RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE IN THE
UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL:
A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

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By
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RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE IN THE UNITED STATES
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The question of prejudice has long intrigued man. Past attempts to study this social attitude, hampered both by the lack of a sound theoretical basis and by methodological difficulties, were discussed. This study proposed to investigate inter- and intra-religious group attitudes among Jewish and Christian populations in Israel and in the United States, using a newly developed approach to measurement of social attitudes, the Contrastive Vignette Technique. A relatively new dimension of religious prejudice, the relationship between majority and minority membership status, was the main focus. The relationship between certain demographic variables and the dependent variable was also examined.

Two hypotheses were investigated. The first proposed that subjects in each religion sampled would rate their own-religion agent in a vignette as more justified in his behavior than the agent of the other-religion. This was confirmed in three of the four populations examined, though none of the differences was significant. However, the Christian sample in Israel rated the Jewish agent as significantly more justified in his actions. The data did not support the second hypothesis that minority subjects would rate the majority agents as significantly less justified in behavior than
than majority subjects would rate minority agents. Significant differences were found in one comparison, but in the opposite direction from predicted. Christians in Israel (the minority group) rated the Jewish agent as more justified than did the majority group, Christians in the United States.

Both statistical and sampling problems occurred with this study, and issues related to these problems were discussed. Possible explanations for the results and applications of the study were offered.