

**A SOCIOMETRIC STUDY OF RACIAL CLEAVAGE
IN INDIAN - WHITE GROUPS**

**A Thesis
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**by
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The present study was prompted by the realization that few of the many reported studies on racial prejudice have dealt specifically with prejudice towards North American Indians. Many studies have investigated the interrelations of Whites and Negroes or Whites and Jews, but not of Whites and Indians. The purpose of this study was to investigate the interracial relationships existing in groups comprised of Indians and Whites.

The subjects used in this study were 682 Manitoba public school children and 139 male adult construction workers. The children comprised twenty classrooms drawn from grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. Each grade level was represented by four groups differing in degree of minority concentration as follows: (a) 1 or 2, (b) 3 or 4, (c) from 5 to 7, (d) 8 or more Indian and Metis members in a group. Similarly, the adult level was represented by four groups differing in degree of minority concentration.

The sociometric test was administered to the members of each group. Two criteria were used and three choices were requested for each criterion.

The results were appraised in two major ways: first, the effect of age on racial self-preference, and second, the effect of minority group concentration on racial self-preference.

Cleavage between Whites and Indians was found in both school and adult groups. Young White children exhibited high self-preference which decreased as grade level increased. Young Indian children showed very little self-preference, but self-preference was found to increase

gradually as the grade level of the Indian subjects increased. The highest degree of self-preference was exhibited by White girls, whereas Indian girls showed the lowest self-preference. White boys and Indian boys both showed self-preference of a degree intermediate between that shown by the White and Indian girls. Both Whites and Indians showed greater willingness to work with, than to sit near, members of the other race.

White children showed increasing self-preference as the concentration of Indian children in the groups increased. Although self-preference was absent in Indian children constituting only one or two members of a classroom, it was present when their numbers increased to three or four. It reached its highest degree at the five to seven concentration level and fell off somewhat in classrooms containing eight or more Indian children.

Racial self-preference was clearly evidenced at the adult level. Both Whites and Indians showed increasing self-preference as the concentration of Indians increased. Both showed greater willingness to work with than to room with members of the other race.

Group differences in White self-preference ratios were believed to reflect differences in age, minority group concentration, educational and occupational levels. In the case of the Indian subjects, group differences in self-preference ratios were considered primarily attributable to the degree of minority group concentration and to the amount of awareness of their position as minority group members.

It was concluded that the self-preference of the White subjects reflected cultural stereotyping, while that of the Indians was due primarily to the direct experience of being rejected by White persons.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE INTRODUCTION

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study attempts to ascertain the influence of two variables, age and degree of minority concentration, on measures of racial cleavage in Indian - White groups in the Canadian Province of Manitoba.

Therefore, the study will investigate the following questions:

1. Does the age of the group members influence the relationship between majority (Whites) and minority (Indian or Metis¹)?
2. Does the degree of minority concentration influence the relationship between majority and minority?
3. Is there an interaction between age and minority concentration that influences the relationship between majority and minority? If so, what is the nature of this interaction?
4. Do girls show sharper cleavages from the other racial group than do boys?
5. Does the Indian - Metis minority show more intense withdrawal into itself than does the White majority?
6. Are there any factors tending to lessen majority-minority cleavages? If so, what are some of these factors?

II. INTRODUCTION

The necessity for a study of the kind here proposed was realized when a review of the bibliography of the Economic and Social research Branch of the Canadian Department of Citizenship and Immigration revealed a considerable number of historical and fictional accounts

¹ Metis - a person one of whose parents is White and the other Indian.

of the Canadian Indian, but only a meager smattering of scientific studies dealing with the Indian and Metis and their present day problems and status. These scientific studies dealt with such topics as anatomical differences, economic problems, housing and sanitation problems on reserves and academic achievement of Indians and Metis. It was felt that a study that investigated the extent to which Indian and White members of a group are accepted by each other would be of considerable value.

Within the last few years, mining, forestry, hydroelectric developments and military establishments in the Canadian North have brought an increasing number of Indians into close contact with the White man and his "civilization". Many Indians have obtained laboring jobs in these Northern developments, while others, forsaking the old ways completely, have moved into the cities and towns to seek a new life. These circumstances have effected a heightening of the Canadian public's interest in the Indian and his welfare. Churches, social welfare agencies and other interested groups have assisted the Indian Affairs Branch in helping Indian and Metis to become oriented to their new environment.

However, all Whites have not welcomed the Indian. Derogatory epithets similar to those applied to the American Negro have been used with reference to the Indian. He has been accused of being lazy, stupid, irresponsible, filthy, drunken, given to violence, immoral, and so on. "Indian ghettos" have been exposed, "good, solid citizens" have loudly protested when Indians or Metis wished to move into their residential areas; economic exploitations and discriminatory employment

practices have been hinted at. These publicized events have prompted various disciplines to investigate, as fully as possible, all aspects of the situation of the Indian and Metis.

The thesis commences with the historical view of racial and ethnic prejudices. It also discusses the various ways in which prejudices are acted out. Some of the more significant racial prejudice studies are next examined. Then follows a discussion of studies pertaining directly to the North American Indian. This historical review of the literature is concluded with an examination of research on specific factors influencing racial prejudice: the effect of age, the effect of minority concentration, boys' and girls' self-preferences, the effect of contact with minority group members.

The introduction is followed by a description of the subjects involved in this study, the test used and the procedure followed. The results are then presented and discussed. The concluding chapter summarizes the results and implications of the previous chapters.

III. THE NATURE OF RACIAL PREJUDICE

Definition of Racial Prejudice

English and English(27) define prejudice as the "failure or refusal to consider a person's own individual qualities, reacting to him instead as if he possessed the qualities (especially the unfavorable ones) that rightly or wrongly are attributed to his social group".

In common usage "racial prejudice" refers to an unfavourable attitude towards any religious, racial, national or cultural group. This is the sense in which the term "racial prejudice" will be used by the author.

Classification of Racial Prejudice

Gordon Allport (2) lists five degrees of the acting out of our prejudices.

1. Antilocution - This is just the "talking prejudice" that at times seems to be almost idle chatter. Usually, this antagonism is expressed rather freely. Many people, Allport contends, never go beyond this stage.

2. Avoidance - The burden of inconvenience by avoiding the disliked group is, of course, borne by the prejudiced person himself.

3. Discrimination - The prejudiced person here takes action to exclude the disliked group from certain jobs, clubs, educational facilities, residential areas and so on. Segregation is discrimination that has become institutionalized through custom or legal force.

4. Physical attack - This may take the form of violence, race riots, desecration, forcible ejection, etc.

5. Extermination - This, the ultimate expression of prejudice, takes the form of pogroms, lynchings, and genocide on the scale carried out by Hitler.

Allport (2 p.15) illustrates the ease of transition from one level to the next level by this illustration:

"It was Hitler's antilocution that led Germans to avoid their Jewish neighbours and erstwhile friends. This preparation made it easier to enact the Nurnberg laws of discrimination which, in turn, made the subsequent burning of synagogues and street attacks upon Jews seem natural. The final step in the nacabre progression was the ovens at Auschwitz."

The present study, as it is dealing with racial cleavages, is actually investigating an example of Allport's second level of acting out prejudice - that of "Avoidance".

IV. FACTORS INFLUENCING RACIAL PREJUDICE AND CLEAVAGE.

The earliest historical annals often mention the prejudices and discriminations that one ethnic group, society or sect practised against another. At present, in many parts of the world, certain religious groups and coloured persons are victims of prejudice. The majority groups concerned have exhibited their prejudices by behaviour ranging from silent disapproval to massive exterminations on the scale carried out by Hitler's Nazis.

The determination of the factors causing racial and ethnic prejudice has for many years been the prime concern of a large number of American sociologists and social psychologists. In particular, the problems experienced by the American Negro have received attention. If prejudice could be thoroughly understood, it follows that an effective program might then be implemented to alleviate the existing conditions.

Valid scientific devices had to be developed in order to measure the presence of prejudice, its direction, strength, intensity and rigidity. Foremost among such devices was the attitude scale. The most suitable of these scales (46) are the following:

Thurstone attitude scale (introduced in 1929) - Each person being studied is asked to agree or disagree with each of a number of statements pertaining to the attitude under consideration. Each of the statements has been assigned a scale value derived from the judgments of a large number of experts.

Likert attitude scale (introduced in 1932) - Each person in this case is asked to strongly agree, agree, indicate indecision, disagree, or strongly disagree with statements dealing with the object in question. The five degrees of agreement are assigned the values 1 to 5 and thus a total score can be calculated for each person in the survey.

Guttman attitude scale (introduced in 1941) - This scale requires that the attitude under study be "scalable" for it relies on assigning a prejudice value at the point at which every statement less extreme is endorsed, while all statements more extreme are rejected.

Bogardus Social Distance Scale (introduced in 1925) - The persons in the study are asked if they are willing to accept persons of a specific racial group, at seven different degrees of intimacy - kinship, friends, neighbours, in their own occupation, citizenship, visitor to the country and total exclusion from the country. A variation of this scale is the Social Rejection scale.

Rank ordering and paired comparison methods are also used to establish racial and ethnic preferences. Poll questions, open-end questioning and combinations of the two approaches are used in some instances to establish the nature of an individual's feelings.

Deeper probing of attitudes has met with varying success through ratings from verbal statements, non-verbal behaviour towards the object, secondary expressive cues, personal documents, clinical interviews, projective testing, and immediate experience.

Indirect methods of investigation have been especially necessary for studying changes in attitudes. Projective tests, sociometry

and correlations between attitudes and other known measures have all been used for this purpose.

Allport (2 p.204) believes that all the theories that have been put forward, to date, to explain prejudice, derive from some one, or a combination of a six major theoretical approaches. These approaches, working from the most remote in time and least specifiable in operation, are:

1. Historical - This is the most general of all the classifications, for it includes all explanations that utilize the past in order to explain today's prejudices. P. W. Massing's Rehearsal for Destruction (59) contends that Hitler's rise and genocide policies, can be understood only by an historical tracing of events.

2. Sociocultural - Here the total social environment in which prejudice develops is studied. Socioeconomic, urban, rural, community and class beliefs, all historically derived, are included under this approach. A. Rose (73 ch.49) uses this approach to explain anti-Semitism in the big city.

3. Situational - Theories reflecting this approach take into account all of the current forces, such as: necessity to conform, employment situation, social mobility, density of minority groups and type of contact with them, acting upon the individual. L. Smith's Killers of the Dream (78) utilizes this approach when it explains the Southern White's prejudice as the product of learning the need to conform when he was a child.

4. Psychodynamics - These theoretical approaches stress factors

in human nature. Chief among them are the frustration-aggressive hypothesis and theories concerning the personality structure of the prejudiced individual. Social scientists often use Boston's 1942 Coconut Grove fire, (83) which prompted the public to successively blame the bus-boy, the "unknown prankster", the fire commissioner, police commissioner and fire inspector, to illustrate the frustration-aggression hypothesis.

5. Phenomenological - Theorists adopting this approach attempt to understand prejudice through the eyes of the prejudiced individual. This clinical approach, which is nearly always combined with others, must "make a detailed and specific analysis of the need structure of the particular person concerned. (or) deal only with general classes of demand and needs." (46 p.447) when concerned with large groups.

6. Stimulus object itself - Theories that embody this approach stress the importance, as causal factors, of observed undesirable qualities of the victims of prejudice. Such explanations, often known as "well-deserved reputation" theories, would utilize, for example, the fact that many Negroes are actually slum-dwelling persons. Many contemporary social scientists, such as Zawadshi (90) and Ichheiser(38) point out that minority groups are often not blameless, but that their plight is not helped by stereotypes, traditions, and scapegoating.

The tendency of most contemporary social scientists is to stress a multiplicity of causal factors underlying the creating of prejudice.

Although a mass of literature dealing with race prejudice and relations has appeared over the years, only a few works have become classics in the field.

The most comprehensive of all is Gordon W. Allport's The Nature of Prejudice (2). In this work, Allport has produced a thorough and penetrating study of prejudice by calling upon the theories and experimental studies of many psychologists, sociologists, social workers and anthropologists.

Adorno et al's The Authoritarian Personality (1) is a massive study seeking, through the use of many scientific methods, to delve into the personality of the prejudiced person. Intensive clinical interviews were found to be the most useful tools. The anti-democratic or authoritarian personality was exposed as being the most prejudiced.

Rose and Rose's American Divided (74) deals with the position of the various minority groups in American life. The history, present problems and situations of all the major American minority groups are discussed by the authors.

Gunnar Myrdal (65) has produced an objective study of the Negro problem, in his An American Dilemma. Dr. Myrdal, a Swedish economist, was brought to America specifically to undertake the investigation. His penetrating work is one of the few undertaken in America by an outsider.

The North American Indian: A Minority Group

The vast majority of studies pertaining to North American Indians has been of a sociological or anthropological nature, studies of child rearing, habits, family structure, tribal customs and anatomical characteristics of various Indian tribes.