

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MOTHERS' RACIAL ATTITUDES TO THEIR  
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S RACIAL AWARENESS AND RACIAL  
ATTITUDES IN SELECTED WINNIPEG FAMILIES

by

Margaret Macdonald

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment  
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## ABSTRACT

This study had two objectives: to replicate American research concerned with racial awareness and racial attitudes in young children with a group of 42 Winnipeg preschoolers and to provide a test of social learning theory by comparing mothers' racial attitudes toward Blacks with their children's racial awareness and racial attitudes. The Morland Picture Interview was used to measure the children's racial awareness and racial attitudes; the Bogardus Social Distance Scale and questions on an interview schedule developed by the author were used to measure the mothers' racial attitudes. The children in Winnipeg were found to have a lower level of racial awareness than the children in the American studies. The comparison of the children's racial attitudes revealed that the children in the present study had stronger pro-white biases, lower White preference scores and lower Black acceptance scores than the American children. These differences were discussed in terms of the structural-normative hypothesis, which relates racial social structure to racial awareness and racial attitudes in young children. It was hypothesized that mothers' racial attitudes would affect their children's racial awareness and racial attitudes. Statistical analysis did not support the hypotheses. Failure to find support for the hypotheses was attributed primarily to methodological factors.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

In the past it was assumed that Canada was generally free of racism (Hughes & Kallen, 1974). However, closer examination of the social history of this country shows that Canadians have not been free of racial prejudices (Hill, 1977). The first slave was brought to New France in 1628. School segregation was legally established in 1849. The rise of the Metis under Riel in the mid-1880's may be seen as a response to racism. In 1914, 376 Sikhs aboard the Komagatu Maru were denied their rightful immigration to this country. In 1933, the KKK was provincially chartered in Alberta. The Second World War brought the physical removal of Japanese from British Columbia for 'security' reasons. More recent occurrences such as the computer incident at Sir George Williams University in 1969, the publication in Yellowknife of a training manual expressing a negative view of native peoples and the assaults on East Indians in Toronto and Vancouver have shown that racism is not on the decline (Tunteng, 1973; 'Wilkins to quit over manual', 1976; Ferrante, 1977; Morrow, 1976). If we believe a world free of these tragedies is important, it is

necessary to have a greater understanding of the development of racial attitudes.

Although racial prejudice exists in Canada, there is little evidence of empirical research on racial attitudes in this country. Symons (1975) pointed out this lack in his report To Know Ourselves; The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies, which called for research concerned with the cultural pluralism of this country. Specifically, this report has encouraged studies of intergroup relations. Therefore, there is a need for the study of racial attitudes in Canada.

Because of the racial composition of the United States, racial attitudes have been measured in that country for decades. As early as 1936, Horowitz was beginning to measure the racial attitudes of children. The United States Supreme Court desegregation decision in 1954 prompted further interest in the measurement of racial awareness and racial attitudes in young children (Porter, 1971). What is presently necessary, is not only the measurement of racial awareness and attitudes in young children, but also a broader understanding of the development of racial attitudes. One aspect of this development which needs further study is the effect of parental racial attitudes on the awareness and attitudes of their children (Porter, 1971; Williams and Morland, 1976). It has generally been accepted that parents are the source of the attitudes of their children (Radke-Yarrow, Trager & Miller, 1952; Goodman, 1952; Clark

& Clark, 1952; Allport, 1954; Milner, 1975; Williams & Morland, 1976). Parents do not appear to actively teach their racial attitudes to their children; the development of racial attitudes in young children seems to be more subtle. Before examining the effects of parents on the development of racial awareness and racial attitudes in their children, it is necessary to establish what is meant by racial attitudes.

### Racial Attitudes

According to the Gage Canadian Dictionary, race is "one of the major divisions of mankind having certain physical peculiarities in common" (Avis, Drysdale, Gregg & Scargill, 1973, p. 908). Rokeach has defined an attitude as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in a preferential manner" (Rokeach, 1969, p. 112). Racial attitudes then, are beliefs about a people who share unique physical traits, which prompt a particular response.

It has generally been agreed that there are affective, cognitive and behavioral components of an attitude (Harding, Kutner, Prohansky & Chein, 1954; Triandis, 1967). In reference to racial attitudes, the affective component involves the feelings toward another race; the cognitive component involves the beliefs and expectations an individual holds about another race and the behavioral component involves the beliefs about how the race or

members of the race should be treated. At least one researcher (Ostrom cited in Triandis, 1967) has suggested that the behavioral component provides the best set of attitude scores for the prediction of actual behavior.

Triandis (1964) has further identified components within the behavioral component of an attitude, one of which is social distance. Park (1924) was the first to use the concept of social distance, which he defined as "the grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy which characterize presocial and social relations generally" (p. 339). Bogardus (1959) who first operationalized the concept of social distance defined that expression as

the degree of sympathetic understanding that functions between person and person, between person and group and between group and group. Sympathy refers to the feeling reactions of a favourably responsive type, and understanding involves that knowledge of a person which also leads to favourably responsive behavior (p. 7)

A scale, based on social distance, then, could be considered a measure of the behavioral component of racial attitudes. Such a scale is the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, which requires respondents to score their willingness to accept different groups on seven categories ranging from marriage to barred from country.

Much of the literature concerned with the racial attitudes of Canadian adults has social distance as its focus; research has been concerned with Canadians' views

on immigration, employment, neighbours, friendship and marriage.

The Racial Attitudes of Canadian Adults

The scientific study of Canadians' racial attitudes is limited. Popular authors, both white and non-white, note the presence in Canada of racial prejudice, generally subtly expressed (Wilson, 1949; Clarke, 1964; Erland, 1970; Winks, 1971; Quig, 1976; Brown, 1977; Collins, 1977; Ferrante, 1977). However, the scientific measurement of these attitudes is generally limited to public opinion surveys and documents produced for human rights organizations.

Canadians themselves recognize they have racial prejudices; in a 1973 Gallup Poll, 84% of the Canadians familiar with the television programme All in the Family agreed that there was a bit of Archie Bunker in all Canadians (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, 1973). Many Canadians believe racial intolerance is growing. A comparison of Canadian Gallup Polls conducted in April 1975 and 1977 showed that more people today believe there has been an increase in racial intolerance; in 1975, 35% believed racial intolerance was increasing and in 1977, 44% believed this (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, July 23, 1975 & 1977).

Turning now to the contents of the racial prejudice, even prior to the Federal Government's recent Royal Commission on Immigration, there was some polling of

Canadians concerning their views on immigration. Of the 717 persons in a Gallup Poll conducted in July 1961, 53.1% felt restrictions should be reduced (Tienhaara, 1974). The 1975 Gallup Poll, conducted during the Federal Government's inquiry into Canadians' views on immigration indicated growing tolerance since the 1961 poll; 63% of Canadians did not support restrictions on immigration from any particular country (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, July 5, 1975). However, when asked what countries should be restricted, the most frequently mentioned were countries with large non-white populations.

More recently, a particularly anti-non-white immigration article published in The Weekend Magazine (Collins, 1976) evoked more than 100 letters-to-the-editor, 80% of which were opposed to the author's views. Although this does not represent a random sample of Canadians' attitudes, it does indicate the strong feelings held by some Canadians. A CTV sponsored opinion poll found that 66% of their sample wanted a change from the present 'non-discriminatory' immigration policy (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 1977). However, the scientific nature of this investigation has been questioned as the study had a low response rate (23%) and the sample was not scientifically chosen (Richmond, 1977).

Following the immigration category in the social distance framework is employment. A Gallup Poll conducted in 1947 showed that Canadians were against racial barriers to employment (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion,

1947); 64% of the Canadian voters in the sample said they would approve of a law which would prohibit the right to refuse a man a job because of his race, colour or religion and 23% said they would disapprove of such a law. Since that time, legislation has been passed to discourage racial discrimination in employment practices. However, it does exist. A study of 30 Ontario employment agencies in 1975 found that at least 22 would screen out non-whites for a prospective employer (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 1977). A review of the most recent annual report of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission (1975) reveals that race and colour were second only to sex in the number of complaints concerned with employment or pre-employment inquiries lodged with the Commission. In 1975, 25 complaints concerned with racial discrimination in employment were lodged with the Commission and 43 complaints concerned with sex discrimination were made.

When examining the willingness of Canadians to have non-whites as neighbours, a similar pattern emerged. Canadians generally say they are willing to have non-whites as neighbours but some discrimination in housing exists. Gallup Polls conducted between 1959 and 1975 show an increase in the willingness of Canadians to accept non-whites into their neighbourhoods and a decrease in their objection to this action (Table 1). Of the Prairie respondents in the 1975 survey, four percent said they would move if non-whites moved into the neighbourhood, 28% said they might do so and 68% said they would not move (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, 1975). However,

Table 1

Responses to the Gallup Poll Question "Would you move if coloured people came to live in great numbers in your district?" 1959-1975

Year	Yes, would move	Might move	No, would not move
1959 <sup>a</sup>	21%	33%	46%
1963 <sup>b</sup>	12%	26%	62%
1969 <sup>c</sup>	14%	25%	61%
1975 <sup>c</sup>	12%	19%	69%

- a Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, 1959
- b Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, 1963
- c Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, July 23, 1975

there has been a slight increase in the number of Canadians who say they would move if a non-white family moved in next door. In 1959, a Gallup Poll found that five percent said they would move if this happened and in 1975, nine percent said they would move (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, 1959 and July 23, 1975).

Non-whites may have difficulty in finding houses through real estate agencies. In 1976 of the 30 real estate agencies surveyed in Ontario, only three expressed unwillingness to comply with a request not to sell a house to non-whites (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 1977). Manitoba residents have felt racial discrimination in

attempts to locate housing. Of a total of 54 complaints received by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission in regard to discrimination in housing, 24 were concerned with discrimination on the grounds of race and colour (Manitoba Human Rights Commission, 1975).

Stronger prejudices are revealed in studies of Canadian's willingness to accept non-whites in the closer relationships of friendship and marriage. A 1960 survey of Canadian YMCA secretaries indicated that 75% thought the marriage of white women to black men was distasteful. These women did not want to encourage relationships that could possibly lead to marriage (Wyborn, cited in Winks, 1971). In a study using the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, Driedger (1975) found that although University of Manitoba students would accept non-whites as immigrants to Canada, as fellow workers, as neighbours and as close friends, very few would accept a non-white individual as a marriage partner. Of the 820 students in his sample, 79.9% said they would marry a British individual and 77.5% said they would marry an American; only 27.4% said they would marry a Negro and 23.4% said they would marry an East Indian.

These studies and documents represent the limited literature available concerned with the racial attitudes of Canadian adults. The results of attitude surveys must always be regarded with scepticism. It is difficult to ensure that such results do in fact reflect the attitudes of the respondents, particularly when measuring sensitive

topics such as racial attitudes. Respondents may be inclined to give a socially approved response, rather than a truthful one (Crowne and Marlowe, 1967; Tienhaara, 1974). The Canadian literature indicates that although Canadians say they are willing to accept non-whites to the less personal relationships of visitors to the country, speaking acquaintances, neighbours or close friends, they are hesitant to accept non-whites as a spouse.

This literature has concentrated on racial attitudes in adults. An exploration of the literature on racial awareness and racial attitudes in young children follows in the next section.

#### Racial Awareness and Racial Attitudes of White Preschoolers

The first serious investigation of racial awareness and racial attitudes in young children was made by Bruno Lasker in 1929. In the book, Race Attitudes in Children, Lasker reported on his study of adult reminiscences of childhood and teachers' observations of elementary school children. Since that time, the measurement of racial awareness and attitudes in young children has become more sophisticated. Generally, dolls, drawings or photographs are used as the focus of an interview in which the children are asked such questions as whom do they look like and with whom they would like to play. Much of the research has used either the Clark Doll Test or the Morland Picture Interview. In the Clark Doll Test, children are shown black and white dolls and are asked to indicate the doll with which they

would like to play, the good doll, the bad doll, the doll that has the nice colour, the doll that is White, Negro and Coloured and the doll that looks most like themselves (Clark & Clark, 1952). Each request is made only once.

In the Morland Picture Interview, questions are repeated throughout the interview, allowing the children more than one opportunity to respond (Williams & Morland, 1976).

This test uses six coloured photographs of black and white children and adults. The children are asked to indicate with whom they would like to play, with whom they would play, who they think are the smartest, nicest and best looking children, who they resemble, who their parents resemble, which children and adults are white, Black, Negro or Coloured, and finally whether they are White, Black, Negro and Coloured, depending on the current terminology. Other researchers such as Goodman (1952) studied children intensively through observations, testing and interviews with parents and teachers to determine young children's racial awareness and racial attitudes.

Racial awareness is the ability to differentiate between different racial groups. Two distinct skills are included in racial awareness: the ability to perceive racial similarities and the ability to apply racial terminology. Most of the literature has been concerned with the age at which young children develop these skills. Only Morland has examined the relationship between the two aspects of racial awareness. He crosstabulated racial

classification ability scores with perception of racial similarity scores: 91% of the white preschoolers in his sample who were high in their racial classification ability said they resembled white children and 78% of those who were low in racial classification ability said they most closely resembled white children (Williams & Morland, 1976).

To assess the perception of racial similarities, researchers generally have asked children to indicate which dolls or photographs of children resemble themselves. Table 2 shows a summary of studies using this type of measure.

Table 2

Summary of Studies of the Perception of Racial Similarity to Self in White Preschoolers

Study	N	Percent able to perceive similarity to self
Horowitz (1939)	10	40
Greenwald & Oppenheim (1968)	36	47
Crooks (1970)	34	100
Durrett & Davy (1970)	30	97
Porter (1971)	185	52
Morland (Williams & Morland, 1976)	711	75
Rohrer (1977)	170	73

Horowitz (1939) was the first to empirically study the level of racial awareness in children. Using photographs, she asked boys to identify boys who resembled themselves and girls to identify boys who resembled their brothers or their male cousins. Although only 40% of the 10 white children were able to correctly perform this task, 20% made no choice. Greenwald and Oppenheim (1968), Crooks (1970) and Durrett and Davy (1970) each used tests based on the Clark Doll Test which measured children's ability to perceive others racially similar to themselves. Greenwald and Oppenheim introduced an additional colour variable--mulatto--to the black-white dichotomy of the Clark Doll Test. Of the 36 white preschoolers in their sample, 47% chose the white doll, 25% chose the mulatto doll when asked to indicate the doll which most resembled themselves and 9% chose no doll; only 19% chose the black doll. All the children in Crooks' study and most of the children in Durrett and Davy's study were able to correctly indicate the white doll when asked to point out the doll which resembled themselves. Only about one-half of the white children in Porter's (1971) study indicated the white doll looked most like themselves, but only 15% consistently misclassified themselves. The children in Porter's study had higher levels of success on other measures of the perception of racial similarity (see below). Morland's research of the perception of racial similarity to self has been the most extensive. Between 1963 and 1972, he made four studies

of racial awareness with a total of 711 white preschoolers, of whom three-quarters pointed to a white child when asked to indicate the child who looked most like themselves.

The most recent study of the perception of racial similarity was made by Rohrer (1977). He introduced Mexican-American to the black-white dichotomy and 73% of the white children correctly indicated the white child when asked to point to the child most closely resembling themselves.

These studies show a wide range in young children's ability to perceive others who are racially similar to themselves; however the low awareness level shown in several of the studies may be due to factors inherent in the studies. The small sample size of ten white children in Horowitz's study may have affected the results. The introduction of mulatto to the black-white dichotomy in Greenwald and Oppenheim's study may have accounted for the low awareness results in that study. In Porter's study, 33% of the children perceived themselves neither as similar to a white doll nor to a black doll, accounting for the low percentage of children in her study able to perceive others who were racially similar to themselves. In the remaining four studies, most of the children were able to perceive others who were racially similar to themselves.

In addition to the perception of racial similarity to self, both Morland and Porter have included other measures of the perception of racial similarity in their research of racial awareness. Porter (1971) asked children to match

mother and child and to match black and white families. Over 70% of the three and four year old children were able to match mother and child; these children were slightly less able to match families. The five year olds in her sample had a greater ability than the three and four year olds to perform these tasks. The Morland Picture Interview includes the measurement of the children's perception of racial similarity to their parents. Of a total sample of 430 white preschoolers in several studies, 76% chose a white man when asked to indicate the man who looks most like their father and 85% chose a white woman when asked to indicate the woman who looked most like their mother (Williams & Morland, 1976). These studies, both of the children's perception of racial similarity to self and of their perception of racial similarity to others, indicate that most preschool children were able to perceive racial similarities. Only one of these studies was conducted in Canada. Crooks (1970) studied 68 black and white children in a racially mixed neighbourhood in Halifax; of the 34 white children in the sample, 17 attended a nursery school which had just completed a program designed to create an atmosphere of racial understanding. These children, would have had more contact with Blacks than most other Canadian children.

The second skill included in racial awareness is racial classification, the ability to apply racial terminology. Both Goodman (1952) and Stevenson and Stevenson (1960) studied children in depth and used a variety of measures to