

Survey-based Experiments on White Racial Attitudes toward Residential Integration¹

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Using residential integration as the main focus and experiments within national sample surveys as the primary method, this paper examines several theoretical explanations that have been offered for white opposition to government enforcement of black rights to open housing. Each of the following explanations receives some support: resistance to government coercion generally and especially to coercion from the federal government, concern over social class differences between blacks and whites, concern over the consequences of open-housing laws, and general antiblack prejudice. The weighting of and relations among these various factors is still to be determined, but it appears clear that no single, simple explanation will suffice. The paper also illustrates the value of combining experimentation with traditional survey design in substantive investigations.

We have two goals in this paper, one methodological and the other substantive. Methodologically, we hope to demonstrate the value of including between-subjects experiments as intrinsic parts of survey design and analysis. Such randomized experiments allow important comparisons between survey responses that would otherwise be suspect. Substantively, we wish to throw light on the meaning of responses by white Americans to standard questions on the implementation of racial integration generally and of residential integration in particular. For both these reasons,

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where possible we start from survey questions that have been used, are being used, or are adapted from items in important national surveys drawn on by sociologists. Our experimental variations and nonexperimental additions to these questions focus on the reasons that underlie white opposition to government enforcement of nondiscrimination in housing. Despite recent theoretical debates about the underlying dynamics of racial attitudes, the issue of residential integration has often been overlooked, although it is to a large degree "the structural linchpin" of American race relations (Pettigrew 1979).

Survey-based experiments.—Occasional randomized ("split-ballot") experiments within surveys extend back to the 1930s and 1940s (e.g., Cantril 1944). Recently, there has been a resurgence in the use of the split-ballot and other forms of experimentation (e.g., Bishop, Oldenick, and Tuchfarber 1978; Schuman and Presser 1981), but these efforts have largely concerned methodological issues of survey questioning as such—for example, the effects of formal properties of inquiries such as inclusion or omission of explicit "don't know" options. Experimentation has also occurred in the form of self-contained vignette studies that vary wording factorially for particular theoretical purposes (Rossi and Nock 1982).

In this article, however, we use split-ballot experiments not for methodological purposes or as a unique substitute for traditional survey analysis, but rather to increase the power of such analysis by allowing comparisons of substantive responses to survey questions with more precision than is otherwise possible. Comparing answers with questions *within* a single survey has always been problematic because such answers may be influenced by previous questions (Schuman and Presser 1981); comparing aggregate answers with questions *across* different surveys risks confounding shifts in response with change over time or other variations from one survey to another. Experimentation using random subsamples within surveys avoids both these problems.

Below, we summarize what is known about broad patterns of white attitudes toward residential integration and indicate how we use experiments to test some of the interpretations of these patterns that have been advanced.

White attitudes toward integration.—National trend data on white racial attitudes show sharply increasing support for the principles of residential and other forms of integration and decreasing support for any form of racial discrimination (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). By 1985, for example, 74% of the white population claimed to disagree with the statement that "white people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods, and blacks should respect that right"—up from 39% in 1963 (Davis and Smith 1986). Moreover, 85% answered no in 1972 (the last time asked) to the more personal question: "If a black person with the

same income and education as you have moved into your block, would it make any difference to you?"—up from 36% in 1942.

At the same time, however, the same surveys show that white support for the implementation of black rights through open-housing laws has been significantly lower and less consistent in growth, reaching 48% in 1986. And actual desegregation of neighborhoods has been much slower still, changing only slightly over long periods of time (Taeuber 1983; Massey and Denton 1987). In addition, although there is a strong positive relation of respondent educational level to support for principles of non-discrimination in housing, the relation is significantly weaker with respect to the implementation of those principles through open-housing laws (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985).

What is true in the area of housing is even truer in some other areas such as school desegregation: support for the general principles of integration and equal treatment is much clearer than is support for the implementation of the principles. Moreover, the relation of education to questions of abstract principle has been much stronger than its relation to steps toward government implementation of principle. In fact, for some implementation questions, there is no relation to education at all.

These discrepancies between white attitudes toward general principles and white attitudes toward implementation, as well as between *all* attitude data and measurable societal outcomes, have led to wide disagreement among social scientists concerning the best interpretation of the attitude data. At the furthest extreme, some researchers have argued that survey evidence of high levels of support for general principles of integration reflects only lip service to democratic platitudes, and that they conceal strong objections to actual racial integration that manifest themselves in resistance when any serious step toward implementation is proposed (Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe 1980; Dovidio and Gaertner 1986).

Two other theoretical approaches, usually labeled "symbolic racism" and "superficial tolerance," also argue that support for general principles tells us much less about underlying attitudes or likely behavior than does support for steps toward implementation. The theory of symbolic racism (Kinder and Sears 1981; Kinder 1986; Sears 1988) claims that much racism no longer finds expression in explicit beliefs in black inferiority or in overt support for segregation. Instead, new stereotypes have arisen that fault blacks for being pushy, pressing illegitimate demands, and benefiting from favoritism and welfare dependence. Such symbolic racial beliefs thus become the new basis for opposing implementation of changes that benefit blacks.

The second approach, superficial tolerance, focuses on the weak connection between level of education and support for concrete policy change beneficial to subordinate groups such as blacks or women (Jackman 1978;

Jackman and Muha 1984). From this perspective, the strong positive link between education and support for egalitarian principles and the weak or nonexistent link between education and support for "real" change (i.e., specific policies) point to ideological sophistication rather than egalitarian commitment. The better-educated members of a more privileged (e.g., white) group are familiar with and recognize the importance of advocating egalitarian norms but fail to apply them when doing so might undermine their own privileged status.

Our main interest is not in the specifics of either theory but in testing several alternative explanations for the relatively low level of concrete support for black-white residential integration. Most directly, we compare response to enforcing the right of blacks to move into white neighborhoods with enforcement of the rights of other racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Japanese-Americans) in theoretically similar circumstances. We also consider approaches that attempt to explain differences between support for principles and lesser support for implementation in terms of genuine ideological conflict. In particular, white support for integration may conflict with equally strong distrust of the federal government. Evidence for the distrust in government hypothesis was advanced as a critique of Jackman's superficial tolerance theory (Margolis and Haque 1981; Kuklinski and Parent 1981), but she has responded to these claims convincingly (Jackman 1981*a*, 1981*b*), showing little relation between trust in government and either education or support for implementing racial change.

A related and as yet untested possibility, however, is that it is not general distrust of the government but resentment toward its coercive power that is critical (Lipset and Schneider 1978; Stinchcombe and Taylor 1980; Taylor 1986). We investigate this possibility, first, by experimentally varying the source of implementation of open-housing laws (federal legislation vs. local referenda) on the assumption that federal power is viewed as the more coercive, and, second, by determining whether a direct but nonracial measure of opposition to government coercion (objection to automobile seat-belt laws) has an independent effect on acceptance of open-housing laws as well as interacting with the federal/local distinction.

Two other, more pragmatic explanations for white resistance deserve consideration in the case of residential integration, even though neither has played a prominent part in recent debates about white racial attitudes. One explanation is that much of what appears to be general white opposition to blacks is due to white perceptions of social class differences between themselves and potential black neighbors. A second possibility is that many whites have no absolute objection to some degree of residential integration but are concerned primarily about more sweeping neighbor-

hood changes implied by open-housing laws. Both hypotheses are tested experimentally, the first by varying the social class characteristics of a black neighbor, the second by varying the scope of antidiscrimination enforcement implied by the question.

Our experiments thus separate into three major groupings: those concerned directly with the element of government coercion, those concerned with the rights of blacks as compared with the rights of members of other ethnic groups, and those concerned with more pragmatic objections such as social class differences correlated with race. Some of the experiments focus on questions involving the enforcement of blacks' housing rights, and others focus on the willingness to have blacks as neighbors; both are important aspects of white commitment to residential integration, and in the end we attempt to tie the two together.

METHOD

Our experiments were carried out within national telephone surveys in 1985, 1986, and 1987.² In each survey, a simple split-ballot with substantive variations in the wording of questions was used to compare the answers of random halves of the sample. In addition, standard background measures of age, education, and region were employed in the analysis since all three are often related to racial attitudes. Education, in particular, has played an important role in debates on these issues, and age is also implicated both directly and as a correlate of education. The South/non-South regional distinction has been historically important with regard to racial attitudes and therefore needs to be treated as a control variable in analyses where possible, though it seems never to interact importantly with other variables in our results.³

² These were random-digit-dial (RDD) monthly surveys carried out by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center (SRC). Experimental and other special questions were inserted into the middle of these interviews, which otherwise dealt with consumer attitudes and views of the economy. The months used are given in the App., along with exact *N*s for the full white and black subsamples (including missing data omitted from some tables) and the response rate for the total RDD sample each month. (These and most other telephone surveys tend to have response rates several percentage points below the best face-to-face full probability surveys, with the loss showing up mainly among the oldest and least-educated parts of the population, a point that should be borne in mind in comparisons with, say, the General Social Survey.) Most of our experiments extended over more than one month, primarily to enlarge sample sizes.

³ For purposes of analysis, region is divided into South (using census categorization of states as southern) and non-South, with the latter referred to as North. Age is divided into four approximately equal size categories: 18–29, 30–39, 40–59, and 60+. Education is divided into four approximately equal size categories: 0–11, 12, 13–15, and 16+.

Two nonracial items were introduced into certain of the surveys, one dealing with attitudes toward laws requiring the use of seat belts in automobiles and the other with distrust of the government. They will be described further when first employed.

Our analysis is focused on the attitudes of white Americans, and unless otherwise noted all figures refer to white respondents. However, at several points we introduce results for black Americans when the comparison is particularly useful. Other racial groups, as well as Hispanics, are omitted from our analysis because the subsamples are too small to be treated separately.

HYPOTHESES AND RESULTS

1. Open-Housing Laws

One explanation for the discrepancy between support for principles of integration and support for implementation of these principles is the presumed tradition in America of limiting coercion by the central government even when it is a means to a valued goal. We attempted to test this possibility using both experimental and nonexperimental survey items.

The experimental variation started from the main question that has been used in NORC's General Social Survey (GSS) to assess attitudes toward open-housing laws in the United States:

Question: Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself who to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to blacks. The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color. Which law would you vote for?⁴ [Davis and Smith 1986]

Although this question on implementation yields lower support for black freedom of residential choice than do questions at the level of principle, it has shown a generally positive trend over time and a small but significant positive relation with education. However, unlike most other standard questions dealing with implementation (e.g., in the National Election Study), which refer only to "government" action, this question specifically locates government at the local community level, and it specifically involves a hypothetical referendum in which the respondent is to vote. If resistance to implementation is based mainly on resistance to imposition

⁴ The question ignores the fact that both Supreme Court rulings and a 1968 federal law prohibit discrimination in the sale and rental of housing. Not a single respondent in this study volunteered that there already is such a federal law, probably because the law has rarely been enforced and carries no clear penalties.

TABLE 1
EXPERIMENT ON OPEN-HOUSING LAWS

	Local Referendum*	Federal Legislation†
Owner decide (%)	42.5	48.7
No discrimination (%)	57.5	51.3
	100	100
	(584)	(563)

NOTE.—Ns are shown in parentheses.

* "Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself who to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to blacks. The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color. Which law would you vote for?"

† "Suppose your representative in Congress is about to vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible federal laws to vote on. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself who to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to blacks. The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color. Which law would you want your representative to vote for?"

from the central government in Washington, then the GSS open-housing question may not capture the main source of objection.

To test this point, we revised the GSS item to refer to a federal law to be passed by Congress and asked how the respondent would want his representative to vote. Otherwise, the wording of the question was kept identical to the original GSS item. The two versions of the question were asked in split-ballot form over four months, with wording and results shown in table 1. There is a small but statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 4.45$; $df = 1$; $P = .03$) in the predicted direction: 6% more of the sample favor open housing when a local referendum is at issue rather than a federal law.⁵ (The difference is consistent in direction over each of the four months, ranging in size from 3% to 9%.) Thus, there is evidence that resistance to "federal intrusion" is a real factor in opposition to open-housing laws and perhaps to antidiscrimination laws in general. However, this factor cannot be considered of major importance since even with a local referendum 42% of the white sample opposes an open-housing law.⁶

⁵ Likelihood-ratio χ^2 calculations are used throughout this paper.

⁶ It is important to note, however, that some blacks *also* voice opposition to open-housing laws: 16.7% (of 54) on the community referendum question and 22.7% (of 75) on the federal law version. Black opposition is some two-fifths that of whites, and, therefore, the amount of distinctly white opposition that needs accounting for can be conceptualized as considerably smaller than the percentage of opposition shown in table 1. The small black difference by question wording (6%) may also suggest greater support for a local referendum than for a federal law, but in this case the sample sizes are much smaller, and thus the difference does not approach significance ($\chi^2 = 0.71$; df

If white opponents of open housing are responding in terms of opposition to government intrusion generally, federal or not, this should show up on questions that have nothing whatever to do with racial issues. As a test of this point, we chose the recent controversy over whether riders in automobiles should be required by law to wear seat belts and included the following Gallup question: "Would you favor or oppose a law that would fine a person \$25 if he or she did not wear a seat belt when riding in an automobile?" Opposition to such laws has been almost entirely in terms of opposition to government regulation rather than rejection of seat belts. For example, according to the director of the successful 1986 campaign to repeal the Nebraska mandatory seat-belt law, "All through our campaign, we encouraged people to go ahead and wear seat belts, but we feel education is a more healthy way to go about it. Rather than mandate—educate" (*New York Times* 1986). Furthermore, arguments over seat-belt laws seem as remote as any issue could be from matters of race—other than the role of government enforcement in each case.⁷

We hypothesized that white respondents opposing the mandatory wearing of seat belts would also oppose open-housing laws and, further, that the association would be stronger for federal laws than for local, referendum-based laws since the latter involve a direct participatory element not present in the former. Both the seat-belt question and the two versions of the open-housing-law questions were included in four surveys (August and September 1985 and May and June 1986), with the seat-belt question always asked before any racial items were posed. As shown in table 2, for both versions of the open-housing-law question, those who oppose seat-belt laws are more likely to oppose open-housing laws, though only in the federal case is the difference large (18%) and significant ($\chi^2 = 17.56$; $df = 1$; $P < .001$). (In the case of the local law, $\chi^2 = 2.07$; $df = 1$.) Furthermore, the three-way interaction represented by table 2 also reaches the conventional .05 level of significance ($\chi^2 = 3.88$; $df = 1$), which suggests that the association of opposition to seat-belt laws with opposition to open housing is stronger in the federal case than in the local referendum case. (This federal-local difference for the white sample as a

= 1) and must be regarded as due to chance. We should note that these telephone interviews by a largely white interviewing staff may have affected black responses, though the questions analyzed in this article are not of the type that typically show race-of-interviewer effects (Schuman and Converse 1971).

⁷ A question on trust in government from the National Election Study was included in two of the same months as the seat-belt question: "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?" The two items show essentially a zero relation, suggesting that opposition to government enforcement is *not* the same as distrust of the government.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OPPOSING OPEN HOUSING BY SEAT-BELT LAW AND QUESTION FORM

	Local Referendum	Federal Law
Favors belt law (%).....	39.7 (272)	39.9 (289)
Opposes belt law (%)	45.7 (300)	57.8 (270)

NOTE.—Base *N*s are shown in parentheses.

whole also holds for each of the four monthly surveys in which the experiment was carried out: the association of opposition to seat-belt laws and opposition to open-housing laws is stronger on the federal version than on the local referendum version. For the small black subsample, there is no sign of a relation between the seat-belt and open-housing questions.)⁸

Because relations involving the seat-belt item are not purely experimental, it is important to consider whether our findings may result indirectly from background variables associated with attitudes toward open housing. In table 3, age, education, and region are included in a logit analysis of the open-housing question (*a*) with the question form (local/federal) and the seat-belt item as separate predictors and (*b*) with the further addition of an interaction term constructed from the question form and the seat-belt item. (In order to create the interaction term, the question form and the seat-belt item were each coded as dummy variables [0, 1], and for the interaction term the combination of federal open housing and opposition to seat-belt laws was coded "1," with the other three possible combinations coded "0.")

The main findings in table 3 are that the effects of the question form and the seat-belt item remain significant ($P < .05$) when age, education, and region are controlled and, further, that a model assuming the predicted question form by seat-belt interaction provides the preferred specification (improvement in $\chi^2 = 4.30$; $df = 1$; $P < .05$). In addition, it is of interest that for the open-housing question, age appears to be the

⁸ In July 1987, we directly tested the assumption that opposition to seat belts represents opposition to government coercion. We administered the seat-belt question to a small national sample ($N = 116$) and asked those who objected to a seat-belt law ($N = 47$) to explain their answer. Opposition to government coercion was mentioned by 61% as their main reason, with other answers scattered across several residual explanations, the most common of which (seat belts can be dangerous) garnered only 11%. Thus, our assumption receives substantial support, but this indicator, like almost all other indicators, carries some error. The results suggest that the relations reported in the text would be stronger if a perfect indicator of opposition to government coercion could be used.

TABLE 3
LOGIT ANALYSIS OF OPEN-HOUSING ITEM

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	ADDITIVE ONLY		INTERACTION TERM INCLUDED	
	Coefficient	Coefficient/SE	Coefficient	Coefficient/SE
1. Age	-.47	-7.78	-.47	-7.76
2. Education	.08	1.38	.08	1.38
3. Region	-.48	-3.55	-.50	-3.63
4. Question form (local/ federal)	-.28	-2.23	-.01	-.05
5. Seat-belt item	-.39	-3.06	-.13	-.75
6. Interaction term (question form by seat belt)			-.53	-2.07

strongest predictor, while the effect of education does not reach significance.⁹

Although the relation of the seat-belt question to the open-housing item is consistent with our predictions, it is possible that attitudes toward seat belts would be related to any items that deal with integration, whether government enforcement is involved or not. We can test this point by looking at the relation between the seat-belt question and two other pairs of racial items included in two of the same months (August and September 1985). One question asks whether the respondent believes that black and white children should go to the same schools or to separate schools; the other question, to be discussed in detail shortly, asks whether the respondent would have any personal objection to a black person's moving next door. By combining two experimental versions of each question, we obtain approximately the same size sample as was available for the previous table; the difference in versions is not relevant to the point being tested. The prediction in each case would be that those opposing seat-belt laws will also indicate personal opposition to integration in each of these questions even though government enforcement is not mentioned. In the case of the same-schools question, there is only a 1.2% difference in the direction predicted ($\chi^2 = 0.45$; $df = 1$; N.S.). In the case of the question

⁹ This finding about education for our sample should not be overgeneralized since analysis using 1986 GSS data on the local open-housing question shows the desirability of including education in a satisfactory model. Almost certainly this is because of the larger sample provided by the GSS, since again age shows the much stronger relation, and region also a slightly stronger relation. In sum, education is positively related to support for open-housing laws (at least, local open-housing laws, that being the only version in the GSS), but the relation is appreciably weaker than age when both are included in a multivariate analysis.

about personal objections to a black neighbor, there is a nonsignificant 4.1% difference in the predicted direction ($\chi^2 = 1.30$; $df = 1$; N.S.), and in a logit analysis of the black-neighbor item the seat-belt question does not add significantly to a model with age, education, and region as the other predictors. Thus, neither prediction is confirmed.

Our conclusion from this analysis is that opposition to seat-belt laws, taken as an indicator of perceived government coercion of individuals, does play a genuine role in opposition to open-housing laws, and this seems to be particularly true when the open-housing law is federally imposed.

2. Government Enforcement of the Rights of a Single Black Family

Between 42% and 49% of our sample of white Americans oppose open-housing laws, the exact percentage apparently varying with whether a local referendum or a federal law is being considered. We wondered, however, whether support for the rights of blacks to live wherever they wish might increase if an important practical consideration is taken into account. Open-housing laws refer to complete nondiscrimination across a community and might for some whites raise the fear of whole neighborhoods' changing in racial composition practically overnight. However, if the issue is defined as a single black family's moving into the neighborhood, this concern should become somewhat less the focus, while at the same time the effect of discrimination on an actual black family should be more easily appreciated. Thus, it seemed likely that support for government enforcement would increase. We investigated this hypothesis experimentally, which led in turn to a series of further experiments about enforcement of the rights of single families of *other* ethnic groups. The sequence as a whole produced surprising results.

The first step was to ask a random half of a national sample the GSS open-housing question and the other half what we shall refer to as the single black family question.¹⁰ The questions and results are shown in table 4.

¹⁰ Although this experiment is logically the first step in the sequence of experiments to be presented, it was not the first chronologically. This was because we believed we knew the likely outcome on the basis of an earlier comparison between two questions that had been asked in different surveys (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985). However, to make certain that the comparison was not confounded with possible changes over time between surveys or possible effects due to questionnaire context, the fully experimental comparison reported here was carried out in September 1986. The single black family question itself was constructed by the authors for the theoretical purpose we have described. An additional purpose, as noted below, was to allow and record spontaneous remarks by those unwilling to accept either of the closed alternatives presented.

TABLE 4

EXPERIMENT CONTRASTING OPEN HOUSING LAW AND SINGLE BLACK FAMILY*

Single Black Family			Open Housing (Local Referendum)		
Suppose a black family plans to move into a house in an all-white neighborhood, and some people in the neighborhood want to stop them from moving in. Do you think the government should enforce the black family's right to live wherever they can afford to <i>or</i> that it should be left entirely up to the white neighborhood residents to decide?			Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself who to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to blacks. The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color. Which law would you vote for?†		
	Col. 1 (%)	Col. 2 (%)		Col. 1 (%)	Col. 2 (%)
1. Government enforcement	80.3	52.3	2. Second law: no discrimination	60.7	56.8
2. Leave it up to white neighbors	19.7	12.8	1. First law: homeowners decide	39.3	36.8
3. (Volunteered) "People should be able to live wherever they want, <i>but</i> the government should not be involved/enforce it."	...	22.8	3. (Volunteered) Neither	...	.6
7. Other	...	10.7	7. Other	...	5.2
8. Don't know	...	1.3	8. Don't know	...	.6
	100 (97)	100 (149)		100 (145)	100 (155)

NOTE.—Ns are shown in parentheses.
* Data from November 1986, white respondents only. For each question, col. 1 percentages are only for respondents who chose one of the two offered alternatives, omitting other respondents; col. 2 percentages, all respondents.
† In the table below, results for the two laws are presented in reverse order to allow easier comparison with the single black family results.

If only the direct dichotomous answers to the two questions are considered, there is as predicted a great deal more support for government enforcement of the rights of a single black family than for an open-housing law more generally. (Compare the first columns in each half of the table.) Of those making a clear choice on the single black family question, 80% expressed support for government enforcement as against 61% who expressed support for an open-housing law ($\chi^2 = 10.90$; $df = 1$; $P < .001$). Taken by itself, this finding might suggest that an important

factor in opposition to open-housing laws is the perception of their overall effect on neighborhoods rather than reluctance to support enforcement of black residential rights in particular instances.

However, a large proportion of respondents (35%) who were asked the single black family question avoided choosing either alternative offered, whereas only a tiny fraction (6%) avoided a direct answer with regard to open-housing laws. For each of the two questions, we had allowed and recorded *volunteered* answers outside the offered categories, and the bulk of those on the single black family question claimed to favor the right of the black family to live wherever it wished *but* also opposed any use of government power to enforce that right. From the standpoint of our interest in support for the implementation of rights, such responses must be considered as indicating opposition to government enforcement, regardless of strongly claimed support for the principle of nondiscrimination.

When this is done—treating all responses showing *lack* of support for enforcement (including even the few “don’t know” responses) as a single category for each question—we can see in the second column comparison provided by table 4 that there is no difference between the results for the two questions ($\chi^2 = 0.60$; $df = 1$). For present purposes, it is *this* comparison that is most critical, and it indicates that opposition to open-housing laws is, in the final analysis, probably not mainly a matter of sophisticated distinction over scope. (Although it is possible that some persons opposing a single family’s move do see it as the beginning of a much larger in-migration of blacks, the ambivalence indicated by the large number of “volunteered” responses to the question suggests that we were successful in making rejection of government enforcement more difficult by focusing on a single black family.) Thus, the results imply that concern over large numbers of blacks is not the only cause of opposition to open-housing laws, even though the relative proportions of blacks and whites in neighborhoods clearly do influence greatly the personal willingness of whites to live in integrated areas (Farley et al. 1978).

The results thus far suggest that nearly half the white population represented by our sample is unwilling to support government enforcement of black rights to residential choice even when this is put in terms of a single family. However, a series of three additional experiments that contrasted the single black family question with identical questions about other ethnic groups strongly suggests that the interpretation is more complicated than white opposition to blacks as such. The three experiments are presented in table 5.

The first of these follow-up experiments asked the single black family question to a random half of the sample and an equivalent question about

TABLE 5

EXPERIMENTS CONTRASTING GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT FOR SINGLE BLACK FAMILY AND FOR OTHER ETHNIC GROUP FAMILIES

1. SEPTEMBER 1986			
Black Family*		Japanese-American*	
Suppose a black family plans to move into a house in an all-white neighborhood, and some white people in the neighborhood want to stop them from moving in. Do you think the government should enforce the black family's right to live wherever they can afford to, <i>or</i> that it should be left entirely up to the white neighborhood residents to decide?		Suppose a Japanese-American family plans to move into a house in an all-white neighborhood, and some white people in the neighborhood want to stop them from moving in. Do you think the government should enforce the Japanese-American family's right to live wherever they can afford to, <i>or</i> that it should be left entirely up to the white neighborhood residents to decide?	
1. Government enforcement	60.5	1. Government enforcement	56.8
5. Leave it up to white neighbors	11.5	5. Leave it up to white neighbors	18.1
7. Other (volunteered)	26.8	7. Other (volunteered)	24.5
8. Don't know	1.3	8. Don't know	.6
	100		100
	(157)		(155)
2. AUGUST 1986			
Black Family†		Jewish Family†	
The same as above.		The same as above, but substitute "Jewish" for Japanese-American," and "Christian" for "white."	
1. Government enforcement	61.3	1. Government enforcement	69.6
5. Leave it to white neighbors	20.4	5. Leave it to Christian neighbors	14.2
7. Other (volunteered)	17.6	7. Other (volunteered)	15.5
8. Don't know	.7	8. Don't know	.7
	100		100
	(142)		(148)
3. OCTOBER 1986			
Black Family†		Christian Family†	
The same as above.		Suppose a Christian family plans to move into a house in an all-Jewish neighborhood, and some people in the neighborhood want to stop them from moving in. Do you think the govern-	

TABLE 5 (Continued)

3. OCTOBER 1986			
Black Family†		Christian Family†	
		ment should enforce the Christian family's right to live wherever they can afford to, <i>or</i> that it should be left entirely up to the Jewish neighborhood residents to decide?	
1. Government enforcement	57.1	1. Government enforcement	48.3
5. Leave it up to white neighbors	12.1	5. Leave it up to Jewish neighbors	16.8
6. (Volunteered) People should be able to live wherever they want, but the government should not be involved/enforce it.‡	19.3	6. (Volunteered) People should be able to live wherever they want, but the government should not be involved/enforce it.‡	24.5
7. Other (volunteered)	10.7	7. Other (volunteered)	9.1
8. Don't know	.7	8. Don't know	1.4
	100		100
	(140)		(143)

NOTE.—Ns are shown in parentheses.

* White respondents only.

† White, non-Jewish respondents only.

‡ Added to questionnaire as an "if volunteered" box in October survey.

a Japanese-American family to the other half in order to determine how specific is resistance to black residential movement. To our surprise, there was no difference approaching statistical significance between the two distributions (enforcement vs. all nonenforcement responses combined), and the trend is in the direction of more enforcement for the black family.¹¹ However, it could be that white American "racism" covers all non-white groups; hence, in a further experiment we substituted "Jewish" for Japanese-American and "Christian" for white. (A later question in this and the next survey obtained religious self-identification, and the few Jewish respondents in the sample are omitted from this and the next comparison.) Although the table shows a small trend suggesting more

¹¹ A similar experiment was carried out in July 1986 but was repeated with minor changes in September (shown in table 5) in order to guard against order effects that might have been present in July because that experiment followed other questions on blacks. Only the September results are presented here, but, if the two months are pooled, the difference between experimental forms diminishes and becomes even less significant, despite the increase in cases.

support for enforcement in the case of a Jewish than a black family, the difference does not reach significance ($\chi^2 = 2.23$; $df = 1$; $P > .10$) for enforcement versus nonenforcement.

Even the failure to find a reliable difference between enforcement for black and Jewish families leaves open the possibility that opposition to such enforcement could be due to a broad white ethnocentrism, since a repeated finding in studies of ethnic attitudes has been the extent to which in-group prejudice applies to all out-groups (e.g., Adorno et al. 1950). Therefore, in a final experiment in this series, we contrasted our standard black family question with one that reversed the ethnic identifications of the single family and the neighborhood, making it a Christian family that wished to move into an all-Jewish neighborhood. The finding in table 5 in this case is even more striking: the two distributions do not differ significantly, and in fact there is a nonsignificant trend ($\chi^2 = 2.25$; $df = 1$) toward more support for enforcement in the case of the black family than for the Christian family.

In sum, there is little evidence in this series of experiments that opposition to enforcement of a single black family's right to move into a white neighborhood represents merely a form of antiblack sentiment. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence that it reflects a rejection of government enforcement of open-housing laws regardless of the group concerned. This conclusion also fits both our later debriefing of interviewers and our own occasional monitoring of the interviews: the subjective impression drawn from listening to the interviews is that opposition to government enforcement in this area takes on the force of a principle for many respondents regardless of the group involved and regardless of the contradiction inherent in statements by many of these same people that all persons should be allowed to live where they wish.¹²

We also examined the correlates of the questions in each experimental pairing. On all the questions, regardless of ethnicity, support for enforcement of a family's right to move into a neighborhood is positively related to education and negatively related to age. Most of the relations are significant and monotonic, and deviations seem minor and likely to be due to small subsamples in a particular age or education category in a particular survey. The relation to age is generally stronger than to education, much as we found in analyses reported earlier. There is also little sign of interactions among age, education, and any of the questions.

¹² In September, October, and November 1986, the single black family question was also asked of the small sample ($N = 44$) of black respondents: 75% supported government enforcement, 7% opposed it, and 18% gave an "other" answer. An even smaller sample ($N = 33$) answered the questions about Japanese-American and Jewish families, which produced a distribution similar to that for the single black family question.

The picture thus far drawn, therefore, is of respondents who oppose enforcement of housing rights regardless of the racial or religious group affected, so that the principle of government enforcement in this area seems to be critical rather than opposition to any particular group. This is true even if we note the difference between those who would defer immediately to neighborhood opinion and those who appear to be conflicted between believing in free choice of housing as a right and opposing government intervention in principle. In this broad sense, the conclusions are generally consistent with those of the previous section of this paper and point more to resistance to government coercion than to antiblack sentiments as critical to segregationist attitudes in the area of housing. Yet we will see below that this is too simple a picture.

3. Personally Mind a Black Neighbor

This experiment was initially developed to test the difference between personal objection to a black neighbor based on race and personal objection based on social class. It turned out, however, to be useful also in attempting to understand the basis of opposition to government enforcement in the questions already considered. We will present first the findings in light of the original experimental purpose, then a further experimental variation that alters the new neighbor's race in the personal objection question, and finally the correlation of the personal objection question with the question about government enforcement that we discussed earlier.

The two experimental versions of the personal objection question differ in whether the education and income of a prospective black neighbor are or are not equated to that of the respondent.¹³ The experiment is more complex than the previous ones because the basic item has three closed alternatives and a fourth, open-code category designed to capture volunteered "depends" responses. The latter resulted from our decision not to try to force respondents into one of the closed categories, and it proved to be revealing. Both versions of the question and the experimental results are presented in table 6.

¹³ The question equating income and education of the prospective black neighbor is adapted from, but made more focused than, a question in the GSS. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the GSS question speaks of a black person's moving into the respondent's "block" and asks whether that would "make any difference," a highly ambiguous inquiry. Our adaptation focuses instead on a black family's moving "next door," gives three degrees of objection, and allows a volunteered "depends" answer to be recorded by the interviewer. For the experimental variation, we simply omitted the phrase "same income and education as you."

TABLE 6
EXPERIMENTS ON MIND A BLACK NEIGHBOR

	Class Equated* (%)	Not Equated† (%)
A lot	3.7	4.9
A little	14.2	15.3
Not at all	79.4	72.7
Depends (volunteered)	2.7	7.0
	100	100
	(593)	(587)

NOTE.—Ns are shown in parentheses.

* "If a black family with the same income and education as you moved next door to you, would you mind it a lot, a little, or not at all?"

† "If a black family moved next door to you, would you mind it a lot, a little, or not at all?"

The two versions of the question differ significantly ($\chi^2 = 14.64$; $df = 3$; $P < .01$), which indicates that the qualification about "same income and education as you" does make a difference to respondents. There are several ways to partition the table, and they all lead to the conclusion that the increase in volunteered "depends" responses on the form that omits "same income and education" is the primary source of the difference. If the three closed responses are collapsed, then the table opposing them to "depends" produces $\chi^2 = 12.17$; $df = 1$; $P < .01$, whereas, if "depends" is omitted, the remaining 3×2 table yields $\chi^2 = 2.47$; $df = 2$; $P > .20$. (The components 12.17 and 2.47 sum to the total χ^2 of 14.64.) These and other calculations indicate the need to retain "depends" as a separate category in further analysis as far as possible. In order to simplify the analysis somewhat, "a lot" and "a little" will be combined since the former category is quite small and the conceptual meaning of the two is similar in indicating some explicit discomfort with the possibility of a black neighbor.

The "depends" responses were recorded by the interviewers, and it is useful to consider their content. They turn out to be relatively homogeneous across both forms, though of course more frequent on the one form than the other. Basically, most of these responses reject all the closed alternatives and include things like "Depends on the type of people," "I don't think I'd mind if they were decent people," "On their action, not their color." These qualifications may not seem unreasonable, since they do not use color as a criterion, but the important point is that they occur significantly more often on the question that does not specify "same income and education." Thus, that phrase apparently provides some guar-

antee to respondents that "depends" is not necessary to ensure acceptable neighbors. It should be noted that only in three responses (two of them on the unequated form) are indicators of social class (e.g., occupation) mentioned; in all other cases, the explanation has to do with behavior or character, not class.¹⁴

Varying the racial group.—In July and September 1987, the basic question about whether the (white) respondent would mind a lot, a little, or not at all if a black family moved next door was experimentally varied so that in half the cases "Japanese-American" was substituted for "black." The July experiment omitted the phrase "same income and education as you"; the September experiment included the phrase. Thus, we have two experimental comparisons each involving blacks and Japanese-Americans and nonexperimental comparisons (because there is a time difference) involving whether the minority family is or is not equated in income and education to the respondent.

The results presented in table 7 show the following. First and most important, there is significantly less objection to a Japanese-American neighbor than to a black neighbor, and this is true regardless of whether or not the income and education of the neighbor are equated to the respondent's. Thus, our earlier finding that support for government enforcement does not vary by racial or ethnic group appears to be restricted

¹⁴ Age and education interact differently with the two experimental variations in table 6. If responses to each question in table 6 are collapsed into "mind not at all" vs. all others (a lot, a little, depends), as can be justified by the data in table 6 and the need to reduce degrees of freedom, then older whites tend to be less accepting of a black neighbor on both forms of the question, but the age difference reaches significance ($P < .001$) only on the form that omits the phrase "same income and education as you." The three-way interaction of question form, response, and age (with education controlled) is significant ($\chi^2 = 4.27$; $df = 1$; $P = .04$), which indicates that older whites are especially likely to reject black neighbors who are not described as of the same income and education as themselves. Since age and education are negatively correlated, the findings for age would ordinarily be accompanied by a similar finding for less educated as against more educated whites. That is, less educated whites would be more apt to reject the black neighbor generally and to do so especially on the question form where social class is not equated. However, this is not what happens: the relation of education to acceptance of a black neighbor becomes smaller, rather than larger, on the nonequated version of the question. This education by form by response interaction (with age controlled) almost reaches conventional significance levels ($\chi^2 = 3.37$; $df = 1$; $P = .07$). We interpret this difference between the results for education and for age as reflecting the sensitivity of more highly educated—i.e., middle-class—whites to the social class characteristics of a prospective black neighbor. When these class characteristics are not specified to be the same as the respondent's, it is middle-class whites who especially object. (Of course, the phrase "same income and education as you" has a different literal meaning depending on the income and educational levels of the white respondent: it is possible that whites with low income and education would react more positively if the black family were described as middle class in these respects rather than as like the respondent.)

TABLE 7

COMPARISONS OF MIND A BLACK FAMILY AND MIND
A JAPANESE-AMERICAN FAMILYA. "SAME INCOME AND EDUCATION" PHRASE OMITTED
(July 1987)*

Mind	Black Family (%)	Japanese-American Family (%)
A lot, a little	19.6	10.4
Not at all	70.6	87.7
Depends (volunteered)	9.8	1.9
	100	100
	(143)	(154)

B. "SAME INCOME AND EDUCATION" PHRASE INCLUDED
(Sept. 1987)†

Mind	Black Family (%)	Japanese-American Family (%)
A lot, a little	18.6	2.7
Not at all	78.6	92.5
Depends (volunteered)	2.8	4.8
	100	100
	(145)	(146)

NOTE.—Ns are shown in parentheses.

* $\chi^2 = 15.55$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$.† $\chi^2 = 21.73$; $df = 2$; $P < .001$.

to issues of government enforcement since personal preference questions do vary by the race of the group mentioned.

Second, across months both blacks and Japanese-Americans are regarded as less objectionable if the "same income and education" phrase is included. The finding for blacks ($\chi^2 = 6.67$; $df = 2$; $P = .04$) is a replication of the earlier result in table 6; the finding for Japanese-Americans ($\chi^2 = 9.14$; $df = 2$; $P = .01$) extends that result to another racial group. One might have expected the equating for income and education to have less effect for Japanese-Americans on the assumption that they are seen as well-off in such terms, but this is not the case.

Third, there is a rather complex three-way interaction ($\chi^2 = 11.47$; $df = 2$; $P < .01$) when table 7 is considered as a whole. When the "same income and education" phrase is included, it reduces the "depends" response for the black family, just as we found earlier, but it reduces the "a lot/a little" responses for Japanese-Americans. We are uncertain of the

interpretation of this interaction but regard it as of less importance for our present purpose than the two previous results.

In sum, unlike questions about government enforcement of rights, where ethnicity makes no apparent difference, questions about personal feelings do show such a difference. Put another way, white Americans seem equally ready or equally reluctant to say they will enforce antidiscrimination norms regardless of the group being discriminated against, but when it comes to stating personal preference—what might indeed be called personal prejudice—distinctions are made. It is important to note, however, that personal objections even to blacks (table 7) are appreciably lower than is objection to enforcement of antidiscrimination norms for any group (table 5).

Personal rejection versus enforcement of rights.—The “mind a black neighbor” question can also be used to throw light directly on answers regarding the enforcement of a single black family’s right to housing. Since the former question simply asks whether the respondent would personally mind having a black family move next door, it removes entirely the issue of government enforcement and therefore can be taken as tapping antiblack attitudes as such. We are able to analyze the association between the two questions in the two months in which both were asked.¹⁵

As table 8 shows, the two questions are clearly related ($\chi^2 = 19.0$; $df = 1$; $P < .001$), which indicates that part of the opposition to government enforcement in the case of the single black family is linked to antiblack attitudes generally.¹⁶ Moreover, the 30% difference, if regarded as a measure of association, is larger than any association we have reported in previous sections of this paper.

Another way to look at these data is to consider the percentage of *all* respondents who fall into each cell in table 8. Of the 286 respondents, the majority (57%) of the sample claim not to mind at all having a black neighbor *and* to favor enforcement of such a person’s right to move into the neighborhood. Another 22% also claim not to mind having a black neighbor but resist government enforcement. Some 9% say they would

¹⁵ For this purpose, we have available only the “mind a black neighbor” question not equated for social class, since only it appeared on the same form as the single black family question. This occurred in July and August 1986 (see App.). The mind a black family question came first, followed immediately by the single black family question; a comparison of the August and September results on the mind a black family question in table 5 does not suggest order effects due to the August sequence.

¹⁶ For this purpose, it was necessary to combine categories, as shown in the table, since with only two months of respondents there were too few cases in some categories kept separate in earlier analysis. However, examination of less collapsed categories does not suggest a picture appreciably different from that shown in table 8.

TABLE 8
RELATION OF MIND A BLACK NEIGHBOR
AND SINGLE BLACK FAMILY

	MIND A BLACK NEIGHBOR	
	Not at All (%)	A Lot, a Little, Depends (%)
Single black family:		
Enforce	72.3	41.9
Not Enforce*	27.7	58.1
	100	100
	(224)	(62)

NOTE.—Ns are shown in parentheses.

* Includes "neighbors decide" and other nonenforcement responses.

mind somewhat (only "a little" according to 24 of these 26 respondents) yet would support enforcement of the right. Finally, 13% say they would both mind a black neighbor personally and oppose government enforcement of such a prospective neighbor's right. Readers will differ in how they might interpret each of these logical combinations, but perhaps the simplest brief summary is to say that a slight majority claim to be unequivocally in support of a black family's moving into their neighborhoods, while at the same time a large minority indicate some opposition.

If we recall that there are also survey *non*respondents (see App.) and these persons may well lean in the opposite direction, it is possible that the majority and minority terms in the previous sentence should be reversed for the white American population as a whole. Added to this is the reluctance of many people to become involved in neighborhood disputes, and it is not hard to explain the continued impenetrability of many white neighborhoods by these distributions, quite apart from any sharp discrepancy between stated attitudes and overt behavior. Of course, other factors (e.g., the relative proportions of blacks and whites in or near a neighborhood subject to integration) undoubtedly play an important role, and we certainly do not wish to claim that our present experiments capture all the factors involved in creating or maintaining residential discrimination.

CONCLUSIONS

Three sets of experiments on survey questions were constructed in order to explore the bases of white opposition to residential integration. Two of

these sets addressed the issue of white resistance to government coercion generally as one explanation for white objections to enforcement of black rights to housing in white neighborhoods. A third experiment dealt with personal preferences and initially addressed a more pragmatic objection to black housing rights: white perceptions of social class differences between blacks and whites. We have three conclusions at this point.

First, there are several pieces of evidence pointing to general resistance to government coercion as *one* factor in opposition to open-housing laws: (a) such opposition is stronger to federal laws than to laws based on local referenda; (b) opposition to open-housing laws is associated with opposition to laws requiring that seat belts be worn in automobiles, and the association is stronger for federal than for local open-housing laws; and (c) opposition to government enforcement of black housing rights is no greater than opposition to enforcement of similar rights for Japanese-Americans, for Jews, and even for Christians.

The last-mentioned (c) finding requires further discussion since it is a striking result given the assumed potency of antiblack sentiment in the United States. One possibility is that, whenever white Americans are confronted with the enforcement of the rights of members of a minority or even majority group, experience leads them to view blacks as the paradigmatic case. Thus, they are always in a sense considering blacks as a reference point even though the questions attempt to focus on other groups. Another possibility is that members of a majority (dominant) social group react adversely to the enforcement of any other group's "rights." Under such circumstances, members of the majority group believe that enforcement of group rights will ultimately change status relationships, as well as run counter to their own needs as individuals (Bobo 1983). The use of Christians to provide a white group denied rights to open housing may simply be too unrealistic for such a majority to comprehend and identify with.

A second general conclusion is that there is also an important element of personal prejudice against blacks in white opposition to open-housing laws. This shows up in a question that has nothing to do with government enforcement or with legal rights but simply with preferences about next-door neighbors. Moreover, in this question, when Japanese-Americans are substituted for blacks, there is less objection; whites do distinguish between racial minorities when personal preferences are the focus of the inquiry but do not when asked about government enforcement.¹⁷ It

¹⁷ The difference between enforcement questions and personal preference questions shows up in other ways. In July and August 1986, we asked white respondents: "In addition to being white and American, what do you feel to be your main ethnic or nationality group?" Those who gave an ethnic or nationality identification (some 90%

should be stressed, however, that personal objections are voiced much less frequently toward blacks than is resistance to government enforcement for blacks, Japanese-Americans, Jews, or even Christians.

Third, some personal objection to blacks (and also Japanese-Americans) appears to be based on perceived class differences rather than on race differences as such. This seems especially true for middle-class whites, though more replication of this point is needed using larger samples and other experimental variations. There is also strong evidence that white respondents find it more uncomfortable to oppose government enforcement of open housing when the focus is on a single black family rather than on blacks in general; yet, despite the increased discomfort, enforcement is not supported more in the one case than in the other.

Finally, on a methodological note, the between-subject experimentation used in this study has been the basis for most of the conclusions drawn thus far. In addition to the usually noted advantage of clarifying causal direction, experiments in surveys have more specific benefits. They reduce the reliance on pure self-report by respondents since an investigator can observe differences in self-reports under different conditions. They also encourage precision in developing and testing hypotheses, and they promote a step-by-step approach to additional development and testing across surveys. At the same time, survey-based experiments allow generalization to natural populations and thus avoid a major limitation of laboratory and other nonprobability sampling. Furthermore, the experimental results can be integrated readily into standard survey analyses that draw on the basic social and demographic variables that characterize natural populations as well as on other survey items that may be relevant to a particular substantive problem. In sum, survey-based experiments combine fruitfully the strengths of two quite different methods to offer insights that neither can provide alone.

of 575 respondents) were then asked: "How close do you feel toward others who are [R's ethnic or nationality group]—would you say you feel much closer to them than you do to other people, somewhat closer, about as close, or do you feel less close to them than you do to other people?" White respondents who say they feel much or somewhat closer to their own ethnic or nationality group are significantly more likely to express personal reservations about having a black neighbor (whether equated or not in income and education) than are those who do not claim particular closeness to their own ethnic or nationality group. However, support for enforcement of a black family's right to move into a white neighborhood is not related to the ethnic closeness question.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1
ITEMS USED IN RACIAL EXPERIMENTS*

	1985		1986					1987			
	Aug.	Sept.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	July	Sept.
1. Open-housing laws†	X	X	X	X							
2. Government enforcement:†											
a) Blacks vs. Japanese					X		X				
b) Blacks vs. Jews						X					
c) Blacks vs. Christians								X			
d) Blacks vs. open housing									X		
3. Mind a black neighbor†	X‡	X‡			X‡	X‡				X§	X§
4. Seat-belt law	X	X	X	X							
5. Trust in government	X	X									
6. Region: South vs. non-South	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
7. Education: 0-11, 12, 13-15, 16 + ...	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
8. Age: 18-29, 30-39, 40-59, 60 + ...	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Overall RDD response	.75	.67	.70	.70	.70	.69	.71	.70	.74		
N for whites	311	279	296	306	308	299	312	298	304	312	307
N for blacks	47	48	36	35	0	0	30	32	36	0	0

* Two other experiments on school integration and busing were included in the 1985 and 1986 surveys and are reported in Schuman and Bobo (1987).
† Experimentally varied.
‡ Variation included or omitted "same income and education as you."
§ Variation changed "black" to "Japanese-American."

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