

COHORT AND PREJUDICE

WHITES' ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACKS, HISPANICS, JEWS, AND ASIANS

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Abstract Recent cohorts have been shown to be less prejudiced than their elders, at least toward blacks. This study addresses two questions: Has this tendency continued among most-recent cohorts of adults? and Does it extend to prejudice toward other ethnic minorities? Using data from a national sample, I focus on stereotype and social distance attitudes pertaining to blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Jews. In general, results indicate that cohorts born after World War II tend to be less prejudiced than prewar cohorts toward each of the four minorities. But most-recent cohorts of Americans show no tendency to be less prejudiced than their immediate predecessors born since World War II, and most-recent cohorts residing outside of the South actually tend to be more prejudiced than their elders.

Past research shows that younger cohorts of adults are less prejudiced, a cause for optimism about the future of intergroup relations. As more recent, less prejudiced cohorts replace earlier, more prejudiced cohorts, overall prejudice levels will decline. But the conservative shift in America during the 1980s considered in light of Mannheim's ([1928] 1952) theory of generations, along with recent findings showing that cohorts most recently come of age are no less prejudiced than their predecessors, supports a more pessimistic view.

Following a review of this material, I present a new study of cohort and prejudice toward four minority groups: blacks, Jews, Hispanics, and Asians. Results provide no evidence of a general tendency for most-recent cohorts to be less prejudiced, and little reason for optimism about future declines in prejudice resulting from cohort succession.

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Cohort and Prejudice

Studies have shown that younger people typically are less prejudiced than are older people (Condran 1979; Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Middleton 1976; Schuman and Bobo 1988; Smith 1981; Tuch 1987). This was originally attributed to a tendency for people to become less tolerant and more prejudiced as they age (Sears 1983; Stouffer 1955). But more recent studies have found no evidence of this aging effect and imply instead that recent cohorts are not only less prejudiced than earlier cohorts but tend to remain so even as they grow older (Danigelis and Cutler 1991; Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Smith 1981).

If recent cohorts are persistently and permanently less prejudiced than their elders, then as recent cohorts replace earlier cohorts—as younger members are added to the population and older members are lost—the level of prejudice in society can be expected to decline (Stouffer 1955). Evidence that prejudice has reduced sharply and racial attitudes have generally improved since midcentury are consistent with this expectation (see the review and findings in Firebaugh and Davis [1988]; Kluegel [1990]; Ransford and Palisi [1992]; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo [1985]; and Smith [1985]; this trend is less certain for views on racial policy; see, e.g., Bobo and Kluegel [1993]; Jackman [1978]; Kinder [1986]; and Sniderman and Tetlock [1986]). Some of this trend, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, resulted from people abandoning their old intolerant beliefs (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). But much of the trend—especially in the 1980s—came about as older people holding prejudiced attitudes died and as younger people holding more favorable attitudes replaced them in the adult population (Davis 1975, 1992; Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Smith 1985).

Although recent cohorts' tendency to be more tolerant is something of a sociological truism, two questions remain unanswered as this tendency pertains to prejudice. First, have cohorts most recently reaching adulthood continued the tendency for recent cohorts to be less prejudiced than their elders? According to Mannheim's theory of generations ([1928] 1952), specific historic events hold the potential to influence the character of a generation, producing a distinctive set of attitudes lasting through the generation's life course (Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Schuman and Scott 1989; Weil 1987). The civil rights movement and other events taking place during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s may have promoted favorable racial attitudes among cohorts coming of age during that period (Roberts and Lang 1985; Turner and Singleton 1978). But subsequent events, including the conservative shift associated with the Reagan presidency, may have had the oppo-

site effect on young people coming of age in the 1980s, resulting in levels of prejudice among these most-recent cohorts that equal or perhaps even exceed those of their predecessors (Lowy 1991). Some research seems to confirm this view, showing that overall prejudice reduction as well as the tendency for younger people to be less prejudiced than their elders has slowed, if not halted, in recent years. Condran (1979) documents generally liberalizing racial attitudes between 1963 and 1972, but also presents evidence that the process stalled as early as the mid-1970s. Tuch's (1981) latent class analysis produced similar results. Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985) found for antiblack prejudice that, through the 1980s, most-recent cohorts were consistently more liberal than their immediate predecessors were. But they also reported a steady decline since the 1970s in the extent to which the youngest generation differed from their elders. They concluded that while cohort succession has liberalized racial attitudes in the past, it may not continue to do so in the future. In Davis's (1992) study of trends in liberalism, cohorts born after World War II were not consistently more liberal than their predecessors, and in some instances were actually more conservative. With respect to race attitudes in particular, Davis found that recent cohorts' tendency to be less prejudiced than their predecessors has continued even among postwar cohorts. But it has grown a good deal weaker than was observed among cohorts born prior to World War II. Similarly, while Steeh and Schuman (1992) found no evidence for the contention that cohorts coming of age in the 1980s were less tolerant than their counterparts from the previous two decades, neither did they find much difference in racial attitudes among cohorts coming of age in the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s.

The second question pertaining to cohort and prejudice is whether the tendency for recent cohorts to be less prejudiced than their elders extends to attitudes toward minorities other than blacks. Previous studies of cohort and prejudice have dealt mostly with antiblack prejudice, and findings for other ethnic and racial minorities are rare and inconclusive. Dyer, Vedlitz, and Worchel (1989) report that while recent Anglo cohorts desire less social distance from blacks than earlier cohorts do, there is a similar—but weaker—tendency for social distance from Hispanics. Findings for anti-Semitism are mixed. Martire and Clark (1982) report a decline in some dimensions of anti-Semitism between 1964 and 1981, largely attributable to cohort succession. But other dimensions of anti-Semitism, especially perceptions that Jews have excessive power and loyalty to Israel, actually increased during the period. Rosenfield's (1982) review of poll results from the 1960s through the early 1980s concludes that anti-Semitism has apparently declined overall but that attitude differences between cohort groups were weak and irregular (see also Selznick and Steinberg [1969]; cf.

findings for a Soviet sample in Gibson and Duch [1992]). D'Alessio and Stolzenberg (1991) found no tendency at all for younger people to be less anti-Semitic than their elders. Together, these results provide little basis for generalizing the cohort-prejudice effect found for anti-black prejudice to attitudes toward other minorities.

In all, the accumulated evidence suggests that in the past, recent cohorts have generally been less prejudiced toward blacks than earlier cohorts have been. But whether this pattern continues among cohorts most recently come of age, and whether it extends to prejudice toward other ethnic minorities, remains uncertain. These questions are the focus of the following analysis, in which I assess the relationship between cohort and two dimensions of prejudice—stereotypes and social distance—toward four minority groups: blacks, Jews, Hispanics, and Asians.

Data and Measurement of Variables

The 1990 General Social Survey (GSS; Davis and Smith [1991]) provides data for this study. The GSS uses a representative national sample of noninstitutionalized adults aged 18 years and older, and has been conducted nearly every year since 1972. I chose the 1990 GSS because it includes items tapping social distance preferences with respect to four minorities, not only blacks but also Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Jews, as well as stereotype indicators pertaining to these four minorities and "whites in general."¹

I have limited the study to white Gentile respondents, excluding members of the four minority groups from the $N = 1,372$ GSS sample. Minorities were identified from survey items on race, ethnicity, and religion, and numbered 159 blacks, 7 Asians, 58 Hispanics, 29 Jews, and 14 with missing ethnicity data. I also excluded 33 respondents whose race data were ambiguous but whose ethnicity I inferred to be either Hispanic or Asian based on GSS codebook information (Davis and Smith 1991, p. 67). With minorities excluded, $N = 1,072$ respondents remained.

I have further excluded respondents with missing data on variables needed for the analyses to be presented here, doing so on an analysis-by-analysis basis in order to maximize the sample size available for each analysis. The necessary variables consist of stereotype and social distance indicators, respondent's cohort, and several demographic control variables that past studies have shown to be associated with

1. These are the only GSS items tapping prejudice toward all four minorities, although the GSS does include other indicators of antiblack prejudice.

prejudice (e.g., Condran 1979; Middleton 1976; Rosenfield 1982).² Respondent's cohort is his or her year of birth, and ranged from 1901 to 1972. It was computed by subtracting the respondent's age from the survey year (1990). The demographic variables include household income (a 7-point scale calibrated in \$10,000 increments), years of education completed, sex, and region (coded for South, based on the U.S. Census definition; for a review of this commonly used approach, see Ellison and Musick [1993]). After all exclusions, samples ranged in size from $N = 1,011$ in the analysis of social distance from blacks to $N = 860$ in the analysis of anti-Asian stereotypes, as shown in table 1.

Two GSS items tap social distance, that is, respondents' acceptance versus rejection of social contact with the respective minority groups. One asked the respondent to rate "living in a neighborhood where half of your neighbors were" members of the specified minority; the other asked the respondent to rate "having a close relative marry" a member of the minority group specified. Both items use a 5-point scale scored "strongly favor" = 1, "favor" = 2, "neither favor nor oppose" = 3, "oppose" = 4, "strongly oppose" = 5. The top panel in table 1 displays mean social distance scores. (Scores greater than 3 imply rejection and scores less than 3 imply acceptance of the minority). Similar to past findings (Martire and Clark 1982; Sandefur and Lam 1985), preferences for social distance are greatest with respect to blacks, less for Hispanics and Asians, and least with respect to Jews. On average, respondents seem to favor social contact with Jews. But, not shown in table 1, there is a small minority of white Gentiles who reject such contact: 15.8 percent oppose marriage to a Jew and 12.3 percent oppose living in a neighborhood with many Jews.

To simplify the analysis of the GSS data, I averaged the two social distance items to form a 5-point composite Social Distance Index for each minority group.³ Means for the index also appear in table 1. The means significantly differ from one another ($p < .05$) and are highest

2. Missing attitude data lead to most of the exclusions. Excluded cases' demographic characteristics differed somewhat from those of included cases. The sample used in the Asian stereotype analysis, which at $N = 860$ was the smallest sample and had the most exclusions for missing data, was typical. Due to missing stereotype data, 187 cases were excluded; 24 additional cases lacked income data and 1 case lacked education data. Compared to the cases remaining for the analysis, excluded cases were less educated (means = 11.6 and 13.3 years, $p < .05$); equally affluent (means on the 7-point scale = 5.3 and 4.6, n.s); more often female (63.7 percent vs. 54.2 percent, $p < .05$); and older (cohort means = 1936.7 and 1945.0, $p < .05$).

3. Coefficients of reliability are $\alpha = .65$ for blacks, $\alpha = .64$ for Hispanics, $\alpha = .62$ for Asians, and $\alpha = .55$ for Jews. Keep in mind when assessing these seemingly modest α 's that the social distance composites each include only two items and that the magnitude of α directly varies not only with the strength of interitem correlations but with the number of items in the scale as well (Carmines and Zeller 1979).

Table 1. Means for Social Distance and Stereotypic Belief Indicators

	Ethnic Groups				
	Blacks	Hispanics	Asians	Jews	Whites
Social distance (N)	1,011	998	998	1,008	959
"Live in same neighborhood"	3.52	3.48	3.36	2.88	3.12
"Marry close relative"	4.00	3.50	3.54	2.97	3.56
Social Distance Index	3.76	3.49	3.45	2.92	3.18
Stereotypic beliefs (N)	929	866	860	893	959
"Unintelligent"	4.13	4.16	3.51	2.94	3.12
"Violent"	4.61	4.33	3.73	3.24	3.56
"Lazy"	4.50	4.21	3.37	2.80	3.18
"Welfare dependent"	4.82	4.39	3.42	2.26	2.65
"Unpatriotic"	3.51	3.88	3.66	2.98	2.47
Stereotype Index	1.32	1.19	.53	-.15	...

as they pertain to blacks and lowest as they pertain to Jews, with Hispanics and Asians differing only slightly from each other.

Stereotypic beliefs about the four minorities and "whites in general" (respondents' own group) were tapped with a series of five 7-point scales (discussed in Smith [1990]). For each scale, the extremes were respectively labeled with a favorable characteristic (e.g., 1 = "intelligent") and an unfavorable characteristic (e.g., 7 = "unintelligent"). Additional pairs of contrasting characteristics included "hard working" versus "lazy," "not prone to violence" versus "violence prone," "prefer to be self-supporting" versus "prefer to live off welfare," and "patriotic" versus "unpatriotic."⁴ I recoded the stereotype scales so that higher scores consistently indicate unfavorable stereotypes.

Stereotype means in table 1 show that respondents' stereotypes of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are generally more unfavorable than their stereotypes of whites, their own group (differences are statistically significant in every case, $p < .05$), and that of these three minorities, stereotypes of Asians are the least unfavorable. While Jews are viewed as relatively unpatriotic, they are otherwise rated less unfavorably than white Gentiles rate themselves ($p < .05$). Blatant anti-Semitic stereotypes are by no means absent, however. Not shown in table 1, a minority of white Gentiles rate Jews as not only less patriotic (32.6 percent) but also less intelligent (10.0 percent), more violent (11.4 percent), lazier (11.6 percent), and more welfare dependent (8.4 percent).⁵

Again, to simplify the analysis, I constructed a composite Stereotype Index for each minority group. For each respondent, I first calculated means for the five stereotypes pertaining to each minority and to whites.⁶ Then, I calculated each respondent's Stereotype Index score

4. The data also include ratings for "rich" vs. "poor," but I have not used this item because—unlike the others—it does not have an unambiguously unfavorable pole.

5. In comparison, larger minorities of white Gentiles rate Jews as more intelligent (24.2 percent), less violent (31.3 percent), less lazy (39.7 percent), or less welfare dependent (34.1 percent) than they rated their own group. Only 5.3 percent of white Gentiles thought Jews were more patriotic. The meaning of these apparently complimentary stereotypes is open to debate. Merton has cautioned that seemingly positive stereotypes can mask underlying bigotry, noting the "moral alchemy through which the in-group readily transmits virtue into vice" (1968, p. 482). But Allport (1954) argues that positive stereotypes can be sincerely held and constitute the basis for "love prejudice" rather than "hate prejudice."

6. These means were based on raw scores. Coefficients of reliability are: blacks, $\alpha = .68$; Hispanics, $\alpha = .68$; Asians, $\alpha = .72$; Jews, $\alpha = .71$; whites, $\alpha = .72$. I also performed a principal components analysis on the five stereotype items, separately for each minority and for whites. A single significant factor (eigenvalue > 1) was extracted for each target group. This outcome is of special importance for Jewish stereotypes, since only one ("unpatriotic") is similar to, and some (e.g., "lazy," "welfare dependent") seem inconsistent with, anti-Semitic stereotype indicators used in past studies (see, e.g., Martire and Clark 1982; Selznick and Steinberg 1969; Smith 1993). In the

for each minority group as the difference between the respondent's mean for that minority and his or her mean for whites.⁷ Positive differences indicate unfavorable stereotypes of the minority; negative differences indicate favorable stereotypes. In table 1, the Stereotype Index mean for blacks is 1.32, indicating that on the 7-point stereotype scales, respondents on average rate blacks 1.32 points more unfavorably than they rate whites, their own group. The Stereotype Index means for the respective minorities differ significantly from each other ($p < .05$). Overall, unfavorable stereotypes are strongest for blacks and Hispanics and somewhat less strong for Asians. In contrast, stereotypes of Jews are on average relatively favorable (mean = $-.15$ in table 1). Anti-Semitic stereotypes are held by a substantial minority, however. Not shown in table 1, 24.3 percent of the sample have Stereotype Index scores greater than 0, indicating generally unfavorable views of Jews.

Findings

COHORT AND PREJUDICE

In the GSS data recent cohorts prefer less social distance from most minorities ($r = -.21, -.09, \text{ and } -.12$ for social distance from blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, respectively; $p < .05$) and are less likely to unfavorably stereotype most minorities ($r = -.21, -.10, \text{ and } -.13$ for stereotypes of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, respectively; $p < .05$). In contrast, cohort is not related to social distance from Jews ($r = -.03, \text{ n.s.}$), and recent cohorts are actually more likely to hold anti-Semitic stereotypes ($r = .08, p < .05$).

However, past studies suggest that the cohort-prejudice relationship may not be linear (Davis 1992; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Steeh and Schuman 1992). To test for linearity in the GSS data, I recoded cohort into four broad categories: 1930 and prior, 1931–45, 1946–60, and 1961–72. I adopted these cut points because of previous findings of attitude differences between pre- and post-World War II cohorts

end, I chose to base stereotype composites on unweighted raw scores rather than factor-weighted standard scores in order to make comparisons of means across cohort groups easier to interpret. But either procedure would lead to the same substantive results reported in this article: composites based on factor-weighted standard scores and the corresponding composites using unweighted raw scores are virtually identical aside from their difference in metrics ($r > .99$).

7. Measuring stereotypes in this way, as the difference between respondents' ratings of a minority and of his/her own group, is similar to the approach taken by Jackman and Crane (1986). However, in a preliminary analysis of the GSS data I measured stereotypes solely on the basis of respondents' ratings of minorities without regard to their ratings of whites. Results did not differ substantively from those reported here.

(Davis 1992), and because of the marked contrast in political climate between the period when early postwar cohorts came of age during which key civil rights events unfolded and the period when later postwar cohorts reached adulthood during or immediately following the Reagan presidency (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985, pp. 40–42). I then regressed prejudice indicators on the cohort categories and compared results with regressions of prejudice indicators on the original continuous cohort variable. In five of the eight cases, the cohort categories explained more variation in prejudice than the continuous cohort measure did (the cohort categories' R^2 was significantly greater than the comparable R^2 for the continuous cohort measure, $p < .05$, in analyses of social distance from blacks and from Jews and of stereotyping of Hispanics, Asians, and Jews; see Pedhazur [1982, p. 62] for a discussion of testing differences between R^2 statistics). In no case did the continuous cohort measure explain more variation in prejudice than the cohort categories did. These results support the conclusion that the cohort-prejudice relationship in the GSS data is often nonlinear and is generally more accurately modeled using the cohort categories than the continuous cohort measure.

Past studies also have documented differences between residents of the South and those residing in other regions with respect to prejudice toward blacks and toward other minorities as well. And there has been some evidence of interaction between region and other variables that affect prejudice and tolerance, suggesting that the determinants of prejudice may differ by region (Middleton 1976; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Wilson 1984). The GSS data confirm that Southern respondents are consistently more prejudiced toward all four minority groups (with region coded for South, correlations with attitudes toward blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Jews are, respectively, $r = .20, .13, .13, .12$ for social distance and $r = .10, .08, .10, .10$ for stereotypes; all are significant, $p < .05$). The GSS data also confirm interaction between region and other variables. I regressed prejudice measures on cohort categories, region, and the demographic control variables introduced earlier and—entered on a second regression step—a set of cross-product terms involving region (region \times cohort, region \times education, region \times income, region \times sex). In four of eight regressions (stereotypes of Jews; social distance from blacks, Asians, and Jews) the cross-product terms significantly increased variance explained in prejudice.

Because of this interaction, I have assessed the relationship between prejudice and cohort categories separately for southerners and for those residing outside the South. Results appear in tables 2 and 3 and consist of mean social distance or stereotype scores for the respective cohort categories (model 1) and means adjusted for demographic con-

Table 2. Mean Social Distance Index Scores for Cohort Categories, by Region, Unadjusted (Model 1) and Adjusted for Education, Income, and Sex (Model 2)

	Social Distance From							
	Blacks		Hispanics		Asians		Jews	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
South (N)	293		282		285		288	
Cohort category:								
1930 and prior	4.25	4.22	3.81	3.80	3.84	3.85	3.16	3.14
1931–45	4.03	4.01	3.72	3.71	3.69	3.68	2.98	2.98
1946–60	3.90 ^a	3.92 ^a	3.56 ^a	3.57 ^a	3.49 ^{a,b}	3.46 ^{a,b}	2.97 ^a	2.98
1961–72	3.90 ^a	3.91 ^a	3.55 ^a	3.57	3.48 ^{a,b}	3.45 ^{a,b}	3.08	3.09
R ²	.039	.089	.022	.042	.055	.080	.017	.029
Non-South (N)	718		716		713		720	
Cohort category:								
1930 and prior	3.93	3.88	3.51	3.47	3.49	3.44	2.88	2.88
1931–45	3.78	3.80	3.53	3.53	3.47	3.49	2.99	2.97
1946–60	3.48 ^{a,b}	3.51 ^{a,b}	3.33 ^{a,b}	3.36 ^b	3.31 ^{a,b}	3.33 ^{a,b}	2.80 ^b	2.80 ^b
1961–72	3.49 ^{a,b}	3.50 ^{a,b}	3.40	3.40	3.33 ^b	3.33 ^b	2.92 ^c	2.93 ^c
R ²	.066	.106	.012	.036	.013	.052	.011	.035

^a Significantly differs from preceding cohorts born 1930 and prior, $p < .05$.

^b Significantly differs from preceding cohorts born 1931–45, $p < .05$.

^c Significantly differs from preceding cohorts born 1946–60, $p < .05$.

Table 3. Mean Stereotype Index Scores for Cohort Categories, by Region, Unadjusted (Model 1) and Adjusted for Education, Income, and Sex (Model 2)

	Stereotypes Of							
	Blacks		Hispanics		Asians		Jews	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
South (N)	266		244		237		246	
Cohort category:								
1930 and prior	1.80	1.75	1.50	1.48	1.33	1.06	.11	-.04
1931-45	1.63	1.62	1.49	1.48	.86	.81	-.16	-.17
1946-60	1.42 ^a	1.44	1.29	1.29	.77 ^a	.62 ^a	-.06	-.04
1961-72	1.08 ^{a,b}	1.10 ^{a,b}	1.05 ^{a,b}	1.08	.79 ^{a,b}	.39 ^{a,b}	-.01	.01
R ²	.042	.059	.021	.039	.055	.155	.007	.096
Non-South (N)	663		642		623		647	
Cohort category:								
1930 and prior	1.63	1.56	1.39	1.34	.70	.62	-.23	-.27
1931-45	1.22 ^a	1.25 ^a	1.06 ^a	1.08 ^a	.37 ^a	.42	-.24	-.22
1946-60	1.03 ^a	1.06 ^a	.95 ^a	.98 ^a	.30 ^a	.34 ^a	-.27	-.24
1961-72	1.14 ^a	1.14 ^a	1.23 ^c	1.23 ^c	.55 ^c	.54 ^c	.03 ^d	.03 ^d
R ²	.053	.084	.029	.054	.029	.103	.034	.070

^a Significantly differs from preceding cohorts born 1930 and prior, $p < .05$.
^b Significantly differs from preceding cohorts born 1931-45, $p < .05$.
^c Significantly differs from preceding cohorts born 1946-60, $p < .05$.
^d Differs from all preceding cohort categories, $p < .05$.

trol variables (model 2), which I obtained from a series of multiple classification analyses. I tested the statistical significance of differences among cohort categories' means by regressing social distance scores on dummy variables representing the cohort categories (demographic variables were again controlled in model 2; this test for multiple comparisons between means is detailed in Pedhazur [1982, p. 301]).

Results for social distance shown in model 1 in table 2 are similar as they pertain to blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Jews in either region. They support two generalizations about cohort and social distance. First, post-World War II cohorts tend to prefer less social distance from minorities than earlier cohorts do. Cohorts born between 1931 and 1945 never differ from cohorts born in 1930 and earlier (differences between their respective means are nonsignificant). But cohorts born between 1946 and 1960 desire less social distance from each minority group than their predecessors do. They consistently and significantly differ from cohorts born in 1930 and prior, with the single exception of the Jewish analysis of respondents living outside of the South. And in all of the non-Southern analyses along with the Asian analysis in the South, 1946-60 cohorts differ from the 1931-45 cohort category as well.

Second, most-recent postwar cohorts born after 1960 show no indication whatsoever of reduced social distance, compared to their immediate predecessors. Model 1 statistics in table 2 show that social distance preferred by post-1960 cohorts is significantly lower than that of cohorts born in 1930 and prior in the analyses of attitudes toward blacks in both regions and toward Asians and Hispanics in the South. Further, post-1960 cohorts' social distance scores are lower than 1931-45 cohorts' scores in the analyses of attitudes toward blacks among nonsoutherners and attitudes toward Asians among respondents in both regions. However, post-1960 cohorts' social distance scores are never significantly lower than those of cohorts born during 1946-60.

In fact, table 2 shows that outside of the South, the mean score for social distance from Jews is significantly higher among post-1960 cohorts than among 1946-60 cohorts (2.92 vs. 2.80, $p < .05$). This does not necessarily mean greater rejection of Jews among post-1960 cohorts, however, because rejection of a minority is implied only to the extent that social distance scores exceed the neutral point of 3 on the 5-point scale. In an additional analysis not reported in table 2, I found that respondents born after 1960 were no more likely to score above 3 than respondents born between 1946 and 1960 were (14.9 percent vs. 12.8 percent, n.s.). So there is no evidence for the social distance analysis to indicate that most-recent cohorts are any more anti-Semitic than their immediate predecessors.

The tendency among most-recent cohorts to prefer at least as much social distance from minorities as their immediate predecessors might be explained by most-recent cohorts' relatively limited educations. While younger generations of Americans are generally better educated than their elders, cohorts' education levels tend to increase until about age 30 (Davis 1992). Before age 30, recent cohorts may—at least temporarily—be less well educated than their elders. So when the 1990 GSS data were collected, cohorts born after 1960, the oldest of whom were age 30, may have been less educated than their 1946–60 predecessors, accounting for their unexpectedly high levels of prejudice. In fact, the GSS data confirm that 1961–72 cohorts were less educated than 1946–60 cohorts, at least among those living outside of the South (nonsoutherners' education means are 13.36 vs. 13.89, $p < .05$; Southern education means are 12.90 vs. 13.15, n.s.).

Model 2 in table 2 repeats the social distance analysis, this time controlling for education as well as household income and sex. Model 2 findings are essentially identical to those of model 1 as they pertain to social distance differences between 1946–60 and 1961–72 cohorts. Both models show that in no case do cohorts born after 1960 prefer less social distance from any of the minorities than their immediate predecessors born in 1946–60 do. It therefore appears that social distance preferences among respondents born since 1960 are not mere reflections of their presumably temporarily limited educational attainment, and so it seems unlikely that the social distance desired by post-1960 cohorts will decline even if their educational level increases over time.

Results for cohort and stereotypes are shown in model 1 in table 3 and differ by region and by target minority group. Among southerners, cohort categories do not differ with respect to stereotyping Jews. But stereotyping of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians is generally less likely among cohort categories born since World War II than among earlier cohort categories (the 1946–60 category in the Hispanic analysis is the single exception; otherwise, 1946–60 and 1961–72 categories show significantly less stereotyping than cohorts born in 1930 and prior, and 1961–72 cohorts show less stereotyping than 1931–45 cohorts). However, most-recent cohorts born after 1960 show no lesser tendency to stereotype than their immediate predecessors born between 1946 and 1960 (though 1961–72 cohorts' means for stereotyping blacks, Hispanics, and Asians appear to be lower, they never differ significantly from comparable means of 1946–60 cohorts).

Among those living outside of the South, 1931–45 cohorts do not differ from 1946–60 cohorts with respect to stereotyping any of the minorities. And neither of these cohort categories differs from cohorts born in 1930 and earlier with respect to stereotyping Jews. But 1931–45

and 1946–60 cohort categories are each less likely than cohorts born 1930 and prior to stereotype blacks, Hispanics, and Asians.

Non-Southern cohorts born between 1961 and 1972 are less likely than earliest cohorts born in 1930 and prior to stereotype blacks. However, there is no evidence that 1961–72 cohorts are any less likely to stereotype blacks than their immediate predecessors are (mean scores for black stereotypes do not differ significantly between 1946–60 and 1961–72 categories of cohorts). Furthermore, 1961–72 cohorts show no less likelihood of unfavorably stereotyping Hispanics and Asians than any preceding cohort category (1961–72 cohorts' means are not significantly less than those of 1946–60, 1931–45, or 1930 and prior cohorts). And critically, 1961–72 cohorts are actually more likely to hold negative stereotypes of Hispanics and Asians than 1946–60 cohorts are (indicated by 1961–72 cohorts' significantly larger stereotype means).

Among nonsoutherners, 1961–72 cohorts' mean for Jewish stereotypes is significantly greater than those of any of the earlier cohort categories (.03 vs. $-.27$, $-.24$, $-.23$, $p < .05$). This suggests greater anti-Semitism among most-recent cohorts. But most-recent cohorts' stereotype mean (.03) is near zero, and earlier cohorts' means are negative ($-.27$, $-.24$, $-.23$), indicating favorable views of Jews. So it may be that most-recent cohorts are merely less likely than their elders to hold pro-Semitic views. However, in an additional analysis not reported in table 3, I found that respondents born after 1960 were significantly more likely than their predecessors to score above zero on the Stereotype Index, indicating their greater likelihood of unfavorably stereotyping Jews (proportions of each category holding anti-Semitic stereotypes were 1930 and prior, 23.0 percent; 1931–45, 17.8 percent; 1946–60, 17.2 percent; 1961–72, 32.1 percent). Thus, it clearly appears that most-recent cohorts are more likely to hold anti-Jewish stereotypes than any of their predecessors.⁸

Finally, it is again possible that the tendency to stereotype among most-recent cohorts of nonsoutherners may be explained by their limited and incomplete educations. But model 2 in table 3 rules out this possibility. When analyses are repeated, this time controlling for education as well as income and sex, findings as they pertain to most-

8. Increased anti-Semitism among the youngest non-Southern cohorts should not be exaggerated: 1961–72 non-Southern cohorts' stereotyping of Jews falls far short of any cohort category's stereotyping of blacks, Hispanics, or Asians shown in table 3 ($p < .05$). Still, most of the stereotype indicators available for study (e.g., "welfare dependent," "lazy") have little in common with traditionally held anti-Semitic stereotypes documented in past studies (Martire and Clark 1982; Selznick and Steinberg 1969; Smith 1993). So it is possible that the findings presented here may have seriously underestimated the extent of increasing anti-Semitism among most-recent cohorts of Americans.

recent cohorts remain unchanged: nonsoutherners born since 1960 are more likely to stereotype Hispanics and Asians than are their immediate predecessors born since World War II, and they are more likely to stereotype Jews than is any preceding cohort category.

REGIONAL CONVERGENCE

Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985, p. 137) found in their trend study that prejudice has declined in both the South and in other regions as well, largely on account of cohort succession. Firebaugh and Davis (1988) reported that the effect of cohort succession on antiblack prejudice has been greatest in the South, thereby reducing regional differences in prejudice and leading to the expectation that Southern and non-Southern prejudice levels will continue to converge in the future. In this study, tables 2 and 3 have shown that among respondents living outside of the South, most-recent cohorts tend, if anything, to be more prejudiced than their immediate predecessors, but that youngest Southern cohorts exhibit no such tendency. These findings raise the question of whether regional differences in prejudice may already have disappeared, at least among most-recent cohorts.

Reviewing tables 2 and 3 and comparing corresponding mean prejudice scores between the southerners and nonsoutherners, the general impression is that among earlier cohorts, southerners tend to have higher prejudice scores than nonsoutherners, but for cohorts born since 1960, there is little regional difference in prejudice. Table 4 confirms this impression, presenting results of regressions of prejudice indicators on region (a dummy variable coded for South). Samples are small and region is highly modal (the proportion of southerners ranged from 26.6 percent to 32.3 percent among the cohort categories), so coefficients' statistical significance is restricted. But there is a clear pattern in the findings nonetheless. Among the three earlier cohort categories—those born before the 1960s—southerners tend to be more prejudiced toward all of the minority groups, as indicated by coefficients' positive signs (in 23 of 24 instances) and statistical significance (in 9 of 12 instances for social distance, and in 8 of 12 instances for stereotyping).

Results differ sharply for most-recent cohorts, those born after 1960. Southerners continue to desire more social distance from blacks—a regional difference that is as strong among most-recent cohorts as among their elders. But unlike their elders, most-recent cohorts show no regional differences in social distance preferences with respect to Hispanics, Asians, or Jews, and there are no regional differences with respect to stereotyping any of the four minority groups. In all, it seems fair to conclude for the most part (and with the exception of antiblack

Table 4. Unstandardized Coefficients (b) from Regressions of Social Distance and Stereotype Indexes on Region (Coded for South), by Cohort Category

	Cohort Category											
	1930 and Prior			1931-45			1946-60			1961-72		
	N	b		N	b		N	b		N	b	
Social distance from:												
Blacks	272	.313*		180	.250*		358	.422*		201	.410*	
Hispanics	267	.304*		178	.200		352	.236*		201	.161	
Asians	266	.360*		178	.221		354	.166*		200	.161	
Jews	276	.281*		178	.000		354	.169*		200	.161	
Stereotypes of:												
Blacks	243	.178		163	.420*		336	.393*		187	-.056	
Hispanics	213	.106		158	.434*		330	.341*		185	-.179	
Asians	206	.427*		154	.486*		319	.265*		181	-.166	
Jews	230	.231		157	.071		326	.204*		180	-.040	

* $p < .05$.

prejudice) that regional differences in prejudice are confined to cohorts of Americans born before the 1960s, and that among cohorts born more recently there is little difference between southerners' and non-southerners' prejudice levels.

Discussion

I began this study by formulating two questions concerning the relationship between cohort and prejudice. First, Have cohorts most recently reaching adulthood continued the tendency found in past research for recent cohorts to be less prejudiced toward blacks than their elders are? Second, Does the tendency for recent cohorts to be less prejudiced extend to attitudes toward other minorities?

The analysis of data began by confirming that the statistical relationship between cohort and prejudice is not linear, and by finding that it differs by region. Minor variations aside, the data present the following picture. Both in the South and elsewhere, cohorts of Americans born after the end of World War II (1946–60) prefer less social distance from ethnic minority groups than do prewar cohorts. But cohorts of Americans most recently reaching adulthood, born between 1961 and 1972, show no further reduction in preference for social distance.

For the most part, stereotype findings are similar. Both in the South and elsewhere, post-World War II cohorts born during 1945–60 less often stereotype minorities than prewar cohorts do, especially the oldest prewar cohorts. In the South, however, cohorts born between 1961 and 1972 show no general tendency toward further reduction in stereotyping (stereotyping of Hispanics is the single exception). But outside of the South, findings differ sharply: most-recent cohorts born between 1960 and 1972 are actually more likely to adversely stereotype minorities (Hispanics, Asians, Jews, though not blacks) than their immediate predecessors born between 1946 and 1960.⁹

In sum, the answers to the research questions provided by this

9. It is not clear why 1961–72 cohorts are more likely to stereotype other ethnic minorities but not blacks. To check the generalizability of my findings for black stereotypes, I did additional analyses paralleling those in tables 2 and 3 for additional indicators of antiblack prejudice in the 1990 GSS. (No additional indicators of prejudice toward the other minorities were available.) These included a scale tapping attitudes toward various levels of school integration (computed from GSS variables RACFEW, RACHAF, and RACMOST); attribution of blacks' socioeconomic condition to intellectual inferiority or lack of motivation (RACDIF2, RACDIF4); attitudes toward civil rights (RACMAR, RACOPEN, RACSEG); and willingness to vote for a black presidential candidate (RACPRES). Results consistently confirmed this study's finding for antiblack prejudice: neither in the South nor outside of the South did 1961–72 cohorts differ in antiblack prejudice from 1946–60 cohorts.

study's findings are these. Cohorts born after World War II, between 1946 and 1960, generally tend to be less prejudiced than their predecessors, not only toward blacks but toward other minorities as well. But there is little evidence of further reduction in prejudice among cohorts born since 1960. On the contrary, these most-recent cohorts of adults—some born as recently as the early 1970s—desire every bit as much social distance from minorities and, at least among those living outside of the South, are actually more likely to hold adverse stereotypes than their elders born as long ago as the late 1940s.¹⁰

Some studies reviewed earlier have shown that the liberalizing of attitudes toward blacks occurring among successive cohorts has considerably slowed and may even have halted entirely (Davis 1992; Schuman, Sheeh, and Bobo 1985; Steeh and Schuman 1992). Results reported here confirm these earlier findings and show that they apply also to attitudes toward other minority groups. Davis (1992) has reported that among cohorts born since 1946, most-recent cohorts show no general tendency to be more liberal than their elders. Instead, he discovered that on many issues they are actually more conservative, although Davis found no evidence of the youngest cohorts' greater conservatism reflected in their racial attitudes. The findings I have presented in this study are, to my knowledge, the first to show that the youngest American adults are actually more prejudiced than their elders, documenting a reversal in the liberalization process among successive cohorts as it pertains to attitudes toward minorities.

These findings, pertaining as they do to attitudes toward several distinct minority groups, do not seem amenable to any narrow interpretation. For example, it seems unlikely that they merely reflect reactions to specific policies designed to benefit one or another particular minority (e.g., affirmative action or busing). Instead, a broader interpretation seems more appropriate. I suggest that the halting and the reversal in liberalization of most-recent cohorts' race and ethnic attitudes are best understood as symptomatic of the general decline in the liberal climate described and documented by Davis (1992). This change in climate, in which recent cohorts can no longer be counted upon to be persistently more liberal than their predecessors, is in turn intelligible in light of Mannheim's theory of generations, which holds that specific historical events determine a generation's character and affect its attitudes throughout its life course. More specifically, I suggest that this climatic change—particularly as it involves most-recent cohorts'

10. It is not apparent why 1961–72 cohort findings for stereotypes differ from those for social distance. But differing findings across theoretically distinct dimensions of prejudice are neither unexpected nor unusual, and they are only occasionally explainable (Erich [1973]; Sandefur and Lam [1985]; for an example involving antiblack stereotypes and social distance, see Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo [1985, pp. 112, 125]).

tendency not only to be no more liberal but actually to be more conservative than their immediate elders—is the result of the clear contrast between the events taking place during the formative years of the respective post–World War II cohort categories: the civil rights movement and Vietnam protest that reached a crescendo as 1946–60 cohorts approached young adulthood and the conservative political shift peaking during the Reagan presidency, during the formative or young adult years of those born after 1960.

Interpreted in this way, some inferences about the future of race relations can be drawn from this study's findings. Strictly speaking, of course, cross-sectional data of the sort used here provide little reliable basis for predicting attitude trends. Indeed, it is possible that the attitude differences among cohorts reported here result solely from the aging process, reflecting no more than the respective cohorts' differing life cycle stages. But past studies of the aging effect suggest otherwise. To begin, people can be expected to become more prejudiced—not less prejudiced—as they age (Stouffer 1955). Furthermore, young people are not particularly likely to change their attitudes as they grow older (Chafetz and Ebaugh 1983; Davis 1992). Additionally, between-cohort attitude differences tend to be stable as cohorts progress through the lifecycle (Danigelis and Cutler 1991; Krosnick and Alwin 1989; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Smith 1981). So it seems reasonable to assume that the differences in prejudice among cohorts found in this study are not likely to abate but instead will probably persist as the respective cohorts grow older. Based on this assumption, then, at least to the extent that trends in prejudice are influenced by cohort succession (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985, p. 128), we can draw the following inferences.

If most-recent cohorts are no longer less prejudiced than their predecessors, the clear implication is that in the long run cohort succession cannot continue to result in society-wide prejudice reductions as it has in the past. Further, if most-recent cohorts are more prejudiced than their predecessors, then cohort succession can only result in society-wide prejudice increase. Returning to table 3, even though youngest non-Southern cohorts are no less prejudiced toward blacks than their immediate 1946–60 predecessors, they are less prejudiced than the earliest (1930 and prior) cohorts they will slowly but inevitably replace. So for a while at least, antiblack prejudice can be expected to continue to decline as a result of cohort succession, although perhaps more slowly than it has in the past. However, compared to earliest cohorts, most-recent non-Southern cohorts are not less prejudiced toward Hispanics or Asians. Clearly, then, prejudice toward these minorities cannot be expected to decline from cohort succession, even in the immediate future. Additionally, most-recent non-Southern cohorts are more

anti-Semitic than earliest cohorts, at least as reflected by the stereotypes they hold. So beginning at once, overall levels of anti-Semitism can be expected to increase as a result of cohort succession.

This study also has found that among earlier cohorts, southerners tend to be more prejudiced than nonsoutherners, but that there is little regional difference in prejudice among most-recent cohorts. These findings imply that as a result of cohort succession, prejudice levels both in the South and outside of the South can be expected to continue to converge, as they have been found to do in the past (Firebaugh and Davis 1988). Additionally, however, this study has found that in the South most-recent cohorts are, if anything, less prejudiced than the earliest cohorts, while outside of the South, most-recent cohorts are no less prejudiced than the earliest cohorts (at least toward Hispanics, Asians, and Jews) and, if anything, tend to be more prejudiced (at least toward Jews). Together, these findings imply that over time and as a result of cohort succession, regional convergence in prejudice may come about not as it has in that past, because prejudice is declining faster in the South than it is outside of the South, but because in the future prejudice will decline only in the South while it remains stable and perhaps even increases elsewhere.

Conclusion

This study has found that the well-documented tendency for recent cohorts to be less prejudiced toward blacks is limited for the most part to a tendency among members of cohorts born since World War II to be less prejudiced than their predecessors—particularly the oldest predecessors—born earlier. As such, the tendency extends as well to prejudice toward other minorities—Hispanics, Asians, and, to some extent, Jews. However, this study has found no evidence whatsoever that cohorts most recently having come of age are any less prejudiced than their immediate predecessors born since World War II. On the contrary, the findings for attitudes toward Hispanics, Asians, and Jews show that these most-recent cohorts are actually more prejudiced than their elders.

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