

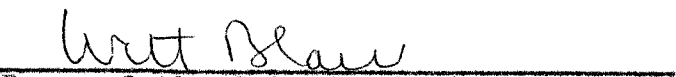


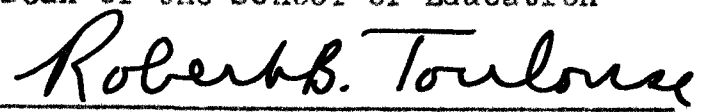
RIGIDITY: A FUNCTION OF ETHNIC ATTITUDES

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RIGIDITY: A FUNCTION OF ETHNIC ATTITUDES

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## CHAPTER I

### PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Over the past centuries, man has involved himself with moral and religious questions. In the time of Plato there was the discussion of justice and the rights of man. Man has not come far since then in his search for truth on the philosophical level (4). Man is still discussing the questions of Plato in relation to justice. In the United States today the question of justice is especially discussed in relation to the racial problem that has arisen between the Negro Americans and Anglo-Americans. The moral and religious issues swing to and fro. One group maintains there is a God-given difference between the races and that it is our religious obligation to support it. Others say there is no way that a person can conceive of a just God who would discriminate on the basis of skin color. So it goes--many oppose segregation and many fight for segregation on both religious and moral grounds. Often each will cite the same example to prove the validity of their argument.

No matter what position a person holds toward the Negro American on a religious or moral ground, there are those to stand with him and those to fight him. It is very unlikely

that the issues will be reconciled at any near date. The very nature of the problem involving religious or moral issues limits its discussion to opinions and beliefs.

Some feel that science has no place in this area (5, pp. 3-5), yet it is the nature of social psychology as a science to study the effects of various phenomena on the society and the individual. Within this framework it was the purpose of the present investigation to study one aspect of the race problem and its effects upon a selected sample of Anglo-Americans and Negro Americans. No attempt was made to treat the moral and religious issues associated with the problem. Science never says what a person should or should not do. Science only tells him how to do it, and what the results of it will be. At least, this is the aim of science (6, pp. 1-3).

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of segregation on the flexibility of individuals in the Negro and Anglo-American ethnic groups and to investigate the relationship between variations in flexibility and sociometric choices within the peer group.

The measure of flexibility or of constriction and stereotyped response was defined as a score achieved on the Inventory of Beliefs (3, p. 19). This inventory was developed by the American Council on Education to isolate those individuals who

have trouble in the humanities due to their stereotyped way of responding to verbal stimuli (3, p. 4).

The Bonney-Fessenden Sociograph was administered to the test population in order to ascertain their sociometric status in relation to their peer group. The Bonney-Fessenden Sociograph is a technique utilized to elicit the attraction and repulsions of individuals in the group setting (2, pp. 258-263).

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in that the analysis of the data gathered and generalizations drawn from the results of the experiment must be applied only to other populations which are composed of adolescents and other populations where a similar situation exists.

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were derived from the proposition that there are measurable variations in flexibility of individuals of different ethnic groups, when one group holds a minority group position which is low in status. The hypotheses were also derived from the proposition that individuals who are more flexible will occupy a preferred position in the peer group than those showing more rigidity (1, p. 38).

Hypotheses 1. In a segregated school system, Anglo-American adolescents will be significantly more flexible

than Negro American adolescents when flexibility is measured by the Inventory of Beliefs.

Hypothesis 2. There will be no significant difference between the flexibility of Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents in an integrated school system as measured by the Inventory of Beliefs.

Hypothesis 3. High choice Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents will score above the mean on the Inventory of Beliefs in a segregated school system.

Hypothesis 4. High choice Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents will score above the mean on the Inventory of Beliefs in the integrated school system.

Hypothesis 5. There will be a significant difference on scores made on the Inventory of Beliefs between the integrated and segregated school systems, with the integrated being the more flexible.



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## CHAPTER II

### RELATED LITERATURE

It is recognized at the present time that the personalities of individuals in a group affect the group as well as the group affects the personality of each individual in the group.

Careful research in the past quarter-century has demonstrated that the individual does not exist per se, but in mutual relationship with others; that the group likewise has no independent existence, but is a pattern of interacting persons, producing and produced by a situational context. The group is thus a network of psychological relationships, not a mystical entity (2, p. 39).

A question of paramount importance arises at this point. To what extent is segregation related to such personality factors as flexibility and rigidity? It is readily seen that there is an indirect relationship because of the interactional process between the individual and his group. Segregation is a group process which is therefore interrelated to the personality of the individuals involved in the various groups.

A more basic relationship exists, though it is less apparent on the surface. Horney examines this in relation to the personality of the child:

A wide range of adverse factors in the environment can produce this insecurity in a child: direct or indirect domination, indifference, erratic behavior, lack of respect for the child's individual needs, lack of

real guidance, disparaging attitudes, too much admiration or the absence of it, lack of reliable warmth, having to take sides in parental disagreements, overprotection, isolation from other children, injustice discrimination, unkept promises, hostile atmosphere, and so on and so on (7, p. 41).

Fromm, on the other hand, emphasizes this point in his description of the ideal society:

. . . in which man relates to man lovingly, in which he is rooted in bonds of brotherliness and solidarity . . . a society which gives him the possibility of transcending nature by creating rather than destroying, in which everyone gains a sense of self by experiencing himself as the subject of his power rather than by conformity, in which a system or orientation and devotion exists without man's needing to distort reality and to worship idols. . . . (6, p. 362).

Bonner brings this into clear focus in his treatment of the effects of segregation on the minority group:

The minority group develops a sense of isolation, inferiority, and insecurity, not to mention an accompanying hostility which develops as a mode of defense. The dominant group, whose change is more subtle and hence usually unrecognized, suffers, too, in the face of their discrimination. No society can be said to be healthy which stunts the growth to its minority groups. Cohesiveness is bound to be injured by discrimination, and where poverty and substandard communities are by-products of this differentiation, the total economy inevitably suffers (2, p. 139).

A close inspection of what Bonner, Fromm, and Horney have said reveals that segregation does play a part which is closely related to the personality of the individuals. How nearly the factors which, Horney contend, foster security in the child agree with what Bonner has said in regard to the effects of segregation. Fromm's ideal society is in almost exact disagreement with what is presented as a picture of

a society in which segregation and discrimination exist as reported by Bonner.

It was the contention of this study that the same situations which are involved on a family level in the rearing of a child are also involved on a broader range in the social relations between minority and majority groups. The same factors as mentioned by Horney affect the subculture minority group in the same manner as they do the child.

The problems faced in the South when forced integration was used by the Supreme Court give evidence of the discrimination that exists. One may safely conclude in the light of this evidence, as well as the evidence quoted earlier, that a relationship exists between the Anglo-Americans and Negro Americans that is not always desirable from a mental health point of view. The subculture is treated in such a way as to foster insecurity and inferiority for the minority group, and to block its growth as a part of our modern society.

Bonney has this to say on inferiority:

. . . a child may suffer from inferiority feelings due to (1) some kind of obvious physical defect or limitation, (2) lack of proficiency in the kinds of skills emphasized in a particular situation, (3) arbitrary discrimination against him due to his race, nationality, or religion . . . (3, p. 47).

Cronbach has this to say about rigidity of the individual:

Poor thinkers are rigid. The rigid person clings to one perception and overlooks alternatives. Rigidity is associated with emotional tension and lack of confidence . . . (6, p. 286).

When one considers the foregoing research, the following relationships become apparent. Segregation and discrimination exist in such a manner as to retard the development of the minority group by developing feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and rebellion. This may be harmful to the whole society in that it reduces the productivity of the society by coercing the minority group.

The psychologists' views cited on personality development of the child give examples of what will produce feelings of insecurity and inferiority in the child. The same attitudes are found in relation to the minority group, and evidence points to the effect of this attitude's being as significant to the minority group as it is to the child's development. In conclusion, then, one may assume that the Negro will show evidence of this relationship by reacting in a more rigid manner on the Inventory of Beliefs as an expression of stereotyped response. This reaction should decrease in the integrated system, and similar scores as previously stated should exist.

The hypotheses of this study state that a relationship between level of rigidity and sociometric choice will exist. If an individual is rigid and stereotyped in his response to the questions on the Inventory of Beliefs, it is believed that his social reaction will be affected in such a way as to affect his ability to relate well to others. It is not

felt that he will be unable to relate, but rather that this relation will be influenced in such a manner by his rigidity to be of a dominating or submissive variety rather than a healthy appreciation of others. Because of the type of relationship he strives to establish, it is hypothesized that his sociometric status will be lower than those who are less rigid than he.

It may be important to examine one other group of studies related to segregation. While these particular studies are not central to the theoretical position of this investigation, they are necessary in understanding the development of the attitude that exists between the ethnic groups.

Cothran found in his study of the Negroes' conception of the "white" stereotype that the Negro, to be sure, had a well-structured stereotype of the "white" person. There was considerable conformity to the stereotype conception. The Negroes believed that the "white" person did not like him and that the "white" person could easily be fooled by flattery. It was this point about flattery that was used to explain the reaction of Negroes to "whites" in many instances. The lower the education and the social level of the Negro, the more he accepted the stereotype of the "white" man (4, p. 467).

The "white" person's stereotype was studied and the following was stated in regard to it:

Negro residents are not very likely to conform to the typical stereotypes held by many white persons;

moreover, for reasons already mentioned, they are in many ways very much like the white residents. Within a project, the white residents with the greatest opportunity to observe these similarities are those who live near Negroes. As a result, such residents might be expected to hold fewer stereotyped notions than the white residents who live further away from Negroes. . . . It is clear that women living far from Negroes were, on the average, twice as likely as women living near Negroes to occupy the more prejudiced end of the scale (10, pp. 59-60).

In concluding this chapter on related literature, there could be no better statement of the essence of this entire study than the following made by Allport:

Any psychologists who admit these basic mechanisms of categorization, displacement, rationalization to good standing ought to admit the product of their joint operation. Prejudice is something and does something. It is not the invention of liberals. Its importance in society merely adds urgency to what is in any case a basic psychological problem (1, p. 6).

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## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

The subjects used for this investigation were selected from an integrated and segregated high school population. A total of fifty-six students in their junior and senior years in high school were utilized. Twenty-eight of the subjects were drawn from a segregated system, with fourteen of the twenty-eight coming from a Negro American school and fourteen from an Anglo-American school. The remaining twenty-eight students were drawn from an integrated system of which fourteen were Negro American and fourteen were Anglo-American students. All subjects in the integrated and segregated systems knew the members of their respective groups.

The students in the integrated school came from a city in the south central part of Texas. The segregated school from which the other subjects were drawn was located about two hundred miles from the other school, in the central part of Texas. The latter town is somewhat smaller than the city in which the integrated school system is located.

The difference in town size reflects the difference in social attitudes toward the Negro American. Greater social

distance exists between the Negro Americans and Anglo-Americans in the smaller town, while the students from the larger town have a greater chance of being accepted by their peers and adults because of the larger, more diversified population.

#### Description of the Instrument

The Inventory of Beliefs was developed by the American Council on Education to isolate those individuals who will have difficulty in the study of humanities in college due to their rigid way of thinking. The rigidity here refers to a strict responding to statements which represent a stereotyped way of thinking. It does not directly relate to a rigid personality type involving behavioral rigidity characteristics, necessarily. It would be possible for the two types of rigidity to be related, but that is not the present problem under study.

The Inventory of Beliefs contains 120 items which represent stereotyped views held by some persons on a wide number of topics. Topics such as art, science, religion, sex, race, politics, and so on, are included. By responding to each item on the four-point scale, the subject is then given a rigidity score. The subject is asked to (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree. One point is then given for each item for which the subject chooses either answer three or answer four; one point is given for any disagreement with the statements. A score below forty

is considered to show enough rigidity that the individual's performance in the humanities will be affected.

The sociometric test is self-explanatory. The students were asked to react to the criteria previously stated, and the choices received by each person were tabulated.

The validity of the Inventory of Beliefs has been demonstrated to be sufficient to warrant its use. Wide standardization tests have been run which indicate that the Inventory is both reliable and valid (1, pp. 9-12).

The sociometric test has face validity, and this is the only type of validity that will necessarily be needed in this technique.

#### Procedure

Subjects were gathered in a room and were asked for their cooperation. It was explained to them that this was a research project and that their names would not be used. It was stressed at the same time that an honest answer was needed, and they were urged to be truthful and answer every question.

After general questions had been answered, the subjects were asked to come by a desk and pick up an Inventory of Beliefs, an answer sheet, and a three-by-five card. As they picked up these items, they were asked to sign their names on the blackboard which was in front of the room. The names were numbered after the subjects had started working on the Inventory of Beliefs, and a copy of the names and corresponding numbers was made at this time.

After the subjects had received their tests and were all seated, the general instructions on the first page of the In-ventory were read aloud while they followed along. Again, it was stressed that each question be answered and that each be answered to the best of their ability. The subjects were told again that there were no right or wrong answers and that it was not a test but an inventory. Any other questions that arose were answered at this time; then they were allowed to start.

When the subjects were through with the Inventory, they were told to put their name, number, age, sex, and race on the top of the answer sheet. When all the subjects were finished, they were told to pass in their Inventory of Beliefs and the answer sheets.

The subjects were then told to take the three-by-five cards and write their name and number at the top (their number being the one assigned to them on the board). They were then told to write the numbers corresponding to the names on the board on their cards. The following statement was read to them at this point:

If you were going to apply for a job, make a list of all of those whom you would like to go along with you of those who are listed on the board. If there are some listed whom you really do not want to go, list them also. Make your selection by drawing a circle around the number that corresponds to the name of the person or persons you would like to go along and draw a line through the number corresponding to the person or persons you would not like to go along, if there are any. You may choose to take, or not to take, as many

as you like. If you do not care about some of them either way, do nothing to their number. Circle or draw a line through those whom you really would like to go or not to go.

Subsequent questions were answered, and an example was placed on the board. The subjects were told to raise their hands if they had any questions or problems, and these were answered.

The same procedure was carried out in each of the groups of subjects tested. Excellent rapport seemed to exist between the subjects and the investigator. The subjects were relaxed and at ease and did not seem to be under any stress. Students were allowed to ask questions before and during the test in order to involve them more in answering the inventory and in the belief that this permissive attitude would further rapport.

#### Statistical Treatment

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 5 were tested as null hypotheses employing a  $t$ , small-sample theory (2, pp. 112-114).

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were analyzed by direct comparison of individual scores with their respective means.

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## CHAPTER IV

### EXAMINATION OF FINDINGS

In Chapter I five specific hypotheses were developed. In order to test these hypotheses, a small-sample theory was utilized together with direct comparisons of means (1, p. 152).

A review of these specific hypotheses is appropriate at this point. They are as follows:

1. In a segregated school system, Anglo-American adolescents will be significantly more flexible than Negro American adolescents when flexibility is measured by the Inventory of Beliefs.

2. There will be no significant difference between the flexibility of Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents in an integrated school system as measured by the Inventory of Beliefs.

3. High choice Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents will score above the mean on the Inventory of Beliefs in a segregated school system.

4. High choice Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents will score above the mean on the Inventory of Beliefs in the integrated school system.

5. There will be a significant difference on scores made on the Inventory of Beliefs between the integrated and

segregated school systems, with the integrated being the more flexible.

In each case the null hypothesis shall be statistically tested. Hypotheses three and four shall use the direct comparisons of the means rather than the null hypotheses. The mean score of the group shall be compared with the mean score of the high choice individuals of the group.

High choice or high sociometric status is defined in this study as any person who scores one or more choices than the average for his group.

#### Statistical Data

As previously stated, the age was controlled to a range of three years by using only the junior and senior students for a test population. Also, the students were all passing their schoolwork satisfactorily. This was determined by checking with their teachers and looking at their present records.

Intelligence was not specifically controlled, for there is no indication that intelligence will be a factor that will affect the results of the test as long as the students are able to read and understand the questions asked. All the students were able to do this without any difficulty.

The factor of male and female sex arrangement was controlled as far as possible. There was an attempt to assign an equal number of males and females to each of the groups.



The distribution of sex according to groups is shown in Table I. In view of Table I, it is evident that the dispersion of sexes in the various groups was closely matched.

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF SEX ACCORDING TO GROUPS

Type of School System	Ethnic Group	Male	Female	Total
Integrated	Negro	7	7	28
	White	7	7	
Segregated	Negro	7	7	28
	White	8	6	

An analysis of the scores obtained from individuals in the segregated schools is presented in Table II.

TABLE II  
ANALYSIS OF SCORES ON INVENTORY OF BELIEFS OBTAINED FROM STUDENTS IN SEGREGATED SCHOOLS

Ethnic Group	Mean	S.D.	<u>t</u>	Level of Significance
Negro American	47.7	8.70	4.01	.001
Anglo-American	60.1	7.63		

An inspection of Table II indicates the scores of the Anglo-American group in the segregated school are higher and indicative of less rigidity at the .01 level of confidence.

Data on the group selected from the integrated school are presented in Table III. As Table III shows, in the integrated school the Negro Americans, as a group, scored higher than the Anglo-American students. The average score of the Negro Americans was larger, defining them as the less rigid of the two groups, but not to a statistically significant degree.

TABLE III

ANALYSIS OF SCORES ON INVENTORY OF BELIEFS OBTAINED FROM STUDENTS IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL

Ethnic Group	Mean	S.D.	$t$	Level of Significance
Negro American	59.1	11.2	.358	.30
Anglo-American	57.2	15.6		

A comparison of Tables II and III reveals that the hypotheses were being borne out. The Anglo-American is more flexible in the segregated school system, while the flexibility of the Negro American and the Anglo-American are approximately equal in the integrated group.

The next phase of the study involved an examination of the data with reference to the hypothesized relationship between flexibility and sociometric choice. The mean number of choices received in each group was determined, and individuals receiving one or more choices above the mean were identified. The mean score made by these individuals on the Inventory of Beliefs was determined and compared with the mean score for the group. These data are presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV  
GROUP MEAN SCORES AND HIGH CHOICE MEAN SCORES

Type of School	Group Mean	High Choice Mean	Difference
Integrated	57.6	59.7	2.1
Segregated	52.3	61.0	8.7

An examination of Table IV indicates that high choice individuals scored above the mean for their groups. Preferred individuals in both groups showed a greater degree of flexibility than the group as a whole.

There is less difference between high and low choice individuals in the integrated school in comparison to their group average than is found in the segregated schools. This is interpreted as an effect of the different school systems;

one is segregated and the other is integrated. The fact that the integrated school shows a smaller difference between high choice scores on the Inventory of Beliefs and the total group mean is indicative of a more homogeneous group with respect to flexibility. The rigidity which is evident in the integrated school is operating in both the minority and majority groups more equally than in the segregated school system.

There is more rigidity in the Negro American than in the Anglo-American in the segregated school system, but this is not so in the integrated school. This may possibly indicate a lowering of rigidity in the minority group when they are allowed to intermingle with the majority group in the integrated school.

The final treatment of the data was conducted in connection with the relationship between the flexibility scores of the integrated school and the segregated schools, as a whole. The results of the statistical analysis are given in Table V.

The difference between scores for the integrated and the segregated schools, while not highly significant, goes beyond the .10 level. The t score of 1.772 approaches very nearly the .05 level. The t score necessary to be significant at the .05 level is 2.01. Even though the null hypothesis cannot be rejected with a great deal of confidence, the trend indicates an obvious difference between the groups.

TABLE V

MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, t SCORE, AND LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE  
OF FLEXIBILITY SCORES OF INTEGRATED AND SEGREGATED SCHOOLS

Type of School	Mean	S.D.	<u>t</u>	Level of Significance
Integrated	57.6	7.21	1.772	.10
Segregated	52.3	13.70		

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## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the problem of rigidity as a function of the segregated school system. The relationship between individuals in segregated and integrated school systems was studied in relation to their scores on the Inventory of Beliefs. A sociometric measure of individuals and the resulting relation to rigidity were also examined.

The Inventory of Beliefs was used to give a measure of rigidity, and a sociometric test was administered to establish the subjects' peer status in their respective groups.

The specific hypotheses tested were:

1. In a segregated school system, Anglo-American adolescents will be significantly more flexible than Negro American adolescents when flexibility is measured by the Inventory of Beliefs.

2. There will be no significant difference between the flexibility of Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents in an integrated school system as measured by the Inventory of Beliefs.

3. High choice Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents will score above the mean on the Inventory of Beliefs in a segregated school system.

4. High choice Anglo-American and Negro American adolescents will score above the mean on the Inventory of Beliefs in the integrated school system.

5. There will be a significant difference on scores made on the Inventory of Beliefs between the integrated and segregated school systems, with the integrated being the more flexible.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 5 were examined as null hypotheses, utilizing a t test for small samples. Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested by comparison of individual scores with mean scores for their respective groups. The results of the data analysis were as follows:

1. Anglo-Americans in the segregated schools were less rigid than the Negro Americans.

2. There was no difference in the flexibility of Negro Americans and the Anglo-Americans in the integrated school.

3. In the segregated schools the high choice Anglo-American and Negro American children were found to be more flexible than the average for their group.

4. In the integrated school the high choice Anglo-American and Negro American children were found to be more flexible than the average for their group.

5. There was a low but obvious difference found between scores of the integrated and segregated schools, with the integrated school showing the least amount of rigidity.



The individuals in the integrated school were less rigid, as a group, than those in the segregated schools. The results of this study tend to support the theoretical position developed in Chapter II. The data also tend to support studies previously cited which indicate that the more flexible persons are highly chosen persons in their respective populations.

Greater use of society could be made if the integrated school system could be adopted; not just the adoption of a law, but successful integration. It will do little good to integrate in name, but retain prejudices. Without an attitude change, nothing has really happened during integration.

In order to change attitudes in a system and promote integration, the following rules are cited by Bonney (1, pp. 385-388). These rules will aid greatly in smooth and successful integration.

1. Try to bring individuals of diverse ethnic origins together in total-school situations, as well as in the classroom, who are as much alike as possible in all respects except in their ethnic characteristics.
2. Especially during the first attempts to integrate two or more ethnic groups, try to utilize only the less demanding kinds of social situations.
3. Utilize numerous resources to emphasize the contributions of all religious and ethnic groups to our American civilization.
4. Work with community agencies that are trying to increase religious and ethnic tolerance.
5. Teach all children that a large part of their acceptance and of their success in life depends upon their personal qualities irrespective of religious or ethnic discriminations.

6. Set an example of tolerance and accepting attitudes toward pupils of all kinds of religious and ethnic origins.
7. Set up some procedures and organizations for dealing with interreligious and interethnic conflicts.

When the foregoing rules are applied to the problem of integration, the results will be nearer to the desired effect than if only a gross legislative move is taken.

With proper integration, perhaps the more productive power of the American society may be realized. An even greater reward will be much closer to reality--men living together in harmony and with deep appreciation for one another as in Fromm's ideal society.

#### Recommendations

The results of the present investigation have raised many questions which should be investigated in the future, such as the following:

1. What would be the effects of integration on the segregated school system which was used in this study?
2. What is the relationship between personality rigidity, or the make-up of a compulsive personality, to the attitude rigidity studied here?
3. Are the results found in this study merely representative of their specific locations and are differences between the two systems actual differences in attitudes between the

two locations rather than differences between integrated and segregated school systems?

Some recommendations of a specific nature which should be made in regard to a repetition of this study are:

1. A reinvestigation should be made utilizing different populations with a similar structure.

2. The repeat study should have a larger sample, if at all possible. (This was one of the limitations of the present study.)

3. A more detailed depth analysis of individuals in the study should be made.

4. A system of factoring out or holding constant the personality rigidity should be utilized in order that differences obtained would represent only attitude rigidity.

Continued research on the problem of rigidity may help to answer many of the problems and questions concerning educational procedures, political policy, and other areas where people are stratified and required to work together.

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