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The Sources of Political Tolerance: A Multivariate Analysis

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Over the past 25 years a number of conclusions concerning the development of political tolerance have come to be well accepted in the literature on political behavior. There are, however, two persisting problems with the studies that have generated these findings: they have relied on a content-biased measure of tolerance, and have failed to examine well specified models of the factors leading to tolerance. In this article we report the results of an analysis of the determinants of political tolerance using a content-controlled measure of tolerance and a more fully specified multivariate model. The parameters of the model are estimated from a national sample of the U.S. The results indicate the explanatory power of two political variables, the level of perceived threat and the commitment to general norms, and psychological sources of political tolerance. Social and demographic factors are found to have no direct effect and little indirect influence on the development of political tolerance.

The study of political tolerance has been a major component of public opinion research in the 25 years since Stouffer's seminal contribution (1955). Over this time, a number of findings on the determinants of tolerance have become accepted. Yet there are two reasons to suspect the general conclusions of these studies. First, as we have attempted to show earlier (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, 1979), previous studies of political tolerance were flawed in their measurement of the dependent variable. The use of items developed by Stouffer, all with left-wing targets (communists, socialists, and atheists), creates problems that will affect the distribution of political tolerance and will bias estimates of relationships between tolerance and other variables. The content bias resulting from using only left-wing targets means that respondents who are intolerant of *other* groups may erroneously be classified as generally tolerant. Such measures confound the willingness to extend rights to objectionable groups (tolerance) with indifference or perhaps even support of the groups specified. Correlations involving these measures of tolerance are thus difficult to interpret since they invariably tap attitudes toward the group in question as well as the construct of tolerance. We have shown elsewhere the distortion that results when the selection of a target group is related to socioeconomic characteristics such as education and urban/rural residence (Sullivan, Marcus, Piereson and Feldman, 1979; and Marcus, Piereson, and Sullivan, 1980).

The second problem with previous studies of political tolerance has been their reliance on simple correlations to establish the relationships between tolerance and a number of independent variables. Bivariate correlations, however, can be misleading when other important factors influence both variables in question. This sort of specification error can affect the magnitude and even the direction of parameter estimates. Yet, so far as we have been able to find, no study presents or evaluates a well-specified model of political tolerance. As a result, many currently accepted findings on the determinants of political tolerance may be based on severely biased estimates of the relationships between key independent variables and tolerance.

We report here an analysis of the determinants of political tolerance that attempts to correct these problems. We use a content-controlled measure of tolerance to remedy the content-bias of previous measures. This measure is used in a multivariate analysis to evaluate a more fully specified model of political tolerance. In addition, we rely

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on maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL) to fit the model to our data. The advantage of this approach to model fitting is that it incorporates a measurement model into the data analysis. We are thus able to examine the reliability and appropriateness of our indicators as one part of the overall evaluation of the model. This will further raise confidence in our results since parameter estimates will be free of the effects of measurement error and the major constructs will be more clearly defined.

Political Tolerance and Democratic Theory

Much of the theoretical significance of political tolerance derives from its role in varieties of democratic theory. Its importance depends on two sets of empirical questions. The first of these questions involves the distribution of levels of tolerance in society and the relationship of tolerance to political activism. Given the hierarchy of political roles available to citizens today, from those uninvolved in politics to those in formal positions of authority, the citizen's opportunity (and thus responsibility) to sustain the "rules of the game," including ensuring political access to potentially objectionable groups, may vary across these roles in a systematic way. Empirical findings suggesting that those with greatest responsibility have greater commitment to the norms and maintenance of political tolerance would support the continuing hierarchy of influence among political roles as necessary to sustain the tolerant character of the regime. Alternatively, finding the aggregate level of political tolerance to be fairly uniform across different political roles would support a more equitable redistribution of political influence. Thus how tolerant various classes of people are in various political roles has been one of the abiding areas of dispute in the contention between "elitist or revisionist" theories of democracy and "participatory" theories of democracy (see Walker, 1966; Pateman, 1970; Thompson, 1970).

A second important way in which the empirical study of political tolerance can affect views on democratic theory lies in the question of the relationship of political tolerance to other factors. As societies change, for example by becoming more educated, more industrialized and more urban, these changes may alter the extent and nature of tolerance in the political culture. We need, therefore, to explore the determinants of political tolerance and how changes in these determinants are likely to affect the level and distribution of political tolerance. For example, while finding low levels of political tolerance, Stouffer (1955) also found powerful links between tolerance and education which he expected would lead to increased tolerance in the future. The extent to which political tolerance is linked to determinants likely to go through progressive changes that will in turn ameliorate political intolerance is thus an important empirical question. The answer will add fuel to the controversies as to which type of democratic theory is best suited to our values and circumstances (see Pennock, 1979; Thompson, 1970). Some varieties of democratic theory, for example, have strong developmental expectations. According to such theorists as J. S. Mill, the political culture and the political judgment of the electorate can be expected to improve as formal education and practical political experience become more widespread throughout the public. A model of the development of political tolerance can help to assess the empirical status of such theories.

Development of the Model

We will consider variables taken from two sources. First, we will review the major independent variables that previous studies have shown to have significant relationships with political tolerance. Such variables fall into three broad categories: social (or demographic) characteristics such as education, occupation, age and religion; psychological (or personality) characteristics such as self-esteem, authoritarianism and dogmatism; and political characteristics such as political ideology, political involvement and commitment to democratic norms. Second, we will consider those factors that are theoretically important even if research has not yet demonstrated significant relationships.

The Dependent Variable: Political Tolerance

As we noted in our previous work (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, 1979) a measurement procedure is needed which allows respondents themselves to specify the groups they most strongly oppose. In an attempt to obtain such a measure, we developed and tested the following measurement approach on a national survey of 1509 respondents conducted for us by the National Opinion Research Center in the spring of 1978. First, we provided each interview respondent with a list of potentially unpopular groups that ranged from communists and socialists on the left, to fascists, John Birch Society members, and Ku Klux Klan members on the right. We also included a number of groups, such as atheists, pro-abortionists, and anti-abortionists, which we expected in some ways to represent positions that are independent of the left/right dimension. Respondents were then asked to identify the group they liked the least, and we made it very clear that they could also select a

group not on the list. Respondents were then presented with a series of statements in an agree/disagree format which elicited their views about a range of activities in which members of that group might have participated. The following statements were among those included in the series:

1. Members of the _____ should be banned from being president of the United States.
2. Members of the _____ should be allowed to teach in the public schools.
3. The _____ should be outlawed.
4. Members of the _____ should be allowed to make a speech in this city.
5. The _____ should have their phones tapped by our government.
6. The _____ should be allowed to hold public rallies in our city.

The statements were read as they appear above with the blanks filled with the group selected by each respondent.

Our intention was to avoid contaminating the tolerance/intolerance dimension with the respondents' political beliefs. If we had merely asked all respondents whether communists should be allowed to hold public office, their responses would have depended not only on their levels of tolerance, but also on their feelings toward communists. The advantage of our procedure is that it creates a situation in which the evaluation of each respondent toward the group in question is held constant. Clearly, our measures are not "content-free" since there is a context and a specific group toward which each respondent must react. We thus call it a "content-controlled" measure, to emphasize that we have attempted to "control for" the content by allowing respondents to select functionally equivalent groups.

In the following analysis, we rely upon a six-item political tolerance scale, based on the six political tolerance items reviewed above. Since each item has five-point agree/disagree response categories, scores on the six-item scale range from 6 to 30. The mean score for the six-item scale is 16.1, well below the midpoint of 18; and the coefficient alpha, an estimate of the lower bound of reliability, is .78.

Social Determinants of Tolerance. Since Stouffer's in-depth empirical study of tolerance, a number of basic demographic variables have been thought to influence political tolerance. Foremost among these is education. Education is thought to increase familiarity with diverse ideas and people. Moreover, the citizen must *learn* that a free market of ideas is vital to American democracy and that nonconformists are not necessarily bad. This is basically a cognitive explanation; one learns the principle that free exchange of ideas is necessary and that to be different is not necessarily to be bad and dangerous. Thus education plays a dual role in increasing levels of information and increasing the willingness to accept hitherto threatening information.

While this argument makes no attempt to tie education into the more general aspects of the social structure, high social status is also likely to be linked to increased experience (hence acceptance of diversity of opinion) and increased security from threat (hence greater willingness to allow others to hold potentially threatening ideas and to display potentially threatening behavior). This reasoning would lead us to expect social status to be related to tolerance in somewhat the same way as education is (see Korman, 1975).

In our study, we examine the impact of both education and social status, the latter measured by income and occupational position. Social status is measured by the Hodge-Siegel Prestige Score, which is assigned to the reported occupation of the respondent (or in the case of the unemployed, of the respondent's spouse; for details see Siegel, 1971).

Previous researchers have found a relationship between age and political tolerance. Because younger respondents are likely to be more educated, and because the younger cohorts of respondents have experienced a political climate that should be more liberalizing and enlightening than that of their elders (a period effect), age should be inversely related to tolerance. The increasing commitment to civil rights for blacks, women and the poor, particularly on the part of the young in the 1960s, may have given the younger respondents a greater commitment to political tolerance, or so the argument runs. Thus, while the link between age and tolerance may be strongly affected by the influence of education (Stouffer, 1955; Nunn et al., 1978; Cutler and Kaufman, 1975), it appears from other studies that even after the influence of education is removed, age may still have a conservative effect on political tolerance.

Past studies (Stouffer, 1955; Nunn, et al., 1978) have also uncovered what appears to be a relationship between religion and tolerance of ideological nonconformity. Following Stouffer, Nunn and his associates found that in 1973, Jews and non-religious people were the most tolerant, followed by Catholics and Protestants, with little difference between the latter two religious groups. The percentage differences discovered were substantial, as approximately 46 percent of Protestants, 59 percent of Catholics, 88 percent of Jews,

and 87 percent of non-religious people were categorized as "more tolerant" on Nunn's scale.

Other researchers have discovered the relationships between tolerance and additional social variables such as sex, size of city, and region. Our research, reported elsewhere (Sullivan et al., 1982) shows that all of these social background variables relate with target-group selection in such a way that the content-bias of the traditional measurement procedures may have produced misleading conclusions about the correlates and determinants of political tolerance. For example, the following respondents are most likely to select right-wing targets: those with more education, younger respondents, Jewish or non-religious respondents, urban residents, residents of the East, and so on. On the other hand, the following respondents are mostly likely to select left-wing targets, precisely those groups included in previous studies of tolerance: the uneducated, those of the older generation, Catholics or Protestants, rural residents, residents of the South and Midwest, and so on. Thus previous studies may have "stacked the deck" by asking about groups which are, in some sense, harder for certain respondents to tolerate.

Psychological Determinants of Tolerance. In addition to the studies which have focused on the demographic determinants of political tolerance, other studies have examined mainly the psychological and personality sources of political tolerance (Knutson, 1972; Zellman and Sears, 1971; Zalkind, Gaugler and Schwartz, 1975). The most consistent finding links self-esteem (or a closely related concept) to political tolerance. Most analysts have examined self-esteem within a trait conceptualization of personality, although Sniderman (1975) viewed low self-esteem as a hindrance to the social learning of political norms, including tolerance. Sniderman argued that low self-esteem leads to intolerance because it interferes with social learning. Although the norms of society may be tolerant ones, a significant portion of the public will neither learn nor adhere to these norms because this requires a facility for abstract thought that many do not possess. In particular, people with low self-esteem will "reject the norms of democratic politics not because they are motivated to do so but largely because their negative self-attitudes have impeded the learning of these values" (p. 178). While he concentrates on the social learning argument, Sniderman also argues that low self-esteem may interfere with the motivation to learn norms and ideals such as tolerance.

Sniderman used three different measures of self-esteem that correlate highly with one another and produce similar results. In the interests of parsimony, we selected his eight-item personality unworthiness scale as the measure of self-esteem we would use in our multivariate analysis. The scale has a reliability (coefficient alpha) of .69.

Probably the most dominant tradition in political psychology is research into the authoritarian personality (see Sanford, 1973). In essence, the authoritarian personality construct is based on a trait approach—an approach which assumes personality to be a collection of traits within the individual. Authoritarianism consists of a number of important characteristics including authoritarian submission, defined as a basic need to obey those in authority and to command subordinates; aggression toward outgroups, which means redirecting underlying hostility of authorities toward weaker scapegoats; stereotyped thinking—that is, intolerance of ambiguity and a strong tendency to think in terms of black and white categories—and other similar characteristics. Seen in these terms, the relationship of authoritarianism to political intolerance is probably close, although tolerance is an attitude rather than a personality trait and the two must be separated analytically.

A serious problem, from our point of view, are the criticisms that the traditional measure of authoritarianism, the F-scale, is appropriate to measure authoritarianism on the political right but not on the left. Theoretically, there is no reason why left-wing belief systems cannot be rigid or authoritarian. One major alternative to the F-scale is Rokeach's work on dogmatism (1960) which attempts to measure the degree of people's open-mindedness and flexibility without regard to ideological content. We include seven dogmatism items which create a scale with a coefficient alpha of .77.

Another strategy is to employ an indirect measure that taps a central aspect of the authoritarian syndrome. To accomplish this, we have included three items from Rosenberg's faith in people scale (1956) and two items from Martin's and Westie's threat orientation scale (1959). Since an important characteristic of the authoritarian personality is distrust of other people, their motives and their impulses, we deem the five items an appropriate, if simple, measure of the affective component of authoritarianism. These items create a scale with a coefficient alpha of .69.

Another major approach is that of Knutson (1972) who relies on the conceptualization of personality developed by Maslow. In this scheme, human personality is dependent on the satisfaction of various needs, ranging from the most basic (physiological and safety needs) to the more complex (affiliation, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs). These needs form a definite hierarchy with the more basic needs requiring satisfaction before the needs on the next level of the hierarchy can be met. Knutson has characterized these as lying

along a continuum with "concern with self" at one end and "concern with self in relation to one's environment" at the other. The self-centered person is unlikely to experience empathy; since most of that person's energies are directed toward meeting personal, basic needs, abstract ideas such as tolerance are unlikely to receive much attention from such a person. Thus, at one end, individuals are expected to be self-centered and most of their behavior should be directed at immediate, concrete goal fulfillment. At the other end, individuals are expected to consider and examine broader perspectives and to be concerned with how they relate to others and to the social environment more generally. Using Knutson's formulation, we would anticipate a monotonic relationship with higher levels on the need hierarchy linked to greater tolerance.

In order to assess people's positions on Maslow's need hierarchy, we asked people in our national study to select their most important value from a list provided them. We selected one value that represented each level on the need hierarchy (see Inglehart, 1977; Marsh, 1977). The values are listed in Table 1 along with the need level they purport to measure and the percentage of our national sample selecting each as most important. The relationship is generally monotonic. There is a strong increase in political tolerance as one moves from the safety-security need level to the affiliation need level.

To anticipate our findings somewhat, we did not find that these four psychological variables were able to discriminate among the various approaches to personality and political tolerance. Our analysis showed all to be linked to political tolerance, and furthermore, that the most powerful analysis was to incorporate the four indicators as alternative measures (multiple indicators) of a single concept: personality. Since the four indicators are so highly intercorrelated and the measurement approach we use corrects correlations for attenuation due to unreliability, multicollinearity problems require us to use them as multiple indicators. Conceptually then, we combine the four personality variables in a single factor, perhaps best defined as "psychological security." The four indicators have much in common because each focuses, in importantly different ways, on the ability of the individual to confront reality and social experience, and to deal with a world that is complex, ambiguous and threatening. The variance shared by these indicators suggests that people vary in the extent to which they are psychologically prepared to engage a socially and politically complex environment.[1]

Political Determinants of Tolerance. The most serious omission in previous studies of political tolerance has been the failure to examine *political* tolerance as an inherently *political* concept with its source in *political* processes. We will attempt to correct this deficiency by examining the importance of three sets of political variables, including political ideology, political threat, and support for the general norms of democracy.

The differences between liberals and conservatives are sometimes thought to account for various degrees of political toleration. At times, the terms "tolerance" and "liberalism" are used in-

[1]The excessive intercorrelations of these personality measures prevents any direct comparisons among the various psychological explanations. Such a result is not totally unexpected; unfortunately it may be predicted from several theoretical perspectives. Knutson (1972) demonstrates that the need hierarchy formulation can account for the development of a number of personality characteristics, including the ones used here. The data are also consistent with Rokeach's argument (1960) that low self-esteem will lead people to develop dogmatic belief systems and to exhibit little faith in other people. These results are consistent with the broad outlines of the theory of the authoritarian personality.

Table 1. Respondents' Choice of Most Important Need

Maslow Need Hierarchy	Value	Percent of Sample	Mean Tolerance Score*
1. Physiological Needs	Comfortable Life	24	14.9
2. Safety and Security Needs	Security	31	15.0
3. Affiliation and Love Needs	Affection	19	16.7
4. Esteem Needs	Esteem	20	17.7
5. Self-Actualization Needs	Originality	6	18.0

N = 1509

Source: Computed from 1978 Political Tolerance Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago.

*On the six-item scale which ranges from 6-30.

terchangeably so that the acceptance of norms of toleration is said to be a liberal position and the rejection of tolerance, or a more guarded acceptance, is said to be a conservative or "illiberal" position (see Lipset and Raab, 1970, pp. 432-33). Those who make this connection, however, are usually careful to distinguish between economic and non-economic issues, where the former refers to questions of the distribution of wealth and the latter to those of cultural conformity and nonconformity. In this sense, tolerance is understood to be part of the social or non-economic dimension of domestic liberalism. Tolerance is thus associated with issues such as the legalization of drugs, acceptance of cultural nonconformity and opposition to traditional women's roles.

From another perspective, social scientists such as McClosky (1960) and Eysenck (1954) have suggested that ideological identification is linked to personality characteristics that might lead us to anticipate a link with tolerance. Specifically, McClosky argues that support of certain conservative beliefs signals a personality unlikely to engage in political discourse, to adapt to social change, to extend universal norms to strangers, and to engage in stereotyping and discriminations. Thus this non-economic dimension of ideology may relate to tolerance in part because of certain underlying personality characteristics. While previous studies of political tolerance may have overestimated the impact of ideology due to an inherent left-wing bias, we advance the tentative hypothesis that those on the left will be more tolerant of extremist groups on the right than those on the right will be tolerant of corresponding groups on the left.

Two measures of ideology, in the left/right sense, have been adopted. The first is an index of ideological self-placement, a seven-point liberal/conservative scale on which respondents were asked to locate themselves. The seond measure is based on the ideology of respondents' two least-liked groups. As we demonstrated earlier (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979), respondents at the liberal end of the spectrum were most likely to select targets from the right, and vice versa. It is therefore possible to contrive a measure of ideology based on the target groups selected. Thus, those who chose two right-wing groups were classified as the most liberal, while those who chose two left-wing groups were classified, on a three-point scale, as the most conservative. Those who picked one group from each end of the spectrum were placed in the middle of the scale.

Previous studies have also shown that the level of intolerance in individuals is directly related to their perceptions of dissident groups as posing a threat (see Stouffer, 1955, Ch. 8). Thus intolerance arises from people's perceptions that dissident groups threaten values important to them or constitute a danger to the constitutional order. Yet it is also true that many people who perceive dissident groups as threatening are nevertheless prepared to tolerate them and to defend their procedural claims. It is appropriate, therefore, to test this general proposition within a multivariate framework with our data.

We attempted to measure the threat posed by each respondent's least-liked group by presenting a series of semantic differential adjectives about the group in question. We began with eight adjective pairs, which were factor-analyzed. The five adjective pairs with the highest loadings on the first factor extracted were selected for use as indicators of perceived threat: honest/dishonest; trustworthy/untrustworthy; safe/dangerous; nonviolent/violent; and good/bad.

While previous studies (Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, 1964) have concluded there is little relationship in the mass public between support for some general democratic principles and the specific applications of these principles, this conclusion—based on a comparison of marginal distributions—needs more examination. The observed consensus in favor of the abstract statements and the lack of any such consensus on the specific items were taken to mean that there was no relationship between the two. A more appropriate way to approach the problem is to measure the relationship between the degree to which individuals support the abstract principles and the degree to which they apply them in practice.

To examine this question, we repeated in our survey two of the questions used by Prothro and Grigg and four used by McClosky. These items, along with the distribution of responses in our survey, are summarized in Table 2. The first four items express democratic principles in highly abstract form, while the last two are more specific and hence more controversial. The distribution of responses to these items is very close to those reported in the earlier studies, despite Prothro's and Grigg's use of local samples, and the passage of nearly 20 years. It is still true that the overwhelming proportion of the American public supports the principles of minority rights, majority rule, equality under the law, and free speech when these principles are posed in an abstract form, as they are in the first four items of the table.

Although the marginal distributions of responses to questions ascertaining support for abstract principles and to questions ascertaining support for specific situations of political tolerance may vary substantially, it does *not* follow that there is no relationship between the two categories of questions. Among recent writers, only Lawrence (1976) has been sensitive to this problem as he tried to measure the relationship between re-

spondents' positions on the general norms regarding tolerance and their willingness to apply them in practice. Using different items, Lawrence found considerable consistency between support for general norms and their application to specific circumstances, concluding: "Large majorities of the population in fact apply their tolerant general norms consistently on even the hardest . . . issues" (p. 93).

Although the proposition is often taken for granted that abstract beliefs influence responses to practical situations, it is not surprising to find that there is not a one-to-one relationship between the two. Competing values usually operate in practical circumstances, so that people are forced to find some compromise between or among them. Hence, we hypothesize that the stronger their commitment to the general norms of democracy, the more willing people should be to act on those norms. Table 2 presents the simple correlations between the various questions measuring support for the general norms and our six-item tolerance scale, which is based on responses to specific situations and political groups. These correlations, while not particularly high, are all in the expected direction. In interpreting these correlations, readers should bear in mind that there is little variation in the responses to these four items (note the distributions in the table), a circumstance that will usually reduce the size of the correlations.

In addition to the variables of left/right ideology, perceptions of threat and support for general norms concerning tolerance, additional political variables such as political interest, participation, and information were also examined. There is sufficient theoretical reason to expect a strong relationship between an individual's political involvement, for example, and political tolerance. Participatory democracy theorists (such as Pateman, 1970) have argued that the process of political participation is an educative one, and that tolerance is one of the natural outcomes of such a process. Empirical studies have found large differences in tolerance between the participatory elite and the non-participatory masses (cf. Stouffer, 1955, p. 57). We find that most of these differences are probably the result of the content-bias

Table 2. Support for General Principles of Civil Liberties (Percent)

General Statement[a]	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Agree with Prothro-Grigg or McClosky[b]	Correlation[c] with Six-Item Tolerance Scale (Specific Acts)
1. People in the minority should be free to try to win majority support for their opinions.	89	9	2	94-98	.25
2. Public officials should be chosen by majority vote.	95	3	2	94-98	.27
3. No matter what a person's political beliefs are, he is entitled to the same legal rights and protections as anyone else.	93	4	3	94	.22
4. I believe in free speech for all no matter what their views might be.	85	7	9	89	.29
5. When the country is in great danger we may have to force people to testify against themselves even if it violates their rights.	35	16	48	36	−.14
6. Any person who hides behind the laws when he is questioned about his activities doesn't deserve much consideration.	52	16	32	76	−.23
N = 1509					

Source: Computed from 1978 Political Tolerance Survey, conducted by National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago.

[a]The first two questions listed are taken from the Prothro-Grigg (1960) questionnaire, while the last four are taken from McClosky's (1964). Our questions were presented in the form of five-point agree-disagree scales. The agree column reports the percentage that agree or strongly agree while the disagree column reports the percentage that disagree or strongly disagree. In the original studies, these questions were presented dichotomously so that respondents either had to agree or disagree.

[b]Reported in Prothro and Grigg (1960) and McClosky (1964).

[c]Correlations are Pearson's r.

of the Stouffer-based questions, because in our national sample we find that political participation relates strongly to target group selection, but not to tolerance (the higher participants dislike right-wing groups more). The parameter estimates in our model are unaffected by excluding these additional political variables.

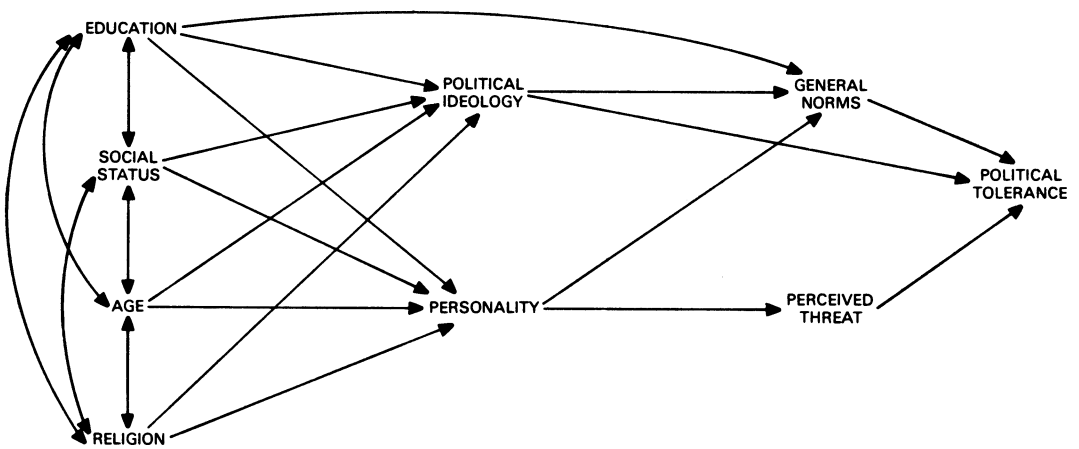
Multivariate Analysis of Political Tolerance

In this section, we specify a more complete model of political tolerance including variables from each of the three sets. In general, we assume that social variables are causally prior to psychological variables, which in turn precede political variables. Certainly these are dynamic relationships. As our analysis uses a cross-sectional survey, it must necessarily be a static one. We assume that this general causal ordering represents the major processes underlying the relationships among these variables.

Figure 1 presents the hypothesized relationships among endogenous and exogenous variables in our model of political tolerance. We assume the most important immediate causes of tolerance to be twofold: adherence to the general norms of civil liberties, and the perceived threat posed by the group toward which the tolerance (or intolerance) is directed. The reasons for our expectations are outlined above, and there is no compelling reason to expect that the impact of these two variables would be mediated by any of the other endogenous variables.

An individual's perception of another group as threatening is undoubtedly affected by psychological processes rather than resulting solely from realistic assessments of the danger of a particular disliked group. Some respondents may be psychologically predisposed to perceive threats whether they exist or not; and, thus, some people may be predisposed to be intolerant while others may not. The psychological characteristics discussed earlier, such as dogmatism and low self-esteem, might therefore explain perceptions of threat and, indirectly, tolerance and intolerance. If this argument were completely true, then levels of tolerance and intolerance in the society would be independent of actual political developments. We take the view here that perceptions of threat do involve evaluations of the political strength of, and the danger posed by, dissident groups, although since such perceptions are subjective, they will be affected by psychologial variables such as personality.

Turning to political ideology, we have already noted the liberal sources of tolerance. There is considerable reason to expect liberals to be more tolerant than conservatives. We fully expect some of this impact to operate through support for general norms of democracy, since the norms of democracy are themselves liberal norms. Thus liberals should be more likely to adopt these norms than are conservatives. There should also be some impact of ideology which operates directly on political tolerance, because while not all rank-and-file liberals and conservatives can be expected to comprehend and adopt the general norms most consis-



Source: Compiled by the authors.

Figure 1. Fully Specified Model of Political Tolerance

tent with their ideology, they might well be expected to adopt the more concrete implications of these norms.[2] However, there is no reason to expect that people's ideologies would relate directly to what they perceive as threats, since there are ample threatening targets in the eyes of both liberals and conservatives.

The role of personality as to its influence on political tolerance has been discussed above. It is unclear whether the impact of personality on tolerance should be expected to be direct, or to be merely indirect, through its link to perceptions of threat and support for toleration norms. Some of the impact of psychological factors is no doubt indirect, as we noted in its role in the development of the perceptions of threat from other groups and ideas. In adddition, those respondents who are more dogmatic, low on Maslow's need hierarchy, low in self-esteem and low in trust in people, can be expected to be more conservative than their opposite counterparts, and to be less likely to learn accurately the norms of the political system, leading us to expect a relationship between inner security and the support for general norms of democracy (Sniderman, 1975).

It is less clear what to expect regarding the direct impact of personality on political tolerance. Certainly, Sniderman's analysis (1975) suggests a direct impact, but it is plausible to explain this as working through the impact of personality on the learning of general norms. Perhaps those with low self-esteem are less tolerant merely because their lack of esteem interferes with learning general norms of democracy so that they cannot therefore apply them in specific situations. On the other hand, in addition to affecting the learning of general norms of democracy, low self-esteem may enhance the tendency to project personal inadequacies onto hated scapegoats, as suggested by the traditional literature on personality and politics. This could operate above and beyond this indirect effect, and in a sense, a comparison of the direct and indirect effects of personality on tolerance may provide a crude test of the social learning hypothesis as against the more traditional personality-trait hypothesis. The indirect effect of personality on toleration through support for general norms of democracy may represent the effect of personality through social learning, while the direct effect may represent its effect through traditional personality traits such as authoritarianism.

[2]Although in the United States we fully expect even most conservatives to adopt the norm of tolerance, at least in the abstract, we do believe that conservatives will be more likely than liberals to trade off tolerance against other political values, such as stability and security. It is, of course, a matter of degree.

The four sociological variables in our model (all exogenous) include education, social status, age, and religion. Education is expected to have a major direct impact on three variables: political ideology, personality, and understanding general norms. Education has been shown to be related to tolerance in many studies, reviewed above, but these studies have not attempted to discern whether its impact is mediated by other variables. Furthermore, our evidence suggests that education relates more strongly with the selection of target groups than with tolerance per se (Sullivan et al., 1982).

There is good reason to expect education to have an impact on at least three endogenous variables other than political tolerance. It ought to have two opposite impacts on ideology. Previous studies have shown that education leads to greater economic conservatism, and greater social liberalism (Erikson and Luttbeg, 1973; Ladd, 1978). Thus the composition of our political ideology variable—social rather than economic—determines the direction of the relationship between education and ideology. Education also ought to affect personality—particularly those aspects of it that we have discussed here—self-actualization, dogmatism, and self-esteem. Persons with higher levels of education ought to be more competent in their environment, generally better able to manipulate and understand the forces which affect them, and thus better able to close the gap between the ideal self and the perceived self, i.e., to have higher self-esteem. They should also learn about diverse points of view and ways of experiencing life, thus becoming less dogmatic, even if they had a tendency toward closed-mindedness before achieving a high level of education. Finally, education ought to enable people to learn better the general norms of democracy. Since these norms are abstract, and require the ability to understand concepts, the highly educated should be more adept at learning and understanding them. Indeed, this was one of the major findings of both Prothro and Grigg (1960) and of McClosky (1964). The major unanswered question about the impact of education is similar to the question regarding the impact of personality: does it have any direct effect on political tolerance, above and beyond its impact on personality and support for general norms?

Social status should have an impact similar to that of education, while age should affect two of the political variables directly—older respondents should be more conservative (both on social and economic issues), and they should be more dogmatic and have lower self-esteem (see Erikson and Luttbeg, 1973). Religion is defined as secular detacchment. We have found that specific religious preference is related to target group selection,

rather than political tolerance.[3] Secular detachment should have basically the same impact as age.

The model in Figure 1 presents the variables that we expect to have direct and significant impacts on one another. It is not a fully recursive model because several possible recursive relationships are not expected to be significant and have therefore been deleted. In estimating the parameters of the model, we estimate a fully recursive model, although generally we will report only those coefficients which are statistically significant. In this way, our a priori expectations can be compared with the modeling results; it will become clear which of the hypothesized direct paths, in Figure 1, are erroneous and should not have been specified, and it will likewise be clear which unspecified paths do in fact appear to exist between variables.

Parameter Estimation

We rely on maximum-likelihood confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL) to fit the model to our data. The problem of measurement error is addressed by allowing the researcher to specify first a set of theoretical relationships among unmeasured, theoretical constructs; and second, to specify a set of measurement relationships between these theoretical constructs and their empirical indicators. Using only information about the relationships among indicators, the researcher is able to obtain estimates of the relationships among the theoretical constructs (called *structural parameters*) and estimates of the relationships between each theoretical construct and its empirical indicators (called *epistemic correlations*).[4] The details of these statistical proccedures are presented in Jöreskog (1969, 1970, 1973); a brief summary may be found in the appendix. Most of the theoretical constructs are measured by several empirical indicators. The epistemic correlations help both to determing which indicators are the most reliable measures of each construct, and to assess the "true nature" of the construct.[5] Table 3 presents the epistemic correlations for those constructs with multiple indicators and for the six-item tolerance scale.[6] Single-indicator exogenous variables are not presented in this table.

The epistemic correlations are consistent with the definitions given to the constructs. Interestingly, the general norms construct seems primarily defined by the political process rules (majority vote and free speech) rather than by legal rules. The single value-actualization item relates only weakly to personality, and the common semantic differential format of the perceived threat indicators introduces some minor correlated error (-.13 between honest/dishonest and safe/dangerous).

Regarding the personality construct, the dogmatism scale is the "best" indicator. It practically defines the construct, although the self-esteem scale also has a large epistemic correlation. The other two variables—the value measure of self-actualization and the faith in people scale—are of lesser importance than dogmatism and self-esteem in defining the personality construct. Thus, although we label the construct psychological security, it is closely related to the traditional dogmatism-authoritarianism syndrome presented

[3]We divided our sample into the same four religious groups: Protestants, Catholic, Jewish, and non-religious respondents. Using our content controlled measure we found almost no difference among Protestants, Catholics and Jews in their levels of political tolerance, although we did find some large differences in percentages selecting left-wing groups as least-liked targets. This again suggests the importance of the content bias of the original Stouffer questions, as Jews are more tolerant of left-wing groups but not of right-wing groups. We find that people who adhere to no particular religious faith are more tolerant than the more religious respondents, and in fact the differences are large. The only difference in tolerance scores among the various Protestant denominations is that Baptists are less tolerant than the others. To maximize the relationship with tolerance, we coded Baptists 1, non-religious people 3, and all others 2. When this is done, the correlation with our tolerance index is .26. Thus, although religion appears to be an important variable in understanding political tolerance, it is primarily a secular detachment from religion that is important, not whether one is Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant.

[4]Since almost all of the variables in this analysis are attitude or personality scales which have arbitrary units of analysis—and since the major concern is a comparison of the relative impact of different variables—we have relied on standardized rather than unstandardized coefficients.

[5]Readers versed in factor analysis, can interpret the epistemic correlations as factor loadings and the abstract constructs as factors. The pattern of loadings helps to label and interpret the factors.

[6]The epistemic correlation between the tolerance scale and the underlying construct is obtained by taking the square root of the scale's estimated reliability. Coefficient alpha for the tolerance scale is .79, so the epistemic correlation is fixed at .89. The other epistemic correlations are estimated using the excess information, provided by the over-identified model, using the LISREL program. In the case of the personality construct it will not generally be true that the epistemic correlations equal the square root of the estimated reliabilities. This is the case because the epistemic correlations reflect both the reliability of the appropriate scale and its relationship to the more general personality construct.

in the personality and politics literature, and in personality research generally. A lack of self-esteem is often hypothesized to underlie this syndrome, and the epistemic correlations suggest that this is the case here. The dogmatism scale also has the highest bivariate correlation with political tolerance.

The relationship between the theoretical constructs are called structural parameters (*partial* path coefficients, corrected for measurement error). The structural parameters represent the strength of the relationships between each of the theoretical constructs included in the model, controlling for the other constructs. Figure 2 presents the political tolerance model with the exogenous and endogenous variables included. As we previously noted, political involvement is not included inasmuch as no direct or indirect relationships with political tolerance were found.

The perception of others as posing a threat has the strongest direct impact on political tolerance; the coefficient of -.43 shows that the more respondents perceived a threat from the target group the less their political tolerance. The general norms construct also has a strong impact (.33), confirming the hypothesis that the general norms of democracy do force some constraint onto specific applications of tolerance. There is a slight tendency for conservatives to exhibit less tolerance, all other things being equal, but the coefficient is small (-.10) and is statistically insignificant. We assume that the only reason conservatives are less tolerant than liberals is that they are less supportive of the general norms of democracy, since ideology and support for general norms are strongly related (-.41).

Psychological security has the hypothesized effects on political ideology and general norms. Respondents who are less dogmatic and have greater self-esteem tend to be both more liberal and more likely to support the general norms of democracy above and beyond that expected by their liberalism. Personality's direct effect on the general norms construct is in fact quite powerful, suggesting that support for the norms of democracy is not purely cognitive, nor is it purely a function of political ideology—the affect component of personality has a powerful influence on this support. Unexpectedly, psychological security and perceptions of threat are unrelated to one another. Our expectation, that perceptions of threat would be greater when the level of inner security is low, is clearly proved wrong.

The first question mark—whether psychologi-

Table 3. Epistemic Correlations among Indicators in Political Tolerance Model

Theoretical Construct	Indicator	Epistemic Correlation
Social Status	Occupation	.53
	Income	.87
Psychological Security	Value-Actualization	.43
	Self-Esteem	.67
	Dogmatism	.81
	Trust in Others	.50
Conservatism	Self-Placement	.44
	Least-Liked Group	.58
General Norms	Minority Rights	.44
	Majority Vote	.53
	Equal Legal Rights	.32
	Free Speech	.58
	Fifth Amendment	.32
	Legal Protection	.24
Perceived Threat	Honest/Dishonest*	.67
	Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	.63
	Safe/Dangerous*	.89
	Non-Violent/Violent	.62
	Good/Bad	.66
Political Tolerance	Six-Item Tolerance Scale	.89

Source: Computed from 1978 Political Tolerance Survey, conducted by National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. Complete listing of the actual items, and the questionnaires, are available from the authors.

*Correlated error terms between these two items, r = –.13.

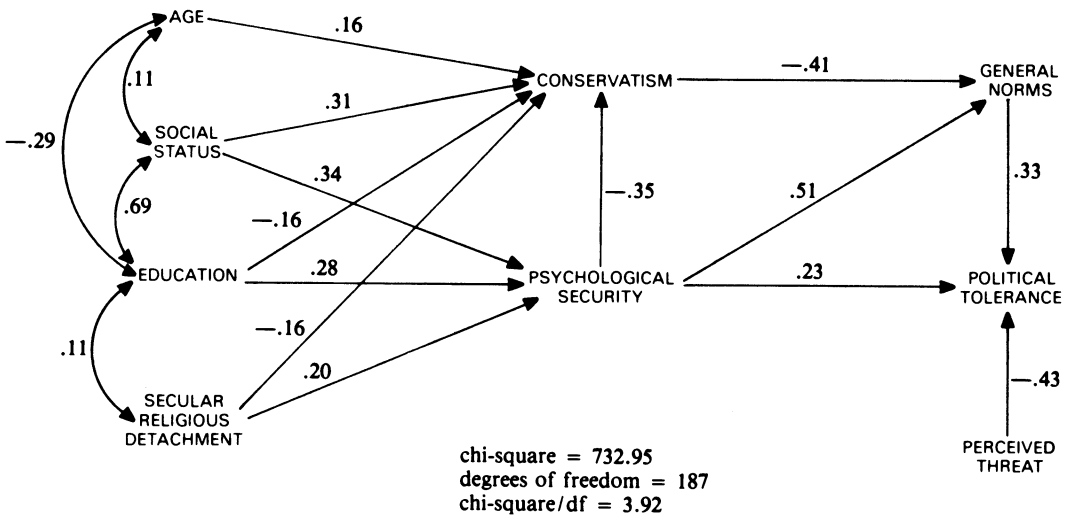
cal security has a direct influence on political tolerance—is answered in the affirmative (.23) in addition to its rather powerful indirect effect through the general norms construct. Persons with flexible, secure and trusting personalities are much more likely to be tolerant beyond that expected because of differences between them and people with opposite personalities as a consequence of the indirect effects through general norms of tolerance. The evidence is thus consistent with Sniderman's results (1975).

In Figure 2 four exogenous variables are included in the model—secular detachment, education, social status, and age. All but the third are single-indicator variables for which we assume perfect measurement. There is one significant correlation among error terms, here between income and age. Since age is assumed to be perfectly measured, the correlated error is between the error terms for the indicator (income) and the construct (age).

None of these exogenous variables has *any* direct effect on the constructs for general norms, political tolerance, or perceived threat. However, psychological security is strongly influenced by education (.28) and social status (.34); and political ideology is affected by social status (.31) while the impact of education is minimal (-.16). These results are discussed elsewhere (Sullivan et al., 1982), especially the finding that an individual's social status is positively related to the degree of conservatism, but is negatively and only indirectly related to psychological factors. Space considerations preclude the extended discussion necessary to unravel these relationships.

The model fits the data quite well, with a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio of 3.92, generally considered acceptable.[7] The R^2 for the endogenous variables are: psychological security, .42; conservatism, .22; general norms, .60; and for political tolerance, .57. So the model does go a long way toward explaining support for the general

[7]While the chi-square statistic provided by the LISREL program does yield a probability level for evaluating the goodness-of-fit of the model, this is not very useful in practice since the chi-square is a direct function of the sample size. Thus, for the number of cases we have here, any non-trivial model will fail to pass this test of statistical significance. A more useful test of fit in this case is to compute the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom. As a rule of thumb, ratios of less than five (for this number of cases) are indicative of a well-specified model (see Wheaton et al., 1977).



Source: Computed from 1978 Political Tolerance Survey, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago.

Note: Disturbance terms have been omitted for sake of clarity.

$x^2 = 732.95$
degrees of freedom = 187
$x^2/df = 3.92$

Figure 2. Model of the Sources of Political Tolerance

norms of democracy and specific applications of these norms to least-liked political groups.[8]

Conclusions

We have examined the impact of social, psychological and political variables on levels of political tolerance toward people's least-liked political groups, as reported by a national sample of respondents. From the analysis reported herein, we conclude the following:

1. Social variables generally have very little impact on individuals' support for the general norms of democracy or for political tolerance. Such variables have no direct impact, and have only minor indirect effects, mediated through such variables as political ideology and personality. Variables such as sex, region, race, and size of city, which previous research has suggested are strongly related to political tolerance, do not correlate with political tolerance once the content-controlled measurement strategy is adopted. Secular detachment, education, and age have a very small indirect impact on political tolerance, while, surprisingly, social status has a somewhat larger indirect impact, as it is one of the major factors influencing personality and political ideology.

2. Personality variables have both a powerful indirect impact on tolerance, through support for general norms of democracy and a fairly strong direct impact on political tolerance. Our results are quite consistent with those reported by Zellman and Sears (1971) and Sniderman (1975). We were unable to separate various aspects of personality, to examine the relative impact of self-esteem and self-actualization, for example, in order to test the relative merit of the Sniderman (1975) and Knutson (1972) theses. The presence of both indirect and direct effects *suggests* that the impact of personality is exhibited both by improving the learning of society's political norms, as suggested by Sniderman, and directly through the affective aspects of personality, as suggested by Knutson. We cannot press this line of inquiry too far, but it certainly suggests that both social learning and more traditional psychoanalytic and humanistic formulations should be taken seriously in any examination of political tolerance.

3. Two political variables—general norms and perceived threat—have a strong direct impact on political tolerance, though other political variables such as political interest, information and participation had no discernible impact. Our work is thus consistent with Lawrence's finding (1976) but somewhat inconsistent with the conclusions of Prothro and Grigg (1960) and McClosky (1964). Surprisingly, perceived threat is an exogenous variable in the model and thus is not merely or even partially a projection of psychological insecurity onto disliked political groups. The common view that inner needs dictate perception of threat is clearly not appropriate here.

On the other hand, general norms are strongly influenced both by political ideology and personality. Support for the general norms of democracy are thus partially the result of a political-ideological calculation of the importance of tolerance compared with other political values, but also partially the result of the degree to which individuals are open, flexible, and secure personally. Surprisingly, education does not have a direct effect on general norms, and even its indirect effects through ideology and personality are weak. It is plausible to suggest, therefore, that support for general norms is more the result of personality predispositions than of cognitive processes such as might result from civic education.

We by no means regard this analysis as definitive and the debate as closed. We do, however, suggest that we have taken the analysis a step further by adopting a content-controlled measurement strategy and by working with a more fully specified multivariate model, particularly one which takes an explicit measurement model into account in conducting the analysis.

The varieties of democratic theory are many and it would be inappropriate to say that these findings uniformly and consistently support any of these theories. However, some brief suggestive points may be made. The failure of political involvement—broadly investigated to include information, interest and participation—to have any direct or indirect effect on political tolerance, and the weakness of the ability of education to strengthen political tolerance suggests that participatory and populist versions of democratic theory have placed too much emphasis upon the presumed salutory impact of these variables, at least with regard to the American setting. On the other hand, the failure of measures of social status to play a powerful role in differentiating the politically tolerant from the intolerant suggests that conservative variants of democratic theory have placed too great a weight on the ability of the "better classes" to sustain the political norms of tolerance.

[8] In our national sample, we included a subset of four items from Stouffer's 15-item tolerance index. When a scale of these four items is used in the model, several important differences occur. Briefly, the Stouffer index produces a significant negative path between conservatism and tolerance, confirming our suspicion of bias in the Stouffer items. We elsewhere describe this and other differences more fully (Sullivan et al., 1981).

Appendix

Since we had several measures of many of the important constructs in our model, we wanted to take advantage of this excess information to estimate the parameters of the model free from the effects of measurement error. Multiple-indicator models are appropriate in such a situation but the complexity of the model means that more sophisticated methods are needed (Sullivan and Feldman, 1979). To accomplish this, LISREL requires the specification of three sets of equations. The first is the set of equations giving the (hypothesized) relationships among the *true* or latent variables. To define those latent variables, two other sets of equations are necessary. One set specifies the *indicators* of the endogenous (dependent) variables as functions of these variables' true scores plus a random error component for each indicator, while the other set of equations does the same for the indicators of the exogenous (independent) variables. Thus, on the basis of these three sets of equations, all the relationships in the main and auxiliary (measurement) theories may be clearly specified as one of three types: free parameters (to be estimated), fixed parameters, and constrained parameters (unknown but set equal to some other parameter to be estimated).

In this form it is not possible to estimate directly the free or constrained parameters since there are too many unknowns in the equations. It is possible, however, to derive the variance-covariance matrix for the indicators on the basis of the hypothesized factor structure. Details may be found in Jöreskog (1973). This derived variance-covariance matrix should then equal the observed variance-covariance matrix of the indicators assuming correct specification of the model. The problem then becomes one of estimating the values of the free and constrained parameters so as to maximize the fit between the derived and observed variance-covariance matrices. If the model is identified, maximum-likelihood estimation procedures are used because for large samples these estimates are consistent (unbiased), efficient (having as small a variance as any other estimator), and approximately normally distributed. The estimators are also scale-in-variant, meaning that if the units of measurement have no real significance, as is the case here, the correlation matrix may be analyzed instead of the variance-covariance matrix. And finally, maximum-likelihood estimation generates a convenient statistical test for evaluating the adequacy of the model, the likelihood-ratio test which, for large samples (the case here) is distributed as chi-square and allows a test of the null hypothesis that the model specified by the fixed and constrained parameters is a perfect fit to the observed data. This simultaneously tests the fit of the structural relationships *and* the measurement component of the model. A large chi-square indicates that the hypothesized model does *not* fit.

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