a cognitive, emotional and action level.

The data revealed that there was no significant differences in prejudice scores elicited by the use of varied minority group labels (Negro, Colored, Afro-American, Black). This study, as opposed to traditional labeling theory, utilizes the group as the unit of analysis and did not presume the passivity of the labelee. Therefore this would tend to indicate that labeling theory, when the unit of analysis is the group, should take into consideration resistance to and counter-application of labels by the labelees.