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Source: *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (Oct., 1973), pp. 625-636
Published by: American Sociological Association
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2094412>
Accessed: 06/12/2009 14:48

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ATTITUDE AND ACTION: A FIELD EXPERIMENT JOINED TO A GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY *

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American Sociological Review 1973, Vol. 38 (October):625-636

We investigate the relationship between survey-elicited attitudes toward open housing and willingness to sign and have published a petition consistent with these attitudes for a probability sample of the white metropolitan Detroit population. The action phase was carried out three months after the survey and in complete dissociation from it. The overall attitude-action relationship is high, and improves when we include additional belief items from the survey as predictors. Information on perceived reference group expectations, material self-interest, and educational level does not prove to be related to attitude-action consistency. We also present data on the actions of survey non-respondents, and on the proportion of people willing or unwilling to sign any petition. Hypotheses are offered for the more positive findings on attitude-action consistency in this research as compared to some past studies.

MOST attitude-action studies since LaPiere's (1934) have been negative or mixed in results. A recent comprehensive review concluded that there is "little evidence to support the postulated existence of stable, underlying attitudes within the individual which influence both his verbal expression and his actions . . ." (Wicker, 1969: 75).¹ These studies have not, however, concentrated on the validity of typical survey questions in general populations, but have often used unusual inquiries (for example, willingness to pose for opposite sex interracial photographs, as in DeFleur and Wes-

tie, 1958, and Linn, 1965); special college populations (most recent racial studies except DeFries and Ford, 1968); or settings such as classrooms which might influence responses in ways different from the household interview (Warner and DeFleur, 1969; Himmelstein and Moore, 1963). None of these factors necessarily invalidates evidence from such studies, but we are left uncertain of their implications for the validity of standard cross-section attitude surveys.

The present investigation began with a fairly typical attitude question on an important social issue ("open housing") which was administered as part of a larger survey to a cross-section sample of a major American city. We then carried out a separate action experiment with this same sample. Obviously no single question can definitively test predictive validity, but executing a complex action experiment using a probability sample of the general population is a formidable undertaking, and this study is an initial step in a necessary direction. Beyond assessing predictive validity in a real survey context, we have three aims. First, we are interested in whether the two attitudinal sides of the issue, which differ markedly in proportions of proponents in this population, show similar associations between survey response and real action. Second, we ask whether the perceived attitudes of two im-

* This experiment was carried out within the University of Michigan 1969 Detroit Area Study, directed by Irwin Katz and Howard Schuman. The present report was written by Brannon and Schuman. The other authors, all graduate students in the Detroit Area Study at the time, were co-designers with Brannon of the action experiment and also contributed to revising this report. The suggestions of an anonymous referee were valuable.

¹ Wicker covers thirty-two studies, but a number are marginal to the basic attitude-action problem. The sixteen studies reviewed in the area of racial attitudes include much of the major research up to 1969, beginning with the more naturalistic studies of LaPiere (1934) and Kutner, Wilkins, and Yarrow (1952), and shifting to more elaborate experiments with college students, from DeFleur and Westie (1958) through Warner and DeFleur (1969). Other recent sceptical reviews are by Deutscher (1966, 1969).

portant reference groups (neighbors and spouses) affect the attitude-action association, again with the two different sides in mind.

The third aim is more complex. A basic variable in all attitude-action research is the degree to which one seeks congruence between the survey question (s) and the action stimulus. At one extreme, the goal is to use a variety of attitude questions to predict particular behaviors different from, but presumably connected to, the attitudes. At the other, one tries to measure a precise "behavioral intention" (Triandis and Davis, 1965) in the survey and then determine whether this behavior occurs as predicted in real life. Our data allow us to test the predictive power of several points along the continuum, from direct behavioral intention to sets of beliefs more indirectly relevant to the focal action.² At the same time, we also vary "action" in terms of the degree to which its public character is made salient to respondents.

OUTLINE OF THE ATTITUDE-ACTION EXPERIMENT

The present experiment was carried out within the framework of the 1969 Detroit Area Study. A two-stage probability sample of 640 white adults was interviewed in the metropolitan Detroit area in the spring of 1969. Interviews were conducted with the head or spouse of head, chosen at random, within each selected household. Persons seventy years of age and over were screened out, as were black households; but otherwise the sample is representative of the total Detroit city and suburban population.³ The

² Tittle and Hill (1967) insist that multi-item instruments always be used, but this does not confront the issue LaPiere and others have raised about whether hypothetical survey responses can simulate non-survey behavior. We do use a multi-measure approach in the course of analysis; but when several modestly intercorrelated items are combined from the start into a single complex index, its identity tends to become unclear. Validity, in the sense of understanding what one measures and why measures should be linked, is sacrificed for high reliability. Nor can one tell from such an index whether individuals are consistent in an absolute sense, as distinct from the relative standings provided by correlation.

³ For a full description of the sample design,

"action experiment" was carried out three months later with this same sample as subjects.

We chose the issue of "open housing" as a suitable one to examine from an attitude-action standpoint. On the one hand, it is an important social issue about which respondents are likely to have thought and formed opinions. On the other, we were able to create an action opportunity that could be totally divorced from the survey: a set of public petitions for or against open housing, supposedly for presentation to state leaders and publication in newspapers.⁴

Our main survey question, referred to as the housing law question, is shown in Table 1. The respondent was asked, during the hour-long survey, how he would vote on a referendum on open housing, with choices that we will henceforth refer to as (1) "Owner's Rights" and (2) "Open Housing."

geographic boundaries, and details of non-response, see Fields, 1969.

⁴ Open Housing is also used as the substantive issue in the research reported by DeFries and Ford (1969), but in that case the action measure was not separated from the interview situation.

Table 1. Housing Law Survey Question, with Percentages for Detroit White Adults

	Detroit Whites
<p>Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on: (PRESENT CARD TO RESPONDENT AND READ ALTERNATIVES). Which law would you vote for?</p>	
1. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself who to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to Negroes.	82%
2. The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color.	16
Neither (Volunteered)	1
D.K., N.A.	1
	100%
	N (640)

The marginal distribution for Detroit shows much greater opposition to Open Housing than support for it; both sides, however, included sufficient numbers to allow a prediction to action.

The action experiment involved the following steps. A member of a group of "concerned citizens" (actually graduate students dressed neatly and conventionally) circulated petitions supporting *either* "Open Housing" or "Owner's Rights" to each address at which we had earlier interviewed, as well as to some surrounding addresses for verisimilitude. To keep the action realistic, only one housing petition was presented to each respondent, in contrast to the forced choice provided in the survey. The petition was presented as a genuine attempt to influence the Governor and other state officials, and the circulators were unanimous in believing that all individuals contacted accepted the "realness" of the action situation and did not connect it with the earlier survey. The gap of three months, the difference in personnel, and the dissimilarity in presentation and content between the hour-long survey and the doorstep petition succeeded in dissociating the two completely.⁵

The action situation had one other important feature. We were concerned that some persons would hesitate to sign any petition from an unknown group, or indeed that some would refuse to open their doors. It seemed useful to identify chronic non-signers of this type, and to separate them from those who were refusing to sign because of the particular content of the petition. To handle this problem our "concerned citizens" first presented for signature a petition on what we had previously determined was a non-controversial issue in Michigan,

⁵ The success of the experiment obviously depended on deception regarding the real purpose of the action. This was one of two ethical problems that troubled the staff—the other being the circulation of some petitions that might reinforce opposition to open housing. Although absolute confidentiality has been maintained for all respondents and no participant has been injured in any way to our knowledge, deception itself is undesirable. We must justify it on the grounds that the experiment was important and that there was no other way to carry it out. Unlike most laboratory experiments, it was not practical to debrief respondents in this case.

the pollution of the great lakes.⁶ Addressed to the Governor and Senators of the state, the petition read as follows:

Yes, stop Pollution! As citizens of Michigan we are standing behind you 100% in your fight to stop the pollution of our lakes and rivers, which is now threatening fish, wildlife, and PEOPLE. Don't give up your fight to stop this threat.

This screening device will be referred to as the "pollution petition," and results bearing on it will be reported below.

Following the pollution petition, the respondent was told: "Our group has also taken a stand on another public issue. Would you please read this petition and, if you agree, sign it?" The respondent was then handed either a petition endorsing Open Housing or a petition endorsing Owner's Rights (following a sample design presented below).⁷ The two petitions, each addressed to the Governor, read as follows (minus the bracketed phrases):

[Owner's Rights Petition:] We believe that

⁶ This petition, and others to be described, consisted of single sheets containing the heading "Michigan Council of Concerned Citizens," followed by the petition statement, which in turn was followed by twenty-four lines for signatures in two columns. To avoid making the respondent the first signer, a standard set of signatures was entered on the first six lines. Thus fresh petitions were used for each address. The pollution petition was introduced by the statement: "Hello, I'm circulating a petition to help stop the water pollution that's about to destroy most of the lakes around Michigan. We'd like you to support this fight by signing this petition, if you agree with it." [HAND PETITION TO R].

⁷ The procedures used to locate the interview respondents within households were as follows: Only one adult at each address had actually been interviewed, but the petition circulators obviously could not directly ask to speak with this person. Each circulator therefore had a description by age and sex of the household composition and of the target respondent. The circulator visited the house at the time most appropriate for locating the respondent. If the spouse answered the door, the pollution petition was presented directly; then, before proceeding, the circulator asked the spouse to call the respondent (i.e., "your husband/wife") to learn if he or she would sign it. The housing petition was then presented to the correct respondent, as well as to the spouse. Only actions from original respondents are used in this report. Houses that did not yield such a respondent are counted as "not at home" in Figure 1.

it is the right of each homeowner to decide for himself to whom he will sell his house.

We urge you NOT to support any law which would force homeowners to sell to someone against their wishes, and if such a law is passed by the current legislature we ask you to veto it.
Signed:

[Open Housing Petition:] We believe that a person who has a home for sale Does Not and SHOULD NOT have the right to choose buyers on the basis of race, color, or religion.

We therefore urge you to support legislation this year which will end racial discrimination in housing, once and for all, in Michigan.
Signed:

To avoid any reminder of the earlier survey, the petitions were written with somewhat different wording than the two alternatives to the original housing law question. Unfortunately, in making these changes the term "religion" was added to the Open Housing petition—a blunder in retrospect. However, we are able, at least in part, to estimate the effect of this change in wording, and to control for it in our analysis. The other changes in wording are probably insignificant, but again in retrospect it seems both undesirable and unnecessary to have made even minor changes.

Those who signed the petition were

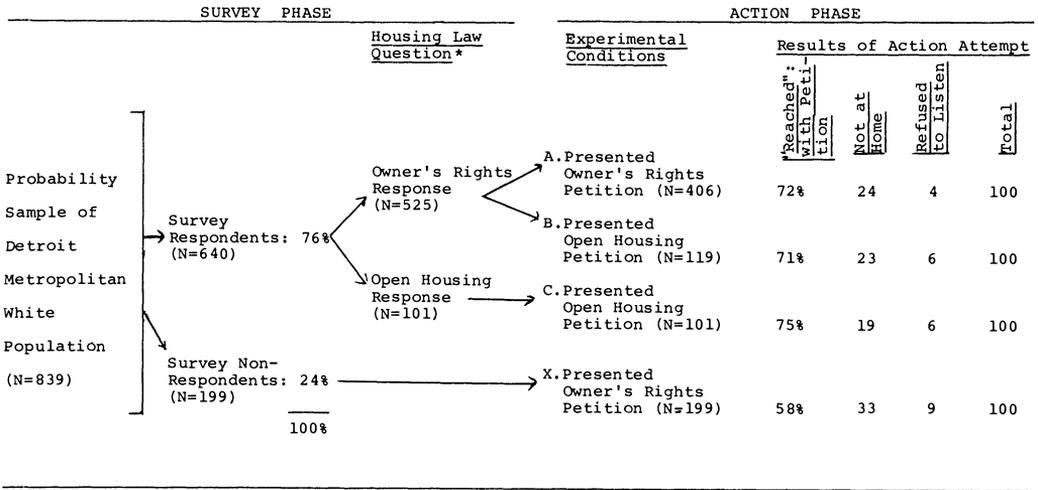
thanked and then asked to perform a stronger action: "We are also hoping to be able to take out some ads in the [two major Detroit newspapers], and reprint our petitions with lots of names of supporters. Would you be willing to be included in either or both of these if we do buy the ads?" Agreement to this action is referred to below as "signed with publicity."

Experimental Design

Figure 1 shows the design of the experiment. Those who had favored Owner's Rights in the survey were randomly divided into two groups: members of one group (Condition A) were presented the Owner's Rights petition, which was consistent with their survey response; members of the other group (Condition B) were presented the Open Housing petition, which expressed a position they had rejected in the earlier survey.⁸ Ideally we would have created a similar random allocation for respondents favoring

⁸ Examination of these two groups by age, education, sex, and several attitude questions show them to be virtually identical on each characteristic. The division of three-quarters (Condition A) and one-quarter (Condition B) was intended to allow at least one large group for finer analysis; in retrospect a fifty-fifty division might have proved more useful.

BASIC DESIGN OF ATTITUDE-ACTION EXPERIMENT



* Fourteen respondents (2%) were unable to make a choice on this question or said they would vote for neither law; due to the small size of this group they have not been included in subsequent tables or discussion, and percentages have been recalculated without them.

FIGURE 1

Open Housing in the survey; but since there were only 101, it seemed better to maintain the group intact for more reliable estimates of action; therefore all were presented the Open Housing petition (Condition C).

Not all respondents interviewed in the original survey could be located and presented a petition. The main problem was respondents not at home; only one call-back was attempted, since repeated call-backs in an action of this type could jeopardize credibility. A total of 144 respondents (28% of the three target categories combined) were finally classified as not-at-home for the action experiment. However, unlike most survey and experimental sampling, we have complete questionnaire information on these persons, and can thus assess the effect of their loss from the sample. The most germane information is their original response to the housing law question on the survey: as Figure 1 shows, the not-at-home loss is essentially the same over all three main experimental conditions ($\chi^2 = 0.76$, 2 d.f., n.s.). Comparisons on other survey questions also show no demographic or attitudinal differences from the total interview sample. The most reasonable assumption is that had these people been reached, they would not have changed our results.

More problematic are those who were contacted but refused to sign the pollution petition screening device and were therefore never presented a housing petition. Most of these simply refused to listen to the petition circulator, either not opening their door or closing it before the petitions were intro-

duced. Fortunately the number of such refusals is quite small (only twenty-eight respondents), and again Figure 1 shows them to be equally distributed over the three main action categories. We omitted these respondents from later results because apparently they were reacting to petitions in general, or perhaps simply to strangers. One might argue, however, that they should be considered attitude-action "inconsistents," in which case one could use the data presented in Figure 1 to recompute later findings. In either case, the number is so small that the changes in findings are slight and the changes in conclusions nil.

The addresses from the original survey sample that had not been successfully interviewed (survey non-respondents) were also included in the action design; for simplicity they were all presented the Owner's Rights petition (Condition X) the results of which will be discussed later. Both not-at-homes and refusals-to-listen during the action phase are somewhat larger among the survey non-respondents. This finding is not surprising, since these were the people not at home or unwilling to cooperate in the original survey.

RESULTS

Our initial findings on attitude-action consistency are presented in Table 2 and summarized below:

Extent of Consistent Agreement: Over two-thirds of the respondents on both sides of the issue (Conditions A and C) were willing to affirm their survey-elicited stand

Table 2. Consistency between Attitude Question and Action*

	Attitude Preference	Housing Petition Presented	Percentage Taking each Action			
			Refused to Sign	Signed Petition Only	Signed with Publicity	Total (N)
Condition A	Owner's rights	Owner's rights	15	26	85 59	100 (293)
Condition B	Owner's rights	Open housing	78	10	22 12	100 (85)
Condition C	Open housing	Open housing	30	12	70 58	100 (76) (453)

*This table includes all respondents in the survey who took a position on the housing issue and who in the action experiment were located and signed the Pollution petition.

by signing a petition. The percentages decline, though not remarkably in Condition A and C; when stronger action is requested: nearly three-fifths signed with publicity. We will discuss below design features that may have raised or lowered these percentages.

Comparison of Owner's Rights and Open Housing Respondents: Those espousing Owner's Rights in the survey showed more willingness to sign an Owner's Rights petition (85%) than did Open Housing proponents to sign an Open Housing petition (70%). The difference ($\chi^2 = 9.44$, 1 d.f., $p < .01$) suggests that those who characterize themselves in a survey as favoring open housing are more timid about affirming this in action (or conceivably less sincere in their survey responses) than those who oppose open housing. However, of those who did agree to sign the petition, Open Housing proponents were more apt to follow through with stronger action;⁹ and thus the two sides do not differ when signing with publicity is considered the criterion of action. We can offer no neat interpretation of this pattern of results, but are inclined to regard the two sides as essentially similar in attitude-action consistency.

Contradiction Between Attitude and Action. Although a surprisingly high proportion of the sample shows itself to be consistent with respect to agreement, such apparent affirmation could be exaggerated by the pressure to sign a petition in the action situation. It is essential to know what happens to respondents asked to sign a petition which contradicts their original position. (We know of no events in the Detroit area between the survey and the action phase which would have led to systematic real change in attitude over this period.) We have data on this for Owner's Rights respondents who were presented the Open Housing petition: In Condition B we see that 78% of this group refused to sign, and 22% did sign. Thus, most respondents did not simply sign whatever was presented to them. Moreover, the decline for signed with publicity is greater in Condition B than

in Condition C ($\chi^2 = 5.36$, 1 d.f., $p < .05$) or A ($\chi^2 = 1.50$, n.s.), suggesting that inconsistent action is weaker than action in line with attitude.

Overall Consistency. To estimate overall consistency for Owner's Rights respondents, one can simply average those in Condition A who acted consistently and those in Condition B who were consistent in withholding action. If the two conditions are weighted equally, then of those who had originally favored Owner's Rights, 81.5% acted by signing, and 73.5% by signing with publicity, as would be consistent with their attitude. These figures seem high indeed. Similar figures cannot be computed for Open Housing proponents because the necessary "Condition D" is not available.¹⁰

The above results do not take into account the wording change noted earlier between the Open Housing alternative to the survey question and the Open Housing petition. The latter referred to outlawing discrimination with respect to "race, color, or religion," while the former referred only to "race or color." Once the import of the discrepancy was fully recognized, we hypothesized that its effect would be to make Catholics and Jews—the groups more likely to be sensitive to religious discrimination—sign the Open Housing petition (Conditions B and C) more readily than they would have had we paralleled the survey question exactly. There are nonsignificant trends in this direction. Although Catholics and Jews do not differ from Protestants in their survey responses, they are more likely than Protestants to sign the open housing petitions in both Conditions B and C. (When signing

¹⁰ Note that it is incorrect, however, to compare the 70% signing in Condition C with a chance expectation of 50% signing (as from coin-flipping). To calculate the "chance" rate of signing for the total population, one must average the percentages of signers in Conditions B and C in Table 2, but with each condition weighted by the proportion of the total survey sample it represents: 378 for Condition B (since that condition estimates what all Owner's Right respondents would do if presented an Open Housing petition) and seventy-six for Condition C. This weighted average is only 30%; hence without prior knowledge of survey responses, we expect only 30% of the total Detroit population to sign an Open Housing petition. The same considerations hold for signing with publicity.

⁹ Based on signed petition vs. signed with publicity, Conditions A vs. C, ($\chi^2 = 3.51$, 1 d.f., $p < .10$). All Pearson χ^2 statistics are corrected for continuity, and all are evaluated as two-tailed.

with publicity is the criterion of action, these differential trends are quite small.) In Condition A, where no such change of wording is involved, there is no difference at all by religion in willingness to sign the Owner's Rights petition. All further analysis was carried out with a control for religion, but that level of control does not affect the findings to be presented and will not be included in tables below.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHER SURVEY INFORMATION

We will now examine several types of additional information provided by the original survey in an effort to increase the basic attitude-action association and to interpret it. To conserve space, only the results for the stronger action, "signed with publicity," will ordinarily be presented; identical analyses using all signers yield the same conclusions.

Reference Group Pressures

Both the open housing issue and the doorstep setting for the action should make the opinions of neighbors particularly relevant. Therefore, after respondents gave their own preferences to the housing law question in the survey, they were asked which law "your neighbors right around here would want you to vote for." The great majority (93%) replied without qualification that the Owner's Rights position would be supported in their neighborhood. Respondents who favored Owner's Rights were even more unanimous in this perception, leaving too few cases to permit further analysis. Respondents favoring Open Housing (Condition C) show some variation: 67% perceived their neighbors as favoring Owner's Rights, but 33% thought that at least some of their neighbors favored Open Housing. But these groups did not differ in their behavior: of those perceiving their neighbors in unanimous support of Owner's Rights, 62% (of forty-seven cases) signed the Open Housing petition; of those perceiving some Open Housing support among their neighbors, 57% (of twenty-three cases) signed. The difference is slight, and opposite to that predicted by reference group theory.¹¹

¹¹ Fields (1971) provides evidence from this same

We did not ask respondents how their spouses would answer the housing law question, but later in the interview we did ask whether their spouses' views were generally "more favorable toward Negroes than yours, the same as yours, or less favorable." N's become quite small for this analysis, but again there is no sign that attitude-action consistency is higher when respondents perceive attitudinal support from their spouses.

Material Self-Interest

Consistency might be expected to be greater among those whose material interests supported (or were believed by respondents to support) their original survey response. Two tests of this assumption were devised. First, we hypothesized that home-owning respondents (82% of the sample) would be more consistent than non-owners in Condition A (Owner's Rights) and less consistent than non-owners in Condition C (Open Housing). A control of the attitude-action relationship by home ownership for each condition gave no evidence of such an effect. Results are slightly and non-significantly opposite to those predicted by this hypothesis.

Second, we hypothesized that consistency in Condition A would be highest in white neighborhoods within Detroit, since black pressure for housing can be presumed greatest there; less in white suburbs contiguous to Detroit; and least in white suburbs remote from the central city. The exact opposite ordering was expected for Condition C. In fact, analysis with this control shows only slight and non-significant ($\chi^2 = 0.87$, 2. d.f.) predicted variation by area for Condition A, and a non-significant trend ($\chi^2 = 1.51$) generally opposite to prediction for Condition C (least consistency for remote suburb respondents). Thus, for neither test do the material interests of respondents, as they are likely to perceive them, help explain inconsistency between survey response and action.

Cognitive Sophistication of Respondents

It seemed probable that consistency would survey on the degree of accuracy of perceptions of neighbors' expectations. However, only if the perceptions were related to respondent consistency would this become a relevant variable for the present analysis.

be higher among better educated persons. Such respondents might be more likely to integrate their attitudes in word and deed and to feel a need for consistency (Converse, 1964); they should also be better at understanding both the survey and the action situations. However, examination of the percentage signing at each of three educational levels (≤ 11 grades, 12, 13+) does not reveal significant improvement in consistency in any condition, nor parallel trends for the three conditions.

Behavioral Intention

All the predictions from attitude thus far have been based on the question in Table 1 about preference for one housing law or the other. We also asked respondents in the survey whether or not they would sign a petition supporting the law they favored: 94% said they would sign and 6% that they would not, with almost identical percentages for the two sides of the housing law issue. The distribution is so skewed that the question could not have made much difference in our basic findings, but we would expect that those who claimed to be willing to sign would be more likely to do so than those who claimed they would not.

Signing both with and without publicity are combined in Table 3 to maximize congruence between the survey question on behavioral intention and the action tested. The trend difference (11%) is in the expected direction, but not significant. Even if the difference were reliable, it is striking that three-quarters of the twenty persons

who said in advance they would not sign such a petition did in fact sign. Quite likely, the act of having signed the pollution petition encouraged respondents to sign a second petition with which they also tended to agree (Freedman and Fraser, 1966), though we saw earlier that it did not force many respondents to sign a petition with which they disagreed (Condition B). Thus consistency appears to be much greater when an important substantive issue is at stake for respondents; where the decision to sign must be based on other than substantive grounds, the pressures of the immediate situation understandably have more power to effect action or inaction. In any case, contrary to our expectation, the need to measure "behavioral intention" directly does not find much support in this experiment.

Other Racial Beliefs Related to the Housing Law Issue

Our measure of housing law preference (Table 1) was a single dichotomous item. It forced respondents to choose between alternatives, but did not measure the intensity, certainty, or meaningfulness with which they made the choice, nor the extent to which that choice fits their other beliefs and attitudes. At this point we will consider two types of racial beliefs which might be relevant to the housing law issue.

The first we measured through an open question on the consequences of residential integration: "If two or three Negro families move into a white neighborhood, do you see any sorts of problems as likely to arise?"

Table 3. Percentage Signing Owner's Rights Petition of Those Who Said in the Survey They Would or Would Not Sign (Condition A Only)

Behavioral Intention	Action		Total*	
	Refused to Sign	Signed, with or without Publicity	%	N
Yes, would sign Owner's Rights petition	14	86	100%	(266)
No, would not sign Owner's Rights petition	25	75	100%	(20)

*Seven respondents failed to answer the survey question on signing a petition, thus reducing the total from the 293 shown in Condition A in Table 2. There are too few cases saying they would not sign in Conditions B and C to allow testing.

Table 4. Percentage Signing and Not Signing by Belief about Whether Problems Occur when Negroes Move into a Neighborhood

	Action		Total	
	Not Signing, Signing with- out Publicity	Signed with Publicity	%	N
Condition A--(Owner's Rights Attitude- Owner's Rights Petition)				
Yes, problems when Negroes move in	34	66	100	(228)
No, not problems	76	24	100	(53)
Condition B--(Owner's Rights Attitude- Open Housing Petition)				
Yes, problems when Negroes move in	90	10	100	(60)
No, not problems	80	20	100	(20)
Condition C--(Open Housing Attitude- Open Housing Petition)				
Yes, problems when Negroes move in	46	54	100	(50)
No, not problems	30	70	100	(23)

Condition A: $\chi^2 = 29.08$, 1 d.f., $p < .001$.

Condition B: $\chi^2 = 0.61$, 1 d.f., n.s.

Condition C: $\chi^2 = 1.00$, 1 d.f., n.s.

One-fourth of the respondents felt that no problems were likely to arise, while three-fourths mentioned a variety of problems that might ensue, some due to the supposed behaviors of Negroes and others to the probable reactions of whites. The association between this variable and the original housing law question is slight for the entire survey sample ($\phi = .05$), but parallel differences in consistency occur within all three experimental conditions when the "problems" item is introduced as a control (see Table 4). The greatest differentiation appears for Condition A: 66% of those Owner's Rights respondents who believed that problems occur when Negro families move into a neighborhood also signed with publicity the Owner's Rights petition, as against 24% of those who thought no problems would occur.¹² We interpret the high degree of inconsistency for the latter group as a result of internal conflict between attitude and supporting beliefs on the part of the small subsample involved (N = 53), although one

can also regard the two questions as simply alternative indicators of a more general attitudinal construct and thus attribute the inconsistency to "measurement error." Our data do not allow us to distinguish these interpretations.

The differences in Conditions B and C, where the N's are smaller, are not significant taken separately; but in each condition our prediction of consistency rises noticeably if we consider responses to the problems question along with the original housing law question. However, for Condition C the improvement covers only a third (twenty-three) of the original seventy-six respondents, suggesting that much inconsistency in this condition is due to the adherence of many open housing respondents to a principle in conflict with their beliefs about the results of putting the principle into effect.¹³ Again, however, the improvement could simply be the result of better measurement because more items are added.

If Conditions B and C are treated as cate-

¹² The types of problems mentioned on the opened part of this question had almost no differential influence on whether a respondent signed; those who saw the problems as due to Negroes' misbehavior and those who blamed panic or overreaction by whites were equally willing or unwilling to sign the petition and to allow publicity.

¹³ Judging from the types of problems they mentioned, these people tend to blame whites rather than blacks for the "problems." Nevertheless, the conscious awareness of any problem seems to reduce willingness to sign an open housing petition, although an even lower rate of signing occurs for those few in Condition C who blamed blacks.

gories of one independent variable and problems/no problems as categories of a second, their combined effect in Table 4 on signing with publicity can be examined. The effect is additive (the likelihood-ratio χ^2 for rejecting the additive model is 0.03, 1 d.f., n.s.) and the partial association of each independent variable with signing is significant beyond the .05 level. The variable "condition" appears to be a good deal stronger than the variable "problems," as indicated by a comparison of the percentage difference in signing with publicity that each makes. The unweighted average difference due to "condition" is 47%, that due to "problems" is 13%. Since "condition" here represents response to the housing law question, this result simply shows that our main attitude item is a better predictor of the signing action than is the question on problems.

If beliefs about the consequences of residential integration are important in reinforcing attitudes toward the housing law issue, what about more general white beliefs about blacks? A four-item index of the tendency to believe in common negative racial stereotypes was used, high scores being obtained

by saying that whites have superior morals, more ambition, take better care of their families, and are less inclined toward violence than blacks.¹⁴ Table 5 presents the effect of this variable (trichotomized) within each attitude-action condition.

Within each condition the effect of the stereotyping index is in the direction expected: those high on stereotyping were more likely to sign an Owner's Rights petition (Condition A), and less likely to sign an Open Housing petition (Conditions B and C). But the effects are a bit less strong here than for the single question on housing problems, despite the greater differentiation and reliability provided by the four-item

¹⁴ The questions were worded as follows: "Regardless of how differences come about, do you think that being inclined toward violence is more true of whites, more true of Negroes, or about equally true of Negroes and whites." The same format was used for the other three items. Each item is scored 1 if the negative belief was held about blacks, 0 in other cases, yielding an index that runs from 0 to 4. Intercorrelations among the four items range from .21 to .36, and coefficient alpha for the four-item scale is .61. The association (Cramer's ϕ) between this index and the original housing law question is .18.

Table 5. Percentage Signing and Not Signing by Tendency to Stereotype^a

	Action		Total	
	Not Signing, Not Signing with Publicity	Signed with Publicity	%	N
Condition A--(Owner's Rights Attitude- Owner's Right, Petition)				
High stereotyping (3 & 4) ^b	35	65	100	(128)
Medium stereotyping (2)	33	67	100	(57)
Low stereotyping (0 & 1)	53	47	100	(87)
Condition B--(Owner's Rights Attitude- Open Housing Petition)				
High stereotyping (3 & 4)	94	6	100	(36)
Medium stereotyping (2)	85	15	100	(27)
Low stereotyping (0 & 1)	85	15	100	(13)
Condition C--(Open Housing Attitude- Open Housing Petition)				
High stereotyping (3 & 4)	50	50	100	(16)
Medium stereotyping (2)	44	56	100	(18)
Low stereotyping (0 & 1)	39	61	100	(36)

^aSignificance tests--Condition A: $\chi^2 = 8.26$, d.f. = 2, $p < .02$.

Condition B: $\chi^2 = 1.80$, d.f. = 2, n.s.

Condition C: $\chi^2 = 0.58$, d.f. = 2, n.s.

^bStereotype index scores are shown in parentheses.

stereotyping index. This finding suggests that a general measure of racial beliefs adds less to predicting action than questions about beliefs tied more directly to the action issue.

INFORMATION ON SURVEY NON-RESPONDENTS

The non-respondents' addresses from the original survey were added to our action phase, and more than half (58%) were reached and asked to sign the Owner's Rights petition. Of these non-respondents, 51% signed with publicity, as against 59% of the survey respondents (Condition A, Table 2). If we assume that the non-respondents would have divided on the housing law issue in the survey in the same way as the respondents (84% favoring Owner's Rights, 16% favoring Open Housing), the 51% signing figure is exactly what we would expect.¹⁵ Perhaps survey non-respondents in our study do not differ appreciably, at least on the issue of open housing, from those actually interviewed. If so, the view sometimes put forth (Schuman and Gruenberg, 1970, Appendix A) that white non-respondents are disproportionately conservative on racial issues would be contradicted.

DISCUSSION

This study revealed greater attitude-action consistency than past research and reviews would suggest. Setting aside chance as an explanation, we can hypothesize for future research three reasons for the greater consistency.

1. The survey question and action dealt with an issue on which attitudes in the general population are better-formed and more firmly held than is true for much past research. It is likely that attitude-action consistency is substantially correlated with attitude stability over time.
2. The attitude object (housing laws) in

this research remained relatively constant between survey and action. When attitude is measured toward abstract social categories ("blacks" in general) and action is tested toward concrete individuals, the object itself changes. In this connection, it should be emphasized that the present research does not challenge the position that behavior is highly particularized, rather than flowing from a few master motives or attitudes. But this is true even within the same survey questionnaire (Schuman, 1972), and represents a different problem from that of whether we can predict from attitude item to non-survey action.

3. Household interviews may obtain a more valid measure of attitudes than questionnaires distributed in classrooms by faculty members. Respondents generally perceive professional interviewers to be neutral (Hyman, 1954), but this may be less true of student perceptions in a classroom or laboratory setting administered by faculty members. The balanced forced-choice structure of the original housing law question may also have improved the validity of the main attitude question.

We did not find perceived reference group expectations, material self-interests, or educational level to affect attitude-action consistency. These factors are no doubt important in shaping both attitudes and their expression, but perhaps here such influences were already incorporated into responses to the original survey question. Reference group expectations might have had more impact had they been called to the attention of subjects during the action phase, (e.g., neighbors' signatures on the petition) but without such explicit notice they seem not to have distinctive effects on action. We did find additional related belief questions useful in predicting action, though we cannot demonstrate that beliefs as such are critical; perhaps additional measures of the attitude itself (e.g., intensity) would have served as well or better. Finally, our findings on the limited value of measuring behavioral intention *per se*, and on the decrease in pre-

¹⁵ We must assume here that the 16% Open Housing non-respondents would sign the Owner's Rights petition at the same rate of inconsistency (22%) as indicated in Table 2, Condition B, and that the 84% Owner's Rights non-respondents sign at the rate of 59% shown in Table 2, Condition A. The expected signing figure on these assumptions is 51%.

dictive power as the action called for became stronger (or perhaps simply more distant from the attitude question), indicate the complexity of the terms "attitude" and "action." Exactly what we predict from, and what to, in attitude surveys needs further theoretical clarification.

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