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IMPACT OF CONTACT ON  
RACIO-ETHNIC ATTITUDES

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Kathryn Lass

1967

THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

### IMPACT OF CONTACT ON RACIO-ETHNIC ATTITUDES

by Kathryn Lass

This paper attempts to deal with relationships that may exist between the variable of previous prolonged personal contact with members of other races and attitudes of racio-ethnic liberalism toward those races. Specifically, the general hypothesis tested is: "Those who have had previous prolonged personal contact with members of other races exhibit a higher degree of racio-ethnic liberalism and social acceptance than do those who have had no previous prolonged personal contact with members of other races."

Using data from 263 questionnaires administered to college students, the hypothesis was supported (at a .05 level or below, using chi-square analysis) for certain social and demographic categories of the controls applied. These categories are females, those from small towns, those with a high frequency of church attendance, those whose fathers are in the middle status occupational group, those with low grade points, those of a moderate political orientation, and those above freshman status.

An attempt was also made to identify some correlates of racio-ethnic prejudice. That is, what groups are more prejudiced, regardless of previous contact? Here, the groups that exhibited the greatest degree of prejudice most consistently are the same groups, with the exception of college status and political orientation, as those for whom contact was a statistically significant factor in their racio-ethnic attitudes. This suggests that when people previously hold strong prejudices, personal contact with the social objects of their prejudices results in a significant reduction of same. For those who previously hold weaker prejudices, contact would not be as significant a factor in their attitude formation.

A peripheral concern was to discover the differential impact of type of contact on attitudes. Generally speaking, it was found that those who had experienced contact with members of other races on a peer basis were the most racio-ethnically liberal, those who had experienced contact on a dominant-subordinate level were the next most liberal, and those who had experienced no contact at all were the least racio-ethnically liberal.

IMPACT OF CONTACT ON RACIO-ETHNIC ATTITUDES

By

Kathryn Lass

A THESIS

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## I. GENERAL PROBLEM AND BACKGROUND

The greater the part that legislation has come to play in implementing the processes of racial desegregation and integration, the stronger have become the arguments that "you can't legislate morality" and "you can't change people's feelings through laws." To a degree, this has been demonstrated by the emergence of strong reactionary elements, politically referred to as the "white backlash," following, for example, the 1954 Supreme Court decision ordering racial integration of schools and the 1965 Civil Rights Act.

One can look at the situation in terms of just how, and to what extent, people adjust themselves to rapid and, to them, often disruptive, changes in the world around them. The concern of attitude change is significant to the broad area of social change--significant because of the pragmatic implications that research in this area might have. Studies in attitude change and attitude formation, especially concerning inter-racial and inter-ethnic relations, have been abundant.

Often, this type of research is intended to provide guidelines for social policy. That is, it is hoped that there is some element or variable which, when manipulated in a certain way, will effect a reduction of prejudice on the part of

the persons upon whom this variable is operative. Inter-racial and inter-ethnic contact is one of these variables.

For example, Deutsch and Collins did a comparative study of two relatively segregated housing projects (which provided few opportunities for interracial contact) and two completely integrated housing projects.<sup>1</sup> In the integrated projects they found the housewives significantly less prejudiced; there was no evidence that white housewives in the integrated projects had been less prejudiced before coming to live in the housing area than those in the more segregated projects.<sup>2</sup> It is also significant to note that, among the housewives in the segregated project, their attitudes were more often less favorable to interracial housing than they were before they moved in.

Allport concludes from his studies of prejudice that, "The trend of evidence favors the conclusion that knowledge about and acquaintance with members of minority groups make for tolerant and friendly attitudes."<sup>3</sup>

In one study of ethnic and racial prejudice in six American communities, it is concluded that, "In all the surveys in all communities and for all groups, majority and

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<sup>1</sup>Morton Deutsch and Mary Collins, Interracial Housing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1951).

<sup>2</sup>Theodore M. Newcomb, Ralph H. Turner, and Philip E. Converse, Social Psychology (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 254.

minorities, the greater the frequency of interaction, the lower the prevalence of ethnic prejudice."<sup>1</sup>

When white sailors in the Merchant Marine were studied, a strong inverse relationship was found between the number of times a sailor has shipped with Negroes and his anti-Negro prejudices.<sup>2</sup>

These and numerous other studies strongly suggest that contact highly correlates with, if it does not actually produce, favorable attitudes toward members of various ethnic and racial groups.

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<sup>1</sup>Robin M. Williams, Jr., Strangers Next Door (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ira N. Brophy, "The Luxury of Anti-Negro Prejudice," Public Opinion Quarterly, IX (Winter, 1945-46), pp. 456-466.

## II. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

### A. Contact

In his classic work, The Human Group, Homans hypothesized that, other things being equal, "If the frequency of interaction between two or more persons increases, the degree of their liking for one another will increase and vice-versa."<sup>1</sup>

The most crucial "other thing," Homans feels, is authority--in other words, a difference in the status positions of the parties involved in the interaction. For, "The relationship between inferior and superior in a hierarchy is inevitably tension producing, and the conflict between different people is always subject to interpretation in group terms."<sup>2</sup> So perhaps it is the quality of the interaction rather than the quantity of it that is crucial; it could be that interaction and unprejudicial attitudes (or sentiments of liking) are positively associated only if a status differentiation is not a factor inherent in the structure of the relationship.

This concern is brought out primarily because the nature of the data collected in this study allows little more than

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<sup>1</sup>George C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1950), p. 112.

<sup>2</sup>Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1963), p. 73.

a cursory examination of status differentials in interaction. But I feel that this shortcoming does not necessarily lessen the validity of the study. Homans argues that while the positive and negative quality and the structural aspects of contact must not be disregarded in research, this "does not invalidate our hypothesis, but does require that the influence of these factors are stated in further hypotheses."<sup>1</sup>

Taking this into account then, the central hypothesis of this study can be stated:

Those who have had previous prolonged personal contact with members of other races exhibit a higher degree of racio-ethnic liberalism and social acceptance than do those who have had no previous prolonged personal contact with members of other races.

The specific question operationalizing the contact variable was--"Have you ever had prolonged personal contact with people of other races?" If initial contacts between the members of two races is perceived as negative on the part of one or both parties, it is possible, of course, that further contacts would be purposely avoided. Since the question asked about prolonged personal contact, it is entirely possible that those who answered that they had had no previous prolonged contact did, indeed, have some contact with other races. Thus, an answer of "no previous contact" could imply: (1) If a small degree of contact was experienced, it may have been perceived as negative--thus discouraging further interaction; (2) If a small degree of contact was experienced, and

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<sup>1</sup>Homans, op. cit., p. 117.

it was perceived as being positive (or if no contact at all was experienced), further or initial situational opportunities for interaction were not available or provided for either or both sides; (3) Those who had no contact could have had none because of previously held prejudices toward, or stereotypes of, the other group--this would tend to nullify motivation to seek interaction with other races or ethnic groups.

Likewise, those who reported that they did have previous prolonged personal contact with those of other races might have experienced these contacts because: (1) They were previously racio-ethnically liberal and relatively unprejudiced so that they at least did not resist, if not actively seek out, contact with members of other races; (2) Their initial contacts with people of other races or ethnic groups were perceived as qualitatively so positive that they continued and extended the contacts; or (3) The situational opportunities for inter-racial contact were present, thus providing an environmental facilitation of interaction.

To say that previous prolonged personal contact between the members of two racial groups is the significant factor in the prejudiced or non-prejudiced attitudes of one group toward the other (in this case, majority toward minority) cannot be definitely established by the data gathered. Nor can any hypothesis of attitude change be supported. That is, no cause-effect relationship between the independent variable

of contact and the dependent variable of liberalism can be established. Although there does seem to be a significant relationship between the two variables, one cannot say whether it is the factor of contact per se, or some intervening variable, that produces the significance of the relationship.

#### B. Configuration of Racio-ethnic Prejudice or Ethnocentrism

A less central attempt of this study is to try to find out just what types of people, in terms of the social and demographic characteristics chosen to study, tend to be less racio-ethnically liberal or more ethnocentric, regardless of previous prolonged personal contact with members of other races.

This concern is related to many studies which claim that there is a certain personality type which can be identified as being more prejudiced than other personality types, regardless of the particular social object or social situation. Bettelheim and Janowitz, for example, say that intimate contact with minority group members does not seem to reduce prejudice toward that group. It is not the contact that is the significant factor, they argue, but rather the particular personality structure of the party involved.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz, Social Change and Prejudice (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1964), p. 72.

Himelhoch claims that the individual "will tend to accept and maintain the prejudiced pattern at the expense of the democratic pattern if he has certain personality tendencies for which prejudice provides an outlet and if other, more satisfying, outlets are not provided."<sup>1</sup> He presents specific personality tendencies associated with high prejudice: status anxiety, authoritarian tendencies, repressed sexual wishes, and insecurity arising from self-hate.<sup>2</sup>

Although this study is hardly prepared to delve into the area of the "prejudiced psyche," it does try to identify some cluster of social traits which shows a high correlation with low racio-ethnic liberalism. It is not, of course, the traits themselves that are significant, but rather what these traits imply. For example, the finding that the females in this study generally exhibit more prejudice than do the males cannot be interpreted that simply being a female makes one more ethnocentric or racio-ethnically prejudiced. Rather, what is important is what being a female in our society means; how the particular roles and statuses conventionally characterizing the female help to form, and often dictate, her personality and her relationships to others.

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<sup>1</sup>Jerome Himelhoch, "Is There a Bigot Personality?" Race, Prejudice, and Discrimination, ed. Arnold Rose (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961), p. 500. This article originally appeared in Commentary, III (March, 1947), pp. 1277-84.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



### C. Type of Contact

Although, as mentioned before, this study does not allow a thorough examination of the differential impact of type of contact, a few findings are presented which indicate to a very preliminary degree that there might exist differences in degree of racio-ethnic liberalism expressed on the basis of whether the previous interaction was on a dominant-subordinate level or on an equal status level. If the former can be interpreted as a negative type of contact and the latter, as a positive contact, one might expect those who had contact with a minority group on an equal status level to be the most liberal, those who had no previous contact to be the next most liberal, and those who had engaged in dominant-subordinate relationships to be the least racio-ethnically liberal or the least socially accepting of out-racial groups.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Operationalization of Variables

##### 1. Contact--Independent Variable

Each respondent was asked to report his own past behavior. The specific question was: "Have you ever had prolonged personal contact with members of other races?" The respondent was to answer "yes" or "no", and "if yes, under what circumstances?"

After examination of the "circumstances" mentioned above, responses were coded into three categories: (1) no, (2) yes, contact with domestics, and (3) yes, contact with friends, co-workers, classmates, etc. For my basic purposes, which deal with existence of interaction rather than quality of interaction, categories (2) and (3) were combined so that the final independent variable had two dimensions--"yes" and "no".

Also, a methodological difficulty arose in using the three original categories; namely, that there were not enough cases in category (2) yes, contact with domestics, to allow statistically significant results after the application of control variables. (However, a short presentation in percentages of the data in the original three categories is presented later.)

## 2. Racio-ethnic Liberalism--Dependent Variable

The concept of racio-ethnic liberalism--the dependent variable--was operationalized by exacting responses to a series of seven indicators or questions. It was intended that the questions were worded in such a manner that, logically speaking, an individual's response would be clearly indicative of his position on a hypothetical scale of racio-ethnic liberalism. In the final analysis, racio-ethnic liberalism was dichotomized into two categories, "high" and "low."

Each question is intended to provide a separate index of the dependent variable; there is no composite "score" of all the responses to form one index of racio-ethnic liberalism. This is primarily to avoid the problem often encountered in a Likert-type scale; namely, that a total "score" does not permit an accurate analysis of what exactly is the response to each question. Rather, the data gathered from each question are discussed separately in perspective of the independent variable.

However, there are what can be called "clusters" of the seven indicators. For example, one cluster consists of the three indicators that are Bogardus-type<sup>1</sup> Social Distance Scales. These indicators call for the respondent to indicate the degrees of social closeness to which he would permit a member of the Negro, American Indian, and Oriental groups,

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<sup>1</sup>I say Bogardus-type because "to church as members" was included between "to club as chums" and "to street as neighbors."

respectively. In the Bogardus Scales, the respondent was asked to indicate the highest, or closest, degree of his acceptance of the members of each racial group. Thus, ideally, indicating one category would imply that he would indicate all lower, or less close, categories of social distance, and no higher categories of social distance.

In the case of the Negro in this study, those who checked "to kinship by marriage" as the closest level of acceptance and those who checked "to club as personal chums" as the closest level were combined into the group exhibiting high racio-ethnic liberalism. All the others were combined to form the low racio-ethnically liberal group.<sup>1</sup>

In both the cases of the American Indian and the Oriental, those who indicated the highest level of acceptance possible--"to kinship by marriage"--comprise the high liberal group; all the other respondents comprise the low liberal group.

The second cluster of indicators is composed of the two questions which deal slightly differently than Bogardus with the closest level of social acceptance--marriage. In these, the respondent was asked if, other things being equal, he himself would marry someone of a different race, and if he himself would marry someone of a different national background. Original response possibilities were: (1) definitely yes, (2) possibly, and (3) definitely no. On the question

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<sup>1</sup>This combination of categories was necessary because there were not enough cases who indicated the "to kinship by marriage" level of acceptance to allow statistical presentation of data.

concerning race, those who answered "definitely yes" and "possibly" were combined<sup>1</sup> and considered high in liberalism. Those who responded "definitely no" were considered low in liberalism.

On the other question--concerning marriage with someone of a different national background--those who answered "definitely yes" were alone considered high in racio-ethnic liberalism; those who answered "possibly" and "definitely no" were combined to form the category of low racio-ethnic liberalism. (Aside from methodological considerations, this collapse of categories is due to the probability that national background is not as stringent a test of racio-ethnic liberalism as is race.)

The last two of seven questions or indicators compose the third cluster, which can be termed the "legal" aspect of racio-ethnic liberalism. This is to be contrasted with the above five indicators which compose the "social" aspect of racio-ethnic liberalism. These last two questions asked the respondent to express his attitude (selecting from the alternative responses presented) about a law affecting relationships between the majority and minority groups in this country. The first indicator asked the respondent if he was in accord with the 1954 Supreme Court decision ordering racial integration of all schools. Those who responded "strongly in

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<sup>1</sup>This combination was partially due to the lack of sufficient cases who answered "definitely yes."

agreement" and "somewhat in agreement" were combined and termed high in racio-ethnic liberalism. Those who responded "undecided," "somewhat in disagreement," and "strongly in disagreement" were combined and termed low in racio-ethnic liberalism.

The second "legal" indicator asked the respondent, after an explanation of anti-miscegenation laws, if he thinks that these laws are unconstitutional. Those who answered "very definitely unconstitutional" and "mostly unconstitutional" were grouped to form the high liberal category; those who responded "undecided," "mostly constitutional" and "very definitely constitutional" together compose the low liberal category.

### 3. Control Variables

Of the social and demographic characteristics obtained from the population, seven which seemed most relevant were chosen and applied as controls in testing the general hypothesis. Due to lack of sufficient cases, use of simultaneous controls was not possible. The control variables are: sex, college status, size of home town (the one in which the respondent spent most of his first sixteen years), frequency of church attendance, status of father's occupation, grade point average, and general political orientation.

In the case of college status, respondents were asked to indicate (1) freshman, (2) sophomore, (3) junior, (4) senior,

or (5) graduate student. Two final categories were formed from this--freshman and non-freshman.

The size of home town question provided five alternative responses: (1) farm and country, (2) small town (under 2,500), (3) small city (2,500-25,000), (4) large city (25,000-100,000) and (5) metropolis (over 100,000). The cases of the first three were combined to form a small town category, and the cases of the last two compose the large town category.

The question of frequency of one's church attendance allowed five possible responses originally: (1) at least once a week, (2) at least twice a month, (3) about once a month, (4) a few times a year, and (5) do not attend. The first three response groups were combined to form the high frequency of church attendance category, and the last two response groups together comprise the low frequency of church attendance category.

Each respondent was asked to briefly state his father's occupation. The standard by which status was attributed to each one is the North Hatt Scale of Occupations. On the basis of one's occupational score according to the North-Hatt Scale (from 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70 and over), each occupation was placed in one of the five status categories. After this, responses from the two highest status levels were combined to form the high status category; the third highest status level itself serves as the middle status category; the two lowest status levels together compose the low status category.

The original questionnaire provided seven categories of grade-point responses: (1) 4.0, (2) 3.5, (3) 3.0, (4) 2.5, (5) 2.0, (6) 1.5, and (7) below 1.5. In the final analysis, 4.0 and 3.5 comprise a high grade point category, 3.0 and 2.5 comprise a medium grade point category, and 2.0, 1.5 and below 1.5 together form the low grade point category.

General political orientation was ascertained by having the respondents identify themselves with one of the following: (1) quite liberal, (2) liberal, (3) moderate, (4) conservative, and (5) quite conservative. The "quite liberal" and "liberal" responses were combined to form the liberal political group, the "moderate" responses themselves form the moderate political group, and the "conservative" and "quite conservative" cases together comprise the conservative political group.

The basis for collapsing the cases from the original response categories to those more general categories by which the data is herein analyzed, is twofold--methodological and theoretical. Methodologically, the lack of sufficient cases in some of the original response categories necessitated some maneuvering to attempt to offset possible distortion of results. Theoretically, some categories just more logically clustered together than others--for example, "quite liberal" and "liberal." But, at times, when neither methodological or logical considerations were seriously involved, it was, admittedly, a relatively arbitrary decision.



## B. Research Population and Data Collection

The sample used in this study was chosen on a non-random basis. The specific research population consisted of 263 white college students, all members of general sociology classes. Data were collected at the University of Missouri in Columbia during a three-week period in April, 1965.

The method of data collection was the questionnaire. Since the sample consisted entirely of students, the questionnaires were administered in group form (during class periods); each class consisted of approximately fifty students. The great majority of questions provided the alternative response categories from which the respondent had to choose. Some "open-ended" questions were used. These responses were content analyzed, and after an apparently valid configuration of responses was obtained, responses were coded categorically.

For this study, the questionnaire was preferred to other methods of data collection, principally because of the anonymity that a questionnaire allows. The nature of many of the questions was such that a respondent might be reluctant to answer honestly in a face-to-face, interviewer-interviewee relationship.

The chi-square method of analysis was applied to the data where concern was with impact of contact on attitudes (or association between contact and attitudes). Other problems dealt with in this paper--characteristics associated with prejudice, and the status differentiation of an intergroup relationship--are presented as simple percentages.

#### IV. FINDINGS

##### A. Association Between Previous Contact and Racio-ethnic Liberalism

As is shown in Table I for the three Bogardus Scale indicators, the relationship between previous personal prolonged contact and racio-ethnic liberalism is significant (at the .05 level or below) positively and directly as hypothesized for certain groups.

It can be seen that the relationship is significant for: females more often than males; for freshmen and non-freshmen alike; in all cases for those from a small town, and in no cases for those from a large town; for those having a low grade-point in all three cases and not significant in any case for those having medium and high grade points; in more instances for those attending church with high frequency than for those attending church with low frequency; more often for those with a moderate political orientation than for those with a conservative political orientation, and in no case for political liberals; and in all cases for those whose fathers are in the middle status occupations, followed by those fathers in the high status occupations, and in no case for those fathers in the low status category.

In terms of the three indicators, the relationship predicted between contact and liberalism is significant most

## FIGURE 1

## CODE FOR INDICATORS OF QUESTIONS

- No. 1--Bogardus Social Distance Scale--Negro
- No. 2--Bogardus Social Distance Scale--American Indian
- No. 3--Bogardus Social Distance Scale--Oriental
- No. 4--Would marry someone of a different race
- No. 5--Would marry someone of a different national background
- No. 6--Attitude toward 1954 Supreme Court decision re school integration
- No. 7--Attitude toward constitutionality of anti-miscegenation laws

Table I. Chi-square Significance of Predicted Relationship  
Between Contact and Liberalism

	No. 1 Bogardus- Negro	No. 2 Bogardus- American Indian	No. 3 Bogardus- Oriental
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	.30	.10	.01
Female	.001	.20	.05
<u>College Status</u>			
Freshman	.05	.10	.05
Non-freshman	.01	.20	.02
<u>Size of Home Town</u>			
Small	.001	.001	.001
Large	.50	.99	.20
<u>Grade-Point</u>			
High	.20	.30	.20
Medium	.20	.70	.50
Low	.001	.01	.001
<u>Church Attendance</u>			
High frequency	.01	.10	.02
Low frequency	.30	.20	.05
<u>Political Orientation</u>			
Liberal	.10	.50	.20
Moderate	.05	.20	.01
Conservative	.20	.01	.10
<u>Father's Occupation</u>			
High status	.10	.30	.01
Middle status	.05	.01	.02
Low status	.10	.99	.50

often for the Scale concerning the Oriental group, next often concerning the Negro group, and least often significant concerning the American Indian group.

The relationship is most consistently significant for those of a small town, those having a low grade point, and those whose fathers' occupations fall in the medium status group.

For the next cluster of indicators, which deals with projected personal acceptance of a spouse of a different racial and different national group, respectively, the findings are presented in Table II.

Here, contact is a significant factor: more often for females than males; in both cases for freshmen and for non-freshmen; in both cases for those from both small and large town backgrounds; in both cases for those with a medium grade-point and in one case for both those with high and with low grade points; more often for those who attend church with a high frequency than for those who attend with a low frequency; in both cases for political liberals and moderates and in neither case for political conservatives; and in both cases for the high and middle occupational groups, but in neither case for the low occupational group.

It can be seen that of the two indicators, the one concerning race shows a greater number of significant relationships (15) between the independent and dependent variable. In fact, for all control categories, the relationship is

Table II. Chi-square Significance of Predicted Relationship  
Between Contact and Liberalism

	No. 4 Marry of different race	No. 5 Marry of differ- ent national background
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	.02	.10
Female	.001	.01
<u>College Status</u>		
Freshman	.001	.01
Non-freshman	.01	.02
<u>Size of Home Town</u>		
Small	.001	.01
Large	.02	.02
<u>Grade Point</u>		
High	.02	.10
Medium	.05	.05
Low	.01	.20
<u>Church Attendance</u>		
High frequency	.001	.01
Low frequency	.05	.10
<u>Political Orientation</u>		
Liberal	.05	.05
Moderate	.01	.01
Conservative	.20	.10
<u>Father's Occupation</u>		
High status	.001	.01
Middle status	.01	.01
Low status	.20	.50

significant except for two--political conservatives and the low status occupational group.

In Table III the "legal" cluster of two indicators shows a significant relationship between contact and liberalism: more often for females than males; more often for non-freshmen than freshmen; more often for those from a small town than a large town; most often for those with low grade points, next often for high grade pointers, and in neither case for those with medium grade points; more often for high church attenders than for low church attenders; in both cases for political liberals and in neither case for moderates or conservatives; most often for the low occupational group, next most often for the middle occupational group, and not at all for those in the high occupational group.

Of the two legal indicators in question, and one concerning the 1954 Supreme Court decision (no. 6) presents a larger number of significant relationships (11) than does the one concerning the constitutionality of anti-miscegenation laws (9).

Looking at the findings for all indicators together in terms of each control group, a pattern seems to emerge. A significant relationship between contact and attitude appears more often for females than males; more often for non-freshmen than freshmen; more often for those of a small town than for those of a large town; most often for those with a low grade point; more often for those with a high church

Table III. Chi-square Significance of Predicted Relationship  
Between Contact and Liberalism

	No. 6 Supreme Court decision	No. 7 Anti- miscegenation laws
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	.01	.10
Female	.05	.01
<u>College Status</u>		
Freshman	.10	.05
Non-freshman	.001	.01
<u>Size of Home Town</u>		
Small	.02	.001
Large	.05	.10
<u>Grade Point</u>		
High	.50	.02
Medium	.20	.30
Low	.001	.02
<u>Church Attendance</u>		
High frequency	.02	.01
Low frequency	.05	.10
<u>Political Orientation</u>		
Liberal	.02	.001
Moderate	.30	.30
Conservative	.20	.50
<u>Father's Occupation</u>		
High status	.50	.20
Middle status	.02	.20
Low status	.05	.01



frequency than those with a low church frequency; equally as often for both political moderates and liberals (but both more often than political conservatives); and most often for those whose fathers' occupations fall in the middle status category.

#### B. Identification of Some Correlates of Racio-ethnic Prejudice

Three out of the total of seven indicators were chosen as representative for the purpose of ascertaining which of the categories within each control group is the more liberal.

Question number 1 was chosen from the three Social Distance Scales, because one's degree of acceptance of Negroes would seem to be the most discriminating indicator of racio-ethnic liberalism.

Question number 4 represents the cluster of two questions which calls for indicating one's probable behavior in a marriage situation, because again, race is probably a more discriminating factor for most people than national background.<sup>1</sup>

Question number 6 was chosen from the two "legal" indicators as being the one that dealt with an issue to which the general population has been much more thoroughly exposed; thus, respondents would more likely hold a clear attitude

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<sup>1</sup>It can be pointed out here that this question--number 4--proved to be the most often statistically significant of all the seven indicators used.

toward it. One might also interpret both legal questions as representing the more formal, perhaps even superficial, aspects of racial attitudes. Findings are presented in simple percentages rather than chi-squares because this particular concern is not central to the study. Rather, these data, by indicating trends and patterns, are intended only to supplement the basic problem of the study--namely, the relationship between contact and attitudes.

### 1. Sex

No. 1			No. 4		
Racio-ethnic Liberalism			Racio-ethnic Liberalism		
	Hi	Low		Hi	Low
male	(62)	(40)	male	(52)	(53)
	60.8	39.2		49.5	50.5
female	(86)	(68)	female	(51)	(103)
	55.8	44.2		33.1	66.9

  

No. 6		
R-E Liberalism <sup>1</sup>		
	Hi	Low
male	(83)	(23)
	78.3	21.7
female	(126)	(30)
	80.8	19.2

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<sup>1</sup>Hereafter, R-E Liberalism will be used to mean Racio-ethnic Liberalism.

The males are more liberal than the females on indicators numbers 1 and 4. The females are more liberal on the legal indicator number 6.

## 2. College Status

No. 1

## R-E Liberalism

	Hi	Low
freshman	(99) 58.6	(70) 41.4
non- freshman	(50) 57.5	(37) 42.5

No. 4

## R-E Liberalism

	Hi	Low
freshman	(68) 39.5	(104) 60.5
non- freshman	(36) 41.4	(51) 58.6

No. 6

## R-E Liberalism

	Hi	Low
freshman	(138) 79.3	(36) 20.7
non- freshman	(71) 79.8	(18) 20.2

Differences between freshmen and those above freshman status are small. On Question number 1, the freshmen show a greater degree of liberality; on Questions 4 and 6, it is reversed--non-freshmen are more liberal.

## 3. Size of Home Town

No. 1			No. 4			No. 6		
R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism		
	Hi	Low		Hi	Low		Hi	Low
small	(70)	(56)	small	(50)	(77)	small	(101)	(27)
	55.6	44.4			39.4		60.6	
large	(76)	(53)	large	(55)	(77)	large	(108)	(26)
	58.9	41.1			41.7		58.3	

Again, differences between those of a small town background and those of a large town background appear slight, but in all three cases, those from the larger towns are more liberal.

## 4. Frequency of Church Attendance

No. 1			No. 4		
R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism		
	Hi	Low		Hi	Low
high frequency	(95)	(71)	high frequency	(66)	(102)
	57.2	42.8		39.3	60.7
low frequency	(53)	(36)	low frequency	(38)	(51)
	59.6	40.4		42.7	57.3

No. 6		
R-E Liberalism		
	Hi	Low
high frequency	(139)	(32)
	81.3	18.7
low frequency	(69)	(21)
	76.7	23.3

On Questions numbers 1 and 4, low church attenders appear to be more liberal--on Question 6, the high attenders evidence a greater degree of liberalism.

### 5. Status of Father's Occupation

No. 1			No. 4		
R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism		
<u>Rank</u>		Hi    Low	<u>Rank</u>		Hi    Low
3	high status	(26)    (23) 53.1    46.9	1	high status	(20)    (29) 40.8    59.2
2	middle status	(69)    (56) 55.2    44.8	3	middle status	(47)    (75) 38.5    61.5
1	low status	(47)    (27) 63.5    36.5	2	low status	(31)    (44) 41.3    58.7

### No. 6

R-E Liberalism		
<u>Rank</u>		Hi    Low
2	high status	(43)    (6) 87.8    12.2
3	middle status	(96)    (30) 76.2    23.8
1	low status	(61)    (14) 81.3    18.7

There does not seem to be a consistent pattern in the relationship between the status of father's occupation and liberalism. On both Questions numbers 1 and 4, those of low status evidence more liberal attitudes than either the middle

or high status occupational groups. On Questions numbers 4 and 6, the middle status group shows the least degree of liberalism. If we rank--from highest degree of liberalism to lowest degree of liberalism--each group on each question, we can obtain a composite "score" of rank numbers. So, for high status the score is 6, middle status is 8, and low status, 4. For the combination of questions, then, the middle status occupational group is the least liberal, followed by the high status and low status groups, respectively.

#### 6. Grade Point

No. 1				No. 4			
R-E Liberalism				R-E Liberalism			
<u>Rank</u>		Hi	Low	<u>Rank</u>		Hi	Low
1	high grade point	(46) 73.0	(17) 27.0	1	high grade point	(27) 42.2	(37) 57.8
2	medium grade point	(77) 56.6	(59) 43.4	3	medium grade point	(52) 38.5	(83) 61.5
3	low grade point	(26) 45.6	(31) 54.4	2	low grade point	(24) 41.4	(34) 58.6

No. 6			
R-E Liberalism			
<u>Rank</u>		Hi	Low
1	high grade point	(54) 83.1	(11) 16.9
2	medium grade point	(107) 79.3	(28) 20.7
3	low grade point	(47) 78.3	(13) 21.7

In terms of one's grade point average, those with high grade points are more liberal on every question than the other two categories--medium and low grade point. The mediums are more liberal than the lows on Questions numbers 1 and 6; it is reversed on Question 4. Again, in terms of rank on the three questions, it is found that the high grade pointers are most liberal, the medium grade pointers the next most liberal, and the low grade pointers the least liberal.

### 7. Political Orientation

No. 1			No. 4		
R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism		
<u>Rank</u>	Hi	Low	<u>Rank</u>	Hi	Low
2 liberal	(57) 56.4	(44) 43.6	1 liberal	(45) 45.0	(55) 55.0
1 moderate	(65) 63.1	(38) 36.9	2 moderate	(39) 38.6	(62) 61.4
3 conservative	(23) 46.0	(27) 54.0	3 conservative	(17) 32.7	(35) 67.3

No. 6		
R-E Liberalism		
<u>Rank</u>	Hi	Low
1 liberal	(86) 84.3	(16) 15.7
2 moderate	(87) 83.7	(17) 16.3
3 conservative	(33) 63.5	(19) 36.5

In all three cases, those with a conservative political orientation are the least liberal. In two of the three cases, the political liberals are more racio-ethnically liberal than the moderates. In one case (Question number 1), the moderates are more racio-ethnically liberal than the political liberals. When we rank the three political categories in terms of a composite score, we can see that the political liberals are the most "accepting," the political moderates next, and the political conservatives the least "accepting."

All of the above findings are not intended, obviously, to positively identify those characteristics that cause one to exhibit more or less liberal attitudes toward other races. Nor do they intend to identify characteristics that must be present in order that a person express either liberal or prejudiced attitudes. The findings are meant to indicate the social and demographic variables which, when in interaction with other variables, might tend to be associated with certain types of attitudes. On the basis of this, then, it appears that a configuration of racio-ethnic prejudice or ethnocentrism consists, in this study, of females, freshmen, those from a small town, those who attend church with a high frequency, those whose fathers are of the middle occupational status group, those who have low grade points, and political conservatives.



## C. Type of Contact

The following tables present the results of running type of previous contact against each indicator of racio-ethnic liberalism.

No. 1			No. 2		
R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism		
	Hi	Low		Hi	Low
no	(69)	(73)	no	(51)	(90)
	48.6	51.4		36.2	63.8
previous contact	(8)	(7)	previous contact	(5)	(10)
yes, with domestics	53.3	46.7	yes, with domestics	33.3	66.7
yes, with peers <sup>1</sup>	(48)	(50)	yes, with peers	(54)	(45)
	71.4	28.6		54.6	45.5

  

No. 3			No. 4		
R-E Liberalism			R-E Liberalism		
	Hi	Low		Hi	Low
no	(38)	(104)	no	(40)	(102)
	26.8	73.2		28.2	71.8
previous contact	(6)	(10)	previous contact	(5)	(11)
yes, with domestics	37.5	62.5	yes, with domestics	31.3	68.8
yes, with peers	(48)	(50)	yes, with peers	(58)	(41)
	49.0	51.0		58.6	41.4

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<sup>1</sup>Peers includes classmates, co-workers, friends, etc.

No. 5				No. 6			
R-E Liberalism				R-E Liberalism			
		Hi	Low			Hi	Low
previous <u>contact</u> with domestics	no	(46)	(97)	previous <u>contact</u> with domestics	no	(105)	(40)
		32.2	67.8			72.4	27.6
	yes,	(6)	(10)		yes,	(15)	(1)
	with peers	37.5	62.5		with peers	93.8	6.2
		(57)	(43)			(88)	(12)
		57.0	43.0			88.0	12.0

No. 7			
R-E Liberalism			
		Hi	Low
previous <u>contact</u> with domestics	no	(96)	(49)
		66.2	33.8
	yes,	(11)	(5)
	with peers	68.8	31.2
		(87)	(13)
		87.0	13.0

On five of the seven indicators there is the same relationship pattern between type of contact and the dependent variable of racio-ethnic liberalism. That is, those who have experienced equal status contacts are the most liberal, those who have experienced dominant-subordinate relationships (with domestics, primarily) are the next most liberal, and those who have had no previous prolonged contact are the least liberal.

On Question number 6, those experiencing dominant-subordinate relationships appear more liberal than those experiencing equal status contacts.

The other exception to the general pattern is Question number 2--the Bogardus Scale concerning the American Indian. The "no" contacts are more liberal than the contacts "with domestics," but are still less liberal than the contacts "with peers."

Interpretation of all the above data must be cautious, due to the small number of cases in the dominant-subordinate (domestic) category. A relatively large percentage shift would result from a shift of only one or two cases.

## V. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Females appear to be less racio-ethnically liberal than do males, and contact is more often significantly related to racio-ethnic liberalism (in the manner hypothesized) for females than for males.

Perhaps that women evidence less liberalism, at least in terms of social distance, is a function of the role of the woman in our culture. The female is more often bound by social conventions, and is expected to be more conservative than the male in heterosexual relationships. Relationships with a man of another race may be more potentially threatening to a woman than a man. Also, especially in the South, the preservation of "white womanhood" is symbolic of the maintenance of caste relations between the races.

The fact that contact is more often significantly related to liberalism for women than men could also be related to the idea that a woman is more often socially isolated, less mobile, and has less access to various types of contact. Thus, she is allowed to build up a strong system of prejudice. So when she does experience interracial contact, it is more likely to effect a stronger reduction of prejudice than it would for men.

The slightly higher liberality expressed by women on Question number 6--concerning the Supreme Court decision--suggests a tendency to conform to formal, institutional and less personal proscriptions.

Differences in college status are relatively slight, but those above freshman status appear more racio-ethnically liberal than freshmen. However, the contact variable has a slightly greater impact on the attitudes of non-freshmen than freshmen.

It might be suggested here that those above freshman status are a bit more sophisticated in outlook.<sup>1</sup> For many students, college is the first setting in which they interact, or are provided possibilities to interact, with people of other races and nationalities on a peer basis. Perhaps when the non-freshmen in this sample were themselves freshmen, they held less liberal attitudes than they do now. Thus, due to increased exposure over time, one might expect that for freshmen, contact would have a more significant impact in reducing previously held, and perhaps untried, prejudices. But the data do not bear out this expectation.

Those who come from larger towns are more racio-ethnically liberal than those from smaller towns. Also, contact and

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<sup>1</sup>For a study relevant to this particular concern, see Newcomb's study of Bennington College women. Theodore M. Newcomb, "Some Patterned Consequences of Membership in a College Community," Readings in Social Psychology, ed. Theodore Newcomb and Eugene Hartley (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), pp. 345-357.

liberalism are more often significantly related as hypothesized for small town students than for large town students.

That those from a large town background demonstrate a higher degree of racio-ethnic liberalism suggests that environmental factors might be operative here. The more heterogeneous, secular and anonymous nature of a large city is more likely to provide available channels for various types of interaction--even interaction that appears to go against the norms. As well, a general atmosphere which necessarily tolerates, if not levels, differences between and among people, offers a type of social sanction to interracial relationships. It is likely that social controls upon individual behavior are less rigidly enforced than they are in a small town. When controls are often more of a secondary than a primary nature, the pressures from the others in one's in-group against out-group contacts are likely to be less strong in the large city than the small town.

In most cases, those with a low frequency of church attendance are more racio-ethnically liberal, regardless of contact, than those with a high frequency of church attendance. Likewise, the relationship between contact and liberalism is significant twice as often for high church attenders as for low church attenders.

A suggestion as to why high church attenders appear slightly less liberal is that most often the church is a defender of the status quo and an upholder of traditional norms

and behavior patterns. Thus, the church might implicitly discourage such "unconventional" behavior as interracial contacts.

Personality theories of prejudice might contend that high church attenders are more doctrinaire and exhibit stronger traits of dogmatism. Thus, one would expect them to maintain wider social distances between themselves and members of other races and ethnic groups. But when it comes to the less personal aspects of racial acceptance--as in Question number 6 concerning the Supreme Court decision--racio-ethnic liberalism is higher for them because, perhaps, supporters of one institutional structure might be more likely to support another institution, which, in this case, is the legal system.

We can conjecture that because of a certain social isolation (or social insularity) of high church attenders, interracial contact would have more of an effect upon their attitudes than upon the attitudes of low church attenders.

For the occupational variable, regardless of contact, the low status occupations generally show the highest degree of racio-ethnic liberalism, followed by the high status group and middle status group, respectively. When contact is taken into account, it is a significant factor in attitudes most often for the middle status group, next often for the high status group and least often for the low status group.

In the search for explanations of these findings, it must first be realized that the status of the occupation of one's

father is not necessarily the status of the respondent himself. The sample consists entirely of college students; it is likely that the respondent's future socio-economic status will fall above that of his father's, especially if the latter falls in the low status occupational group. Since these respondents could be called upwardly mobile, and some studies have found upwardly mobile people more tolerant than others, one could expect the low status respondents to appear the most tolerant.<sup>1</sup>

Those whose fathers' occupations fall in the middle status group show the least tolerance, regardless of contact, and also show the greatest number of significant relationships (in the manner hypothesized) between contact and liberalism.

If the middle status group may be considered the most strongly dependent upon the status quo and therefore, less favorable to anything that might represent change of that status quo, then it seems logical that they would express such a low degree of liberalism toward other races.

In regard to the contact variable, it might be that of the three groups, those of middle class backgrounds are the most sheltered from interracial contacts. The high status people more likely have access to relationships with Negro

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of how upward mobility and status inconsistency are related to liberal attitudes, see Gerhard E. Lenski, "Status Crystallization: A Non-Vertical Dimension of Social Status," American Sociological Review, XIX (August, 1954), pp. 405-413.



professionals as well as employees of other races. Low status people might have more contact by reasons of residential, educational, and occupational proximity. The middle class, especially if they live on the fringe areas of Negro neighborhoods, are likely to look upon interracial contacts as threatening: socially, economically (property values), and politically. Assuming that the middle class is most often the least secure, then, jeopardizing contacts of any kind would be strongly avoided.

Those with the highest grade point appear more liberal than either the medium grade point or low grade point groups. And in most cases, the medium group is more liberal than the low grade point group.

It was also found that previous personal contact varies directly with racio-ethnic liberalism at a significant level most often for the low grade point group.

Although we cannot presume that grade point average is indicative of intelligence, we might be able to say that those with a higher grade point have demonstrated, by some standard of appraisal, a firmer grasp of "matters of the mind." Hence, they might possess more knowledge of people of other races and ethnic groups which Allport, for one, considers an important factor in reduction or prejudice.<sup>1</sup>

Since it is for the low grade point group that contact and liberalism are most often significantly related, one is

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<sup>1</sup>Allport, op. cit., p. 254.

tempted to speculate that both the high and medium grade point groups possess a certain intellectual awareness which could predispose them favorably to another racial or ethnic group. That is, personal contact may not be as important for them; it might only give emotional substantiation to what rational beliefs they already hold. But maybe those with low grade points require a direct confrontation with the object of their prejudice in order to undergo any degree of attitude change.

Regardless of contact, the political conservatives exhibit the least degree of racio-ethnic liberalism, and the liberals exhibit a higher degree of racio-ethnic liberalism than do the moderates on two of the three representative indicators.

The predicted relationship between contact and liberalism is significant as frequently for liberals as for moderates, and least often significant for conservatives.

That the conservatives are the least liberal would be reasonable if we assume that political conservatism varies directly with conservatism in the social realm. By the same assumption, it is likely that the political liberals would exhibit a greater degree of social liberalism toward other races and ethnic groups than either the moderates or the conservatives.

We would expect contact to be significant regarding liberal attitudes more often for the moderate group than for either the liberals or conservatives. The reason for this

expectation might be that the moderates, by the very nature of their own political identification, hold less intense, if not less extreme, attitudes on a variety of issues. From this, both liberals and conservatives would be more resistant to attitude change than the moderates--in this case, attitude change through the process of interracial contact. But the findings show the relationship significant frequently as often for moderates and liberals.

There appear to be definite similarities between impact of contact and the correlates of racio-ethnic prejudice. To review briefly, those appearing to be least racio-ethnically liberal, regardless of contact, are females, freshmen, small towners, low grade pointers, political conservatives, and fathers in the middle status occupations. Those for whom the variable of previous prolonged personal contact and the variable of racio-ethnic liberalism are most often significantly related in the manner hypothesized are, with two exceptions, the same groups of people. The two exceptions are college status, where the relationship is slightly reversed, and political orientation, where the number of significant cases is more for both liberals and moderates than conservatives.

That these similarities appear as they do suggests a further specification of the relationship predicted in the general hypothesis. That is, in cases where people previously hold strong prejudices, personal contact with the social objects of their prejudices results in a significant reduction

of same. It follows, then, that those persons who hold relatively weaker prejudices seek out, or at least do not resist, contact with other races. Thus, these people would tend to exhibit a relatively low amount of prejudice both before and after interracial contact--or regardless of contact.

Although this study is not prepared to substantiate this statistically, it does suggest the following hypothesis for further research in this area: Interracial contact serves to significantly reduce prejudice if the person of the majority group already holds strong prejudices, but not so for those who previously possess weaker prejudices. Further research should deal with the perceived nature of contacts and the effectiveness of various types of contacts. It is possible, for example, that negatively perceived contacts serve to strengthen previously held prejudices, and that positively perceived contacts serve to reduce previously held prejudices. For people relatively free of prejudice before contact, perceived nature of contact could be expected to have less of an impact.

When the type of contact is considered, it is found that in most of the cases (indicators), those who have had contacts with peers are the most liberal, those who have had contacts with domestics are the next most liberal, and those who have had no contacts at all with other races are the least racio-ethnically liberal.

One exception to this pattern is Question number 2--the Bogardus Scale concerning the American Indian--on which the "no" contacts are more liberal than the contacts "with domestics."

It might be relevant to note that the American Indian is probably the least threatening racial minority group today. It is the least threatening in various aspects: 1) Physically; their characteristics do not immediately stand out from the rest of the white population--their visibility is relatively low. 2) Ecologically; they come into contact with a relatively small proportion of white Americans due to regional concentration. 3) Politically; there appears to be little, if any, organized protest or revolt against the status quo or white power structure--at least compared to the Negroes.

It should be remembered that the very small number of cases in the contact "with domestics" category could produce distortion in the over-all relationships among the three categories of contact. Putting this methodological problem aside, however, one can suggest that these figures might be indicative of a more general trend in interracial/ethnic relations. That is, some prolonged personal contact, regardless of the status differential that might be involved, could predispose one to be more racio-ethnically liberal than if there were no previous prolonged personal contact at all.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Among the many ways in which this study is circumscribed are the following:

(1) The findings apply only to the sample in this study. Since college students compose a rather specific segment of the general population, findings are not generalizable to the rest of the population or to other specific segments within society.

(2) Conceptual problems arise from the nature of the sample. For example, it may be untenable to assume that an 18 year old student is aware of what his political orientation is.

(3) This research has carried the implicit assumption that verbal behavior is a fair measure of "actual" behavior. That is, asking a respondent what he would do in a certain situation does not necessarily mean that, when actually in that social situation, he would perform as he said he would.

(4) The manner in which the original response categories were collapsed may have led to a less discriminating and more distorted analysis. For example, those with a 2.0 grade point were placed in the low grade point category and those from towns of 25,000 were placed in the small town category. Clearly, these are rather arbitrary decisions. If the sample

had consisted of a greater number of cases, these combinations of categories might not have been necessary. Similarly, a greater number of cases would have allowed for the application of simultaneous controls, which might have produced different results.

(5) This study did not intend to deal with all the social and demographic factors that might have a bearing on the general hypothesis. It is, of course, possible that some crucial factors were excluded.

(6) The seven indicators used were not subjected to statistical analysis to determine how well they tapped the independent variable of racio-ethnic liberalism. The indicators were chosen on the basis of their face validity, and the primary emphasis was upon tentative patterns, rather than statistically demonstrated particular relationships.

(7) The criteria of the North-Hatt Scale can be easily debated. For instance, a farmer was placed in the middle status category along with some types of white collar workers. This could have distorted the data when generalizing about occupational groupings.

While the limitations are serious, there is warrant to see within the data a case for further research. The central objective of this study was not to establish cause-effect relationships, but rather to describe and suggest. In that context, the data may support a guarded optimism that can be carried into a more sophisticated experimental framework.

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