PEER PREJUDICE
AND DISCRIMINATION

The Origins of Prejudice

Second Edition
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University of Cincinnati
To Diane, Nueria, and Nieta,
with the hope of a
more compassionate world
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Contents in Brief

Preface xiii

1 The Nature of Prejudice 1

2 An Evolutionary Model for the Development of Prejudice and Discrimination 39

3 Discrimination Toward Deaf Individuals 83

4 Prejudice and Discrimination Toward Mentally Retarded Individuals 110

5 Prejudice and Discrimination Against the Opposite Sex 133

6 A Cultural History of African Americans 171

7 Race Prejudice and Discrimination 198

8 Modifying Prejudice and Discrimination 219

9 Parents, Peers, and Personality 263

10 Recapitulation 288
Contents

Preface xiii

1 The Nature of Prejudice 1

Definitions of Prejudice and Attitudes 2
Definition of Discrimination 6
Relationship Between Prejudice and Behavior 7
Stereotypes 8
Stigmas 13
Untouchability and the Consequences of Being Stigmatized 16
Psychological Consequences of African-American Slavery 19
Theories of Prejudice and Discrimination: Individual and Cultural/Historical Influences 20
The Authoritarian Personality 23
Patriarchy and Female Socialization 27
The Present Theoretical View 31
Summary 33
Plan of the Book 35

2 An Evolutionary Model for the Development of Prejudice and Discrimination 39

Canalization 40
Genes, Mind, and Culture 41
Behavior Genetics 46
Hunter-Gatherer Minds in Postindustrial Bodies 48
The Primate Heritage 48
### CONTENTS

- **Influence of Peers and Teachers on Socialization**  [154](#)
  - Development of Opposite-Sex Prejudice  [156](#)
    - Indirect Measures  [156](#)
    - Direct Measures  [159](#)
  - Development of Opposite-Sex Discrimination  [164](#)
  - Summary  [168](#)

6. **A Cultural History of African Americans**  [171](#)
  - Brief Cultural History of African Americans  [172](#)
  - *Brown v. Board of Education*  [182](#)
  - Development of Ethnic Identity  [185](#)
  - Comparisons Among the Histories  [192](#)
  - Summary  [195](#)

7. **Race Prejudice and Discrimination**  [198](#)
  - Development of Race Prejudice  [199](#)
    - *White Children and Adolescents*  [200](#)
    - *Black Children and Adolescents*  [202](#)
  - Development of Race Discrimination  [203](#)
    - Behavioral Observations  [204](#)
    - Self-Reports  [208](#)
    - Sociometric Experiments  [209](#)
  - Comparison of Prejudice and Discrimination of the Target Groups  [213](#)
  - Summary  [216](#)

8. **Modifying Prejudice and Discrimination**  [219](#)
  - Introduction  [219](#)
    - Predictions  [221](#)
    - Contact Theory  [222](#)
    - Lewinian Theory  [223](#)
    - Measures Employed  [224](#)
  - Desegregation  [225](#)
    - The Studies  [226](#)
    - Contact Theory  [231](#)
    - Lewinian Theory  [231](#)
  - Mainstreaming  [232](#)
    - The Prejudice and Discrimination Studies  [233](#)
    - The Social and Academic Skill Studies  [236](#)
    - Contact Theory  [237](#)
    - Lewinian Theory  [238](#)
  - Cooperative Interaction  [238](#)
    - The Studies  [239](#)
    - Opposite-Sex Prejudice and Discrimination  [242](#)
    - Racial and Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination  [242](#)
My overall goal for this book is to give the reader genetic/evolutionary, cultural/historical, and developmental analyses of the development of prejudice and discrimination. These analyses also emphasize how certain of the genetic/evolutionary mechanisms can be utilized either to prevent prejudice and discrimination from occurring, or to modify these behaviors once they are established. The mechanisms are simple, yet powerful. And if applied systematically, they may have the desired effects of increasing tolerance and acceptance of the outsider.

I’ve been mulling about and “mining” a genetic/evolutionary view of human development for more than 30 years, since I started writing my first book, Evolution, Development, and Children’s Learning (1976). It’s an exciting area of research, and many in the field of psychology have now incorporated an evolutionary view into their writing.

Peer Prejudice and Discrimination is intended both for the individual scholar and for advanced undergraduates and graduate students for classroom use. I’ve used the first edition for both groups of students, both in the United States and India, where I was a Fulbright lecturer in 1994. After a short period of uneasiness or uncertainty about a genetic/evolutionary approach, most students come to both appreciate it and value it. It was very gratifying also that my peers in Developmental Psychology at the American Psychological Association awarded the first edition of this book the first Eleanor Maccoby Book Award in 1996.

This second edition gave me the opportunity to make some improvements on the first edition, as well as to incorporate new material whose shape was unknown to me when the first book was published. There are
three broad significant changes to the original text. First, a number of readers and reviewers of the first edition wondered why I hadn’t incorporated the historical material with the development of prejudice material. In the first edition, there was a single chapter dealing with “cultural histories” of females, African Americans, education of the deaf, and education of the mentally retarded. This chapter was followed by discussions, in separate chapters, concerning opposite-sex prejudice and discrimination, race prejudice and discrimination, discrimination toward the deaf, and prejudice and discrimination toward the mentally retarded. In the present edition, I placed the historical and prejudice and discrimination material in the same chapter and treated each type of prejudice and discrimination separately. I believe that the chapters are much better than the previous ones because of these mergers.

The second significant change got its start in 1998 when I was on sabbatical leave at the University of Chicago and having lunch with Professor Sander Gilman. I was describing to him the three genetic/evolutionary factors that predispose us to prejudice and discrimination against outgroups, when he casually mentioned that sometimes we’re attracted to outgroups. After a brief pause I said “You’re right.” I mulled about that for a couple of years and finally got around to discussing it with Professor Bert Huether of the Biology Department at the University of Cincinnati. I wondered aloud to Bert what the genetic mechanisms might be that underlay outgroup attractiveness. After a brief pause he said “gene flow.” And I said, “That’s incredibly simple and elegant.” I then proceeded to do some serious genetics reading and often consulted with Bert about aspects that I didn’t fully grasp. He was very patient with me, and several times he edited the material I wrote about it, which appears in chapter 2 of this edition. The concept and implications of outgroup attractiveness appear in most of the remaining chapters of the book.

The third significant change mainly deals with the work of my students, Megan O’Bryan and Kim Case, my colleague Neal Ritchey of the Sociology Department of the University of Cincinnati, and myself on the bases of individual differences in prejudice and discrimination. For several years, we had been investigating this issue systematically, focusing on the influences of parents, peers, and personality on adolescents’ prejudice. We were repeatedly astounded by our results, and we surprised our friends and colleagues when we conveyed these findings to them. I concluded that a discussion of this research would make a fine addition to the book. All this material comprises chapter 9, Parents, Peers, and Personality.

The various changes to the book resulted in a very substantial reorganization and the inclusion of substantial new material in both the new and original chapters. My estimate is that there are approximately 15% new references in the present edition.
The publisher of the first edition gave me the copyrights to it. I then called Lawrence Erlbaum, described what I wanted to do with a revision, and asked if he was interested in publishing it. Larry was the publisher of my second book and was familiar with my work. He said he’d be pleased to publish it, but said that it had to go through the normal acquisition process. That was fine with me, and the latter went smoothly. I was delighted by their speedy response and am very pleased that Lawrence Erlbaum Associates is the new publisher. I had planned to complete the revision in about a year and a half, but unfortunately a recurrence of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, aggressive type, and the subsequent high dose chemotherapy put a crimp in those plans. But, 9 months after the initial due date, I did finish the book, and here it is.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I’ve always liked the Beatles song “A Little Help From My Friends.” For this edition of the book, several years of collaboration with Neal Ritchey provided the basis for much of the new writing. Discussions over the years with my graduate students, Jan Baker, Ron Hoover, Kim Case, and Megan O’Bryan allowed all of us to test out new ideas, expanding their views and mine about the area of prejudice and discrimination. Bert Huether was nearly always available to discuss evolution with me and answer questions about genetics. I’m not sure what Bert got out of all of this, but I surely gained a lot. Maybe that’s what friends are for sometimes.

Along the way I became part of a discussion group on anti-bias education put together by the American Jewish Committee of Chicago. While associated with this group I got to know and to talk extensively with the social psychologists Jack Dovidio, Walter Stephan, and Cookie Stephan. This was stimulating and put me in touch with materials with which I wasn’t very familiar. Bill Dember of the Psychology Department of the University of Cincinnati and Bob Sala, architect and writer, edited the new chapter 9. I’m very grateful for that, especially in light of the tight time schedule I asked them to comply with. What are friends for? Finally, Dr. John Bealle, folklorist and writer, rearranged the original chapters 3, 4, and 5 into the new chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. I worked closely with John on this revision, but the writer and editor in him led to some unanticipated innovations. Thank you, John, and thank you, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

—Harold D. Fishbein
The summer after I graduated college in 1959, I took a temporary job as a swimming pool attendant at a Chicago Recreation Commission park in the southwest side of Chicago. The park was located in a rough, working-class neighborhood whose population had shifted during the preceding 10 years from extensively Slavic origin to mixed Slavic and Latin American. The transition, I was told, had been very tense and many fights had occurred between teenagers of the two ethnic groupings. The Slavs were still in the majority, and many of their adolescents and young adults were strongly anti-Negro. (In 1959, African Americans and European Americans referred to the former as “colored” or Negroes,” not “Blacks” or “African Americans.” In fact, referring to a Negro as a Black was considered a potentially prejudiced statement.) The pool was open to the public, free of charge, with no official age, race, ethnic, or gender restrictions.

The lifeguards were male, recent high school graduates of Slavic origin, and residents of the neighborhood. I was the only outsider who worked at the pool, in that I was Jewish and lived in a Northside neighborhood. I had some concerns about my own safety, especially when I worked late and took the evening bus home. I felt fortunate that I was never verbally or physically attacked.

One day at the pool, I was talking with two of the lifeguards when one of the Slavic male teenagers approached the guards with a serious problem. There was a young “colored girl” in the children’s pool area. What should they do? The lifeguards told me that colored children weren’t “allowed” in the pool and the last one who came in, a teen-age male several years ago, was thrown out, over the fence. In fact, I never saw an African American in
the park itself during the entire summer. The dilemma the guards faced was that the child, though very dark-skinned with strongly African features, was young—and a girl. Should they throw her out now, wait until the end of the hour when everybody had to leave the pool for 10 minutes, or do nothing? Just then another male Slavic teenager approached and said there was no problem, the girl was Cuban and spoke Spanish. Everybody breathed a sigh of relief. The girl was not colored, she was Cuban.

The girl was not colored, she was Cuban. What an extraordinary experience. The girl was not seen as a Cuban and colored, despite the fact that she had very pronounced Black African features. She was a Cuban, which meant she was a Latin and thus okay. The neighborhood consisted of Slavs and Latins. The battle over that piece of integration had been settled, though I was not aware of any particular friendships between the two groups. They had a working relationship that the majority Slavs were unwilling to challenge. Both groups could peacefully reside in the neighborhood, use the park and pool, and even compete with each other in softball games. But, colored people had better stay clear of the park and the neighborhood. And they did, in 1959.

All of us probably have stories to tell about prejudice and discrimination among children and adolescents. Many of us “ethnics” have been on the receiving end of prejudice. Certainly our parents or grandparents, if they were immigrants to the United States, experienced prejudice either here or in their country of origin. We are told in our high school history books that the English pilgrims came to the New World to escape religious persecution in their homeland. They were welcomed by native Americans—the Indians. Ironically the descendants of those victims of prejudice and the descendants of other immigrants developed a virulent prejudice and discrimination that nearly destroyed the Indians. That story is not clearly told in the history books used to teach our children.

DEFINITIONS OF PREJUDICE AND ATTITUDES

Arguably the best and most influential book written on prejudice since World War II is Allport’s *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). The scope of this book is awesome and the intelligence and sensitivity conveyed are inspiring. Allport starts the book with some anecdotes about “ethnic” prejudice and notes two essential ingredients of it: (a) hostility and rejection, and (b) the basis of the hostility is the target individual’s membership in a group. These two ingredients are clearly seen in the story of the Cuban colored girl.

Allport discusses the difference between “ordinary prejudgments,” which all of us periodically engage in, and prejudice, a special type of pre-
judgment. Allport concludes: “Prejudgments become prejudices only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge” (p. 9). He argues that we emotionally resist evidence that contradicts our prejudices unlike that which occurs with ordinary prejudgments. Thus, we have a third key ingredient of prejudice—resistance to new knowledge. The swimming pool story indirectly supports this ingredient—the girl couldn’t be colored—she was a Cuban. Colored children would have to be hostilely rejected, but Cubans were okay.

Allport summarizes his discussion about the characteristics of prejudice with the following definition: “. . . prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group” (p. 9).

A more recent book on prejudice, Ehrlich’s *The Social Psychology of Prejudice* (1973) provided an excellent discussion of the concept of prejudice. He quotes 16 definitions of prejudice from works published between 1950 and 1966 of highly regarded sociologists and social psychologists. Nearly all the definitions have the following in common: It is an unfavorable attitude directed toward others because of their membership in a particular group.

Ehrlich concurs with this consensus and defines prejudice simply as “. . . an attitude toward any group of people” (p. 8). Attitudes may be positive or negative. We view prejudice as a negative attitude. But what’s an attitude? He defines attitude as follows. “An attitude is an interrelated set of propositions about an object or class of objects which are organized around cognitive, behavioral and affective dimensions” (p. 4).

There are four principle cognitive dimensions of propositions (or fundamental beliefs). The first is salience, which is the degree to which the belief is assumed to accurately characterize all the members of a group. Thus, “All Jews are miserly” is more salient than “Most Jews are miserly.” The second is intensity, which is the degree to which beliefs are accepted and agreed with, or rejected and disagreed with. Thus, “I sort of agree with that belief” is less intense than “I strongly agree with that belief.” The third is evaluative direction, which is the extent to which the belief about a person or group is good/favorable/desirable or bad/unfavorable/undesirable. Thus, “All Arabs are mildly deceitful” is less negative than “All Arabs are very deceitful.” The fourth is centrality, which is the extent to which a belief is important to an individual’s attitude about others. Central beliefs capture the core or essential aspects of attitudes, whereas more peripheral beliefs can be readily changed without having much of an effect on an attitude.

The behavioral dimension of attitudes refers to the extent to which one’s beliefs are linked with intentions to behave in particular ways. Some beliefs only indirectly relate to behavior; for example, an American employer might say, “Japanese mothers are very nurturing to their children.” Others
more directly relate to behavior, for example, the same employer saying, “Japanese workers are energetic and diligent.” Ehrlich indicates that the aforementioned four cognitive dimensions of beliefs can be applied to behaviors.

The affective dimension of attitudes is basically how a person feels about or emotionally reacts to the object of her attitudes. One pole of these feelings is love/liking/attraction, and the other is hate/disliking/repulsion. People may be strongly attracted to others they evaluate as bad, and conversely may be repulsed by someone they evaluate as good. With prejudices, negative beliefs are usually accompanied by negative feelings.

I have spent this much time dealing with Ehrlich’s work, not because I accept his definition of prejudice, but rather because he shows us how complex the concept of attitude is. Prejudice does involve attitudes, and to discuss them, they must be measured. Yet, in virtually none of the studies dealing with children’s attitudes is there even a faint approximation to Ehrlich’s analysis.

Before I give my definition of prejudice, it would be useful to present two others, those by Milner (1983) and Aboud (1988), who have written books dealing with children’s racial prejudices. Milner’s definition is:

Prejudiced attitudes . . . are irrational, unjust, or intolerant dispositions towards other groups, and they are often accompanied by stereotyping. This is the attribution of the supposed characteristics of the whole group to all its individual members. Stereotypes exaggerate the uniformity within a group and similarly exaggerate the differences between this group and others. (p. 5)

Like other writers in this arena, Milner maintains that from a psychological viewpoint, there are no essential differences between racial prejudices and other forms of prejudice. He notes that the occurrence of physical differences between groups may facilitate stereotyping and prejudice, but those are certainly not necessary. Milner’s definition is similar to Allport’s, especially if we equate “irrational, unjust, or intolerant” with “faulty and inflexible.” Additionally, Milner’s “stereotyping” is equivalent to Allport’s “generalizing” about groups.

Finally, Aboud (1988) defined racial prejudice as “. . . an organized predisposition to respond in an unfavorable manner toward people from an ethnic group because of their ethnic affiliation” (p. 4). This definition fits closely with the core definition of prejudice found in Ehrlich’s group of 16. What distinguishes it from Allport’s and Milner’s definitions is that it lacks the idea of “faulty and inflexible.” Thus, a well-founded unfavorable generalization about a group, according to Aboud’s definition, would be prejudice.

Based on this discussion, I adopted a definition of prejudice that closely follows the ideas of Allport and Milner: Prejudice is an unreasonable nega-
tive attitude toward others because of their membership in a particular group.

The quality that makes an attitude unreasonable is that it does not readily get modified when exposed to new and conflicting information. Prejudice is not an all-or-none phenomenon. Rather, like other attitudes, it is graded, as Ehrlich pointed out. The extent to which children will be prejudiced at any point in time depends on (a) their genetic endowment, (b) their specific experiences of the target group, (c) their own personalities, (d) the prejudiced attitudes expressed to them by family and friends, and (e) the cultural portrayal of the target group by television, books, and schools. Prejudice, of necessity, will change over time, because children gain new information and their cognitive, social, and emotional understandings and capacities change with maturation and experience.

The measurement of prejudice, as already defined, has rarely been successfully accomplished with children and adolescents. The major stumbling block has been assessing the unreasonable aspect of the negative attitudes. There appear to be no relevant studies that have directly attempted this assessment. The research efforts seem to assume, as an example, that negative attitudes directed toward Blacks or Whites are unreasonable. From an adult viewpoint, they may be, but from a child’s viewpoint, the negative attitudes may be reasonable. In a simple case, a child is told by her parents that drinking milk is good, crossing streets without looking both ways is bad, policemen can be trusted, strangers in cars are dangerous, and that Whites will try to hurt you. Is it reasonable to have positive attitudes toward police, negative attitudes toward strangers in cars, and yet unreasonable to have negative attitudes toward White children?

In another simple example, if a child has had a number of unpleasant encounters with hearing impaired children, are negative attitudes toward hearing impaired peers reasonable or unreasonable? Categorization is inevitable, normal, and necessary for adaptive functioning (Allport, 1954). It could be concluded that in the second example, the child’s negative attitudes toward the hearing impaired were reasonable in that they were based on a consistent generalization. Is the child prejudiced? Allport would argue, and I concur, that if the attitudes were inflexible and didn’t change with new and conflicting information, then the child would be considered prejudiced (because the attitudes are not reasonable). To state that negative attitudes toward a particular group are reasonable is not to say that they are desirable. Frequently, responsible members of a community will try to get children and others to change their negative attitudes. If successful, that probably is an indication that these attitudes were flexible and hence, not prejudiced.

Finally, there is an important area of human beliefs that may appear to lead to prejudice, but technically does not—religion. There are many
contemporary and historical examples in which “nonbelievers” have been treated with extreme prejudice by members of fundamentalist religious groups (e.g., Jews and Protestants during the Spanish Inquisition). To the atheist and agnostic, the beliefs held by fundamentalists are unreasonable; however, within the latters’ belief system, they are being reasonable. For example, in a conversation I had with a recent convert to Christian fundamentalism, I was told that, as a Jew, I was “an agent of the devil.” I was relieved that this person didn’t plan to organize any action against me or my fellow Jews.

In our definition of prejudice, an unreasonable attitude is one whose cognitive component can be disproved by contradictory information. If such disproof is not possible, then despite horrible acts carried out against others by religious fundamentalists, it can not be asserted that prejudice underlies these behaviors. Religious faith and belief are rarely susceptible to proof or disproof. If nonbelievers are thought of as being agents of the devil, and thus treated with suspicion and distrust, there is no obvious way that that belief can be contradicted. Thus, beyond chapter 1 in this book, religious-based attitudes about the religious beliefs of others will not be dealt with.

DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

Prejudices are particular kinds of attitudes that, according to Ehrlich (1973) have three major dimensions—cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The behavioral dimension reflects a disposition to act negatively toward others, and not the behavior acts themselves. It is thus tempting to define discrimination in relation to prejudice. However, it frequently happens that people who are not prejudiced toward a particular target group may act negatively toward members of that group because of their group affiliation. For example, some nonprejudiced real estate agents may not show houses in certain neighborhoods to members of particular ethnic groups, for example, Jews, African Americans, or Hispanics, because the agents have been instructed by their employers or the homeowners to not do so. Or some female employment managers may not hire women for particular jobs, such as those in construction, because of cultural norms indicating that women do not have the physical capacity to do the work.

Thus, acting negatively (discriminating) toward individuals because of their group membership may or may not be based on prejudice. Accordingly, we adopt the following definition of discrimination. It is similar to definitions offered by Allport (1954) and Marger (1991): Discrimination involves harmful actions toward others because of their membership in a particular group.

The discrimination can be mild, for example, ignoring someone, calling someone a derogatory name behind his or her back, or it can be extreme,
for instance, the mutual killing by ethnic groups in the 1990s in what was formerly Yugoslavia, or the slaughter of Jews by the Nazis in the 1940s. With children, discrimination is usually manifested by avoidance, rudeness, name calling, and, on occasion, fighting.

Although discrimination is not always based on prejudice, it frequently is, especially if the perpetrator is acting on his own as opposed to on behalf of some institution or authority. Children, for example, may be coerced into discriminatory acts by their parents or neighbors. But when they’re freely interacting without adult control, it is likely that discrimination and prejudice go hand-in-hand.

Which comes first, prejudice or discrimination? Frederickson and Knobel (1980) answered in the following way:

Discrimination may appear to be simply acting out of prior prejudice, but there is evidence to suggest that prejudice becomes fully developed and formally sanctioned only after the process of differential treatment is well under way. Attitude and action tend to feed on each other, creating a vicious circle that works to enhance the power and prestige of one group at the expense of the other. (p. 31)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PREJUDICE AND BEHAVIOR

In the early 1930s, R. T. La Piere, a White American, traveled widely in the United States with a Chinese couple. The three of them stopped for food at 184 restaurants and for lodging at 66 hotels and motels. Only once did the manager refuse to provide service for them. After completing the trip, La Piere wrote to the proprietors of each establishment, enclosing a questionnaire that included an item asking whether they would take “members of the Chinese race as guests.” One hundred twenty-eight returned the questionnaires and more than 92% of them stated that they would not accept Chinese people as guests (La Piere, 1934).

On the basis of their questionnaire responses it appears that over 92% of these establishments were prejudiced against Chinese. Yet, in a face-to-face interaction, less than 1% behaved in a prejudiced manner. How can we understand this dramatic discrepancy?

Milner (1983) and Wicker (1969) discussed this issue in the broader context of the relation between attitudes and behavior; in general, there is a relatively weak correlation between the two. Milner and Wicker identified two groups of factors that play a part in mediating behavior: personal factors and situational factors. Salient among the personal ones are other attitudes held by people and competing motives. Thus, the proprietors in La Piere’s study may have disliked Chinese but may have held strong attitudes toward treating strangers with courtesy. Further, they may have wanted to
reject the Chinese couple but were also motivated to make money. Among situational factors two of the salient ones are the presence of other people and social norms for proper behavior. The Chinese couple weren’t alone, but rather with a White, male friend. Additionally, restaurants and hotels are supposed to care for guests, not turn them away.

W. G. Stephan (1985) summarized much of the empirical research dealing with the relationship between prejudice and behavior. There are several clusters of findings for which accurate generalizations can be made. In one group of studies involving no direct contact between people, for example, voting behavior and signing petitions, there was a fairly strong relationship between prejudice and discrimination. For example, White Americans who are prejudiced against Blacks do sign documents opposing housing integration. In studies involving direct contact between prejudiced people and the targets of prejudice, the findings are more complex. One of the largest sets of these studies involves “helping” behaviors, for example, Blacks versus Whites making an emergency call to seek assistance. In these studies, Whites who receive these calls and who express little prejudice often discriminate the most against Blacks. W. G. Stephan (1985) suggested that two opposing attitudes are in play—sympathy for the underdog and feelings of aversion. In responding to a questionnaire, sympathy wins out, but when asked to take action, aversion predominates.

In a third group of interaction studies, where the measures of prejudice are quite specific and the behavior measured is specific, there is a moderate correlation between prejudice and degree of discrimination. W. G. Stephan (1985) interpreted all the findings from the view of how individuals evaluate the relative costs and benefits of expressing particular opinions and acting in particular ways in particular social contexts. So, the link between prejudice and behavior will be strong in situations where individuals believe they will benefit from being consistent in their beliefs and actions, but the link will be weak where the benefits favor inconsistency.

Finally, Schutz and Six (1996) carried out a meta-analysis of 60 studies that examined the relationship between prejudice and discrimination. The correlations ranged from about .20 to about .60, with the average being .28. This indicates that although prejudice and discrimination are modestly related, they are generally highly independent of each other. Thus, conclusions drawn from prejudice research can not readily be applied to discrimination research, with the converse holding also.

STEREOTYPES

We saw in the previous discussion of Milner’s (1983) work that stereotypes are closely related to prejudices. The current use and meaning of the term, stereotypes, was originated during the 1920s by the American journalist, Wal-
ter Lippmann (Bethlehem, 1985). Most contemporary psychologists define the term in a similar way to Lippmann. For R. Brown (1986), it is “. . . a shared conception of the character of a group” (p. 586). Milner (1983) defined the term as “overgeneralizations” about the characteristics of a group, usually undesirable, which function to exaggerate the differences between groups. For Ehrlich (1973), stereotypes are “. . . a set of beliefs and disbeliefs about any group of people” (p. 20). Finally, D. L. Hamilton and Trolier (1986) defined a stereotype “. . . as a cognitive structure that contains the perceiver’s knowledge, beliefs, and expectancies about some human group” (p. 133). It is clear from the psychological literature that the development of stereotypes, as categories of beliefs about groups of people, is inevitable, normal, and necessary for adaptive functioning.

Stereotypes may be positive or negative. Negative stereotypes, for example, “All Asians are secretive,” may differ from prejudices in three ways: (a) They may not be “unreasonable” as that term has been defined; (b) They may not have an affective component, for example, that Asians are secretive may be felt about with indifference; and (c) They may not dispose one to behave in any particular way. However, because of the ways that stereotypes and prejudices are measured, it is sometimes difficult to determine which one is being assessed. Strongly held negative stereotypes certainly have the look and feel of prejudices. However, in an analysis of a number of experiments that measured both prejudice and stereotypes, Dovidio, Brigham, B. T. Johnson, and Gaertner (1996) found the average correlation between the two to be about .25.

Given the facts that, at a minimum, stereotypes and prejudices share the belief component of attitudes, and that a substantial amount of research has been carried out with stereotypes, we can profit by examining this research. In the following discussion it is likely that the conclusions drawn are applicable to prejudices.

Roger Brown (1986) raised two interesting issues about stereotypes that are pertinent to the purposes of this book. The first deals with consequences of the way stereotypes have usually been measured. The second deals with the relation between stereotypes and how we behaviorally deal with individual members of the stereotyped group. The latter discussion gives an explanation of the “some of my best friends are . . .” phenomenon.

In 1933, two social scientists, Katz and Braly, asked Princeton University undergraduates to select from a large list of traits those that were “typical” for each of 10 ethnic groups. This technique was the way Katz and Braly measured stereotypes. The procedure was repeated in 1951 and 1967 by different researchers for the then current Princeton undergraduates. Table 1.1 contains part of the summary by Karlins, Coffman, and Walters (1969) of the data for four ethnic groups for the three testing periods. As you can see, for most of the groups, there is some, but not complete, continuity
from generation to generation. Americans became viewed as less progressive and more pleasure loving from 1933 to 1967; Germans, in the same period, were viewed as more aggressive and nationalistic and less intelligent and stolid. The Jews came to be seen as less mercenary and grasping, and more materialistic and ambitious—more American. Negroes lost the stereotype of “ignorant” in 1967, but not those of being lazy and musical.

Nearly everyone knows that all these stereotypes are incorrect in the sense that they do not characterize all or even most of the members of the various ethnic groups. As a consequence, we tend to discount them, at least when held by others. Part of the problem stems from the way the data were

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collected—students were asked to identify traits typical of each group. No one knows how “typical” was understood, but there is good reason to believe that the students were forced to make absolute judgments about groups rather than relative ones. For example, what does it mean that Negroes are musical? Relative to what or whom?

Subsequent research by C. McCauley and Stitt (1978) and others corrected this problem and presented us with a more palatable view of stereotypes. The essential idea is that a trait is seen to characterize an ethnic group if it is more typical of that group than it is for people in general. Subjects were asked the following kinds of questions: What percentage of Germans are extremely nationalistic? What percentage of people in the world generally are extremely nationalistic? What percentage of Germans are superstitious? What percentage of people in the world generally are superstitious? C. McCauley and Stitt (1978), for the first question, found that the average percentage for people in general was 35.4, and for Germans, 56.3. For the second question, the percentages were 42.1 for people in general, and 30.4 for Germans. By computing the ratio for each pair of percentages, you can determine how much more or less typical each stereotype is for Germans, or for any ethnic group. Thus Germans are viewed as much more nationalistic than others (the ratio is much greater than 1.0), but appreciably less superstitious (the ratio is much less than 1.0).

Are these stereotypes valid? Are Germans really more nationalistic and less superstitious? There is no way to determine the answers. How do you find out how many people in general are superstitious? Stereotypes function to help us bring conceptual order to our experiences, and periodically to make decisions on the basis of them. We assume that the ones we hold are, more or less, valid.

Do we always act on the basis of our stereotypes? Most of us have heard people deride a particular ethnic group, and soften their stance by saying, “Some of my best friends are . . . .” Some of their best friends may really be members of that group. R. Brown (1986) helped us understand this phenomenon by casting it in the framework of decision-making theory. He points out an important distinction between general base rate knowledge about a group of which a person is a member, for example, lawyers, engineers, women, Jews, and individuating information (specific information) about a particular member of that group. Stereotypes are what is believed to be base rates about groups, for example, that Germans are more nationalistic than people in general. Suppose you wanted to hire a person for international work and it was very important to you that the employee not be nationalistic. All things being equal, if you believed the German stereotype, you would not hire a German for that job. But, you interview several people, and one of whom is a German who does not appear to be in the least nationalistic. What do you do?
There is a rule in decision theory, Bayes’ Rule (Goldberg, 1960), which states that the optimal decision we can make will take into account both base rates and individuating information. Intuitively this makes sense. The individuating information is usually based on a small, potentially inadequate sample of behavior for one particular person, whereas the base rates tell us something based on many people across many situations. It turns out, in a wide variety of laboratory studies dealing with such stereotypes as the relative assertiveness of men, the political conservatism of engineers, and the relative emotional instability of “night” people, that most of us do not use Bayes’ Rule. Surprisingly, people do not use stereotypes either. When subjects in experiments have relevant individuating information, they ignore the stereotype and make their decisions on the individuating information. Thus the aforementioned employer might very well hire the German applicant.

The social psychology literature has many examples of prejudices overriding individuating information, and of the converse. Nevertheless, laboratory research makes it clear that persons are not necessarily hypocrites or liars when they tell you that “some of their best friends are . . . .”

As we noted, stereotypes are some of the ways we categorize people in order to help bring order to our concepts about them, and to reduce the enormous amount of social information we are exposed to in our daily lives. D. L. Hamilton and Trolier (1986) asked what are the psychological consequences of categorizing others.

When the person is a member of one group (the ingroup) and is making comparisons between her or his group and members of another group (the outgroup), five interesting effects occur:

1. People believe they are more similar to ingroup members in a host of unrelated ways than they are to outgroup members.
2. Yet ingroup members believe that there is more personal diversity in the ingroup than in the outgroup, for example, “They’re all alike in that group (the outgroup).”
3. On the other hand, almost in contradiction to the aforementioned, when a person rates members of an ingroup and an outgroup on various psychological characteristics, outgroup members receive more extreme ratings, for example, “They’re tremendous artists, whereas we’re pretty good.”
4. Individuals are more likely to remember more positive information about ingroup than outgroup members and more negative information about outgroup than ingroup members.
5. Individuals are more likely to perceive more favorable causes for the same behavior of ingroup than outgroup members, for example, “We
do it because we’re good-hearted. They do it because they want to look good.”

It should be clear from Hamilton and Trolier’s research that categorizing people does more than bring order and reduce information flow of our experiences. Categorizing also biases the way we perceive, remember, and understand others, thus reinforcing the categories themselves. As a consequence when new and potentially contradictory information is presented, individuals often unconsciously distort it so that it will be experienced as consistent with their categories. For example, Bigler and Liben (1993) presented 4- to 9-year-old European-American children stories dealing with traits and social relations that were either consistent with or inconsistent with cultural stereotypes about African Americans. Children generally had poorer memory for the culturally inconsistent than consistent stories. Moreover, those who held strong racial stereotypes had the poorest recall, overall.

We develop beliefs about others because of their group membership; and has been seen, it makes a big difference whether they are ingroup or outgroup members. In the next two sections we explore some of consequences of more extreme beliefs about outgroup members.

STIGMAS

During World War II, the Jews in Nazi-occupied countries were required to wear six-pointed stars (the Star of David) on their outer garments. This identified them as Jews, who were considered by the Nazis to be less than human, but indistinguishable from non-Jews in nearly all other ways (male circumcision was another way, but not readily observable). The Jews were stigmatized by the Nazis, and the Star of David was the outward sign. Unlike the topic of stereotyping, there is no ambiguity about the relationship between stigmas and prejudice. Moreover, unlike other forms of prejudice, in which the connection between attitudes and behavior is not strong, stigmatized groups are nearly always discriminated against, sometimes fatally.

Goffman, one of the most imaginative social scientists of our time, wrote a book on this topic, Stigma, Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (1963). Goffman tells us that the Greeks originated the term stigma whose meaning referred “... to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier” (p. 1). The current meaning of the term is derived from its Greek origins but deals with the “disgrace” itself—some characteristic or attribute of an individual that
spoils, credits, or disqualifies him—and not so much to the physical sign itself. Stigmas help define the social identity of individuals and should be seen in a social context. Thus, a stigma to one group, for example, a criminal record to middle-class people, may not be a stigma to another group, for example, a criminal record to members of the Mafia. In fact, for the latter group, it may be a positive characteristic.

Stigmas are based on objective characteristics of people, for example, being Jewish, African American, physically deformed, deaf, mentally retarded, homosexual, an ex-mental patient, but these characteristics usually have no inherent stigmatizing effect. The stigmatized characteristic gets identified as such by one or more groups in a culture and comes to stand for, or signify the person himself, for example, “He’s an African American,” “She’s deaf.” Being stigmatized is to be dehumanized or depersonalized, which leads to being treated in often discriminatory, predictable ways. The person with the stigma becomes an object, a special devalued one.

Goffman (1963) described three broad types of stigma: (a) physical deformities or incapacities; (b) “blemishes of individual character,” such as imprisonment, mental disorder, radical political behavior; and (c) “tribal” ones of race, nation, and religion. The latter are “inherited” either genetically, or through one’s family of origin. Goffman views these as having more or less equivalent effects on adults, but I think they may have very different developmental paths for children. As an example, there may be characteristics such as physical deformities or behavioral abnormalities that are readily stigmatized by children. Stigmas for more purely, culturally defined characteristics such as religious or sexual preference may be acquired more slowly or with greater difficulty because they are not readily observable. There may be developmental differences for acquiring stigmas for which the person is blameworthy, for example, criminality, as contrasted with those for which a person is blameless, such as race or ethnicity.

The causes for stigmatizing others are probably no different than those underlying prejudice in general. As has been noted, forming social categories is a natural consequence of processing social information. Certainly stigmas “aid” in that process. I. Katz (1979) indicated that there is a fair amount of evidence to support a “scapegoating” cause. That is, individuals or groups are periodically frustrated or provoked in their attempts to attain certain goals and blame others for their failures, for example, “The Blacks are getting all the good jobs, now.” Scapegoating is essentially displaced aggression. I. Katz (1979) suggested another related cause that deals with attempts to assuage guilt or moral discomfort based on our knowledge of the existence of stigmatized groups. We see that it is wrong to mistreat homosexuals, or Blacks, or whomever. In order to justify that treatment and our failures to get others to change that mistreatment, we come to believe that the stigmatized group really deserves it—they are morally inferior. This is es-
sentially a dissonance explanation. Still one more possible explanation is that the existence of stigmatized groups makes us feel better about ourselves. We may see ourselves as morally superior, or alternatively, as fortunate that we are “not one of them.” Psychologically and socially, status is a powerful motivator of behavior.

One of the consequences of stigmatizing others is that it produces “ambivalent” feelings in us toward members of the stigmatized group (I. Katz, 1981). The concept of ambivalence has its roots in early 20th century psychoanalytic and sociological theory. It refers to dual or opposing feelings we occasionally have towards others, such as love and hate, attraction, and repulsion. In the realm of stigmas, the opposing feelings are hostility or aversion versus acceptance or sympathy; when these dual feelings are aroused during interactions with stigmatized others, we try to resolve the incompatibility or conflict through a variety of behavioral strategies. One of the important consequences of ambivalence is that our positive or negative feelings get exaggerated or amplified, depending on the situation. Thus moderate concern can get transformed into deep compassion and moderate dislike into marked rejection.

I. Katz (1981) developed and tested these ideas through research involving two stigmatized groups in the United States: Blacks and those who have physical disabilities. The dominant feeling many Whites have toward Blacks is rejection, and by able-bodied toward disabled persons, sympathy. But rejection toward Blacks is often accompanied by feelings of positive concern about racial discrimination; and sympathy toward the handicapped is often accompanied by avoidance or patronization.

In a typical racial experiment, Katz brings White adult subjects into a laboratory setting and they are met by a Black or White confederate of the experimenter (This partnership is unknown to the subjects) and a White experimenter. Some activity is carried out in which the subjects are asked to do something, for example, helping or insulting the confederate. Then the subjects are asked to fill out an impression rating scale about the confederate. Similar procedures are used with nonhandicapped adults as subjects and confederates who are either normal appearing or in wheelchairs. The basic measure in all these cases is the subjects’ responses to the two types of confederates.

Based on the theory that ambivalence causes exaggerated responses to stigmatized persons, Katz predicted that both positive and negative reactions to Black relative to White confederates and to handicapped relative to nonhandicapped confederates would be more marked. These predictions were supported in nearly all experiments. For example, in one study, White subjects were asked by the researcher to make highly critical statements to the Black or White confederate about the latter’s personality. Subsequently, the subjects were asked by the confederate to help him with a te-
dious task. The Black confederate received much more help than the White ones, which indicates greater sympathy for the Black than White persons.

We can see from this scenario that the ramifications of prejudice and discrimination are complex, but occasionally predictable in surprising ways. Stigmatizing others is perhaps the most debasing form of prejudice and thus the most psychologically destructive for the targets. The physical consequences of stigmatization can also be enormous as seen in the nearly total annihilation of European Jews by the Nazis during World War II.

Official stigmatization of certain groups within a culture does not usually lead to their physical destruction. In fact, it leads to their continuity over time because of the important functions the stigmatized groups serve for the larger society. We can learn a great deal about the study of prejudice by examining such situations.

**UNTOWCHABILITY AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING STIGMATIZED**

This section is based on Passin’s (1955) article dealing with outcasts in India and Japan, the books by DeVos and Wagatsuma (1966) on the Japanese, and Isaacs (1965) on the Asian Indians. Although the existence of “untouchable” castes in India is well-known in Western culture, comparable groups have existed in Japan for over 1,000 years. There are marked similarities in the origins of these groups in the two cultures as well as in the social and psychological consequences of being untouchable. Unlike the idea of social class, which implies the long-term possibility of upward or downward movement, castes are more or less permanent inherited characteristics of people.

In both countries, untouchability was a legally sanctioned status for substantial portions of the population. In India these groups comprised about 15% of the society and in Japan, about 2%. People of untouchable castes literally could not be touched by other groups without the other groups running the risk of being contaminated or defiled themselves. Untouchables lived in segregated villages or neighborhoods and were generally isolated from others. In both cultures, untouchables were often viewed as not quite human. In Japan the name for the major untouchable group, *Eta*, refers to four-legged animals. Legally, they were often restricted in the clothes they could wear, the way they could decorate their houses, and the way they could behave publicly. They could not share public facilities with the higher castes. Their legal rights were greatly reduced, and they could not attend school. Also, until present times they could not own land, which in agrarian societies would be a powerful hindrance to overcoming poverty.

The category of untouchability was first officially banned in Japan in 1871, and in India, in 1949. But, similar to the effects of abolition of slavery
in the United States, the Japanese and Indian ex-untouchables remain stigmatized in their societies, socially and physically separated from their countrymen.

Passin (1955) suggested, and Isaacs (1965) and DeVos and Wagatsuma (1966) concurred, that there were three essential elements required for the evolution of untouchability. The first was that the society have a rigid and hereditary caste system. In both societies, historically there were three to four hierarchically arranged caste groups and below them, the untouchables. The second was the belief that status differences between people are inherent in the nature of the universe; and moreover that these differences are based on an underlying inherited moral state. For the Indian culture, the concept of transmitting one’s moral state across generations is based on religious beliefs. For the Japanese, transmission of a “good” or a “base” moral state is not directly based on religious principles.

The third element was the existence of a religious belief that associates the concept of pollution and ritual impurity with certain substances, usually dirt, blood, and dead animals and people. Excrement falls in the polluted category in India but not in Japan. The key aspect here is that people with certain occupations regularly and necessarily come in contact with polluted substances, for example, street cleaners, butchers, undertakers, and thus become polluted themselves. The “fact” of this pollution indicates that they have a base moral state received from their ancestors, which will transmit to their offspring. Thus, even if untouchables are no longer in contact with polluted substances they are still polluted, and “contagious” to others. Indeed, in both Japan and India, the majority of ex-untouchables do not engage in jobs that put them in contact with these substances.

Despite the unproven beliefs many Indians and Japanese have that the untouchables come from different racial stocks than the higher castes, there are essentially no physical differences between the groups. In Japan the untouchables, officially called Buraku, look exactly like their neighbors. There are behavioral differences, however, but these are related to education and social class differences. In India there are a number of regional differences in physical appearance. Generally, lighter skin is more valued than dark skin. Although the untouchables, now officially referred to as scheduled castes, may often be darker than the higher castes, there is substantial overlap in skin color. Thus, a very dark-skinned or very light-skinned Indian may be from the highest as well as from the lowest castes. In both countries, there are generally no language or religious differences between the untouchables and those of the higher castes.

The original creation of untouchable castes, and their unofficial maintenance today is largely based on economic, social, and psychological reasons. Economically, the nonoutcaste groups are assured that many of the least desirable work activities will be carried out, likely for relatively low
wages. High status or high paying jobs in no cultures go to the lowest social classes. For the untouchables, however, employment in these undesirable jobs is guaranteed because they have a monopoly on them. Further, these occupations are essential to the maintenance of the society so that the likelihood of unemployment is often less for them than for individuals in the higher caste groups.

Socially, the ex-untouchable groups are given a great deal of autonomy in governing their own segregated communities. They are well-known to each other and mutually supportive. This geographic segregation gives the higher caste some assurance that they will not come in contact with ex-untouchables. Psychologically, there are the benefits to the non-outcastes that we previously noted in our discussion of stigmas. The status of the ex-untouchables is enormously degrading. Apparently, nearly all ex-untouchables carry the emotional scars of this degradation throughout their lives.

In Japan and India, the official elimination of untouchable status came about through changes in the government. In Japan, the Tokugawa rulers were replaced by the Meiji, and in India, the British were replaced by the Indians themselves. The elimination of slavery in the South in the United States occurred after the start of the Civil War, not before it. In all three cases, a humane philosophy overcame entrenched cultural practices at times of political revolution. Thus powerful conservative forces had to be overcome to produce these humane changes.

Both Isaacs (1965) and DeVos and Wagatsuma (1966) wrote in depth about the psychological consequences of being born into an ex-untouchable caste. They have pointed out some obvious parallels to being born African American. In both Japan and India, the ex-untouchable children usually perform more poorly in school and have a higher dropout rate than other groups. In segregated schools, it is often difficult to find higher caste teachers to instruct them, and in integrated schools, the higher caste children often discriminate against the ex-untouchables. Ex-untouchable children, adolescents and adults are somewhat apprehensive about leaving their communities for fear of being ostracized. As a consequence of persistent hostility or the threat of it from the larger culture, many, perhaps most ex-untouchables come to view themselves as contaminated. Because of this persistent discrimination, their expectations about future success in the larger culture are minimal. The safety net is the segregated neighborhood, but at the same time, that is the “spider’s web.”

Education and moving to the cities offer some prospect of escape from untouchability. But escape can be accomplished mainly through “passing”—pretending to be a higher caste individual. The psychological costs are enormous. One loses his support system because he has cut himself off from family and friends, has a constant fear of discovery, and cannot live a normal social life. Moreover, in these two cultures, people are very con-
cerned about “family of origin” and make inquiries about it. You have to lie, but there is a fair chance that it will be discovered.

Isaacs (1965) and DeVos and Wagatsuma (1966) reported that some progress has been made against this stigmatization, but it has been slow. No one anticipates that it will be erased before several generations have passed. If the history of prejudice and discrimination toward the Jews and the Blacks is any indicator, several generations is an optimistic speculation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN SLAVERY

As noted, several writers have pointed out the parallels between ex-untouchability in Asia and ex-slavery in the United States. This section explores some of the socialization consequences of being raised as a slave and of being descended from African-American slaves. Two will be emphasized here—the positive and negative consequences—feeling worthy versus feeling unworthy. The slaves and their descendants have a heritage of being free people from African societies rich in cultural traditions. They were captured by other Africans, and uprooted from their sources of nurturance, protection, and identity. A new imposed definition of self was given them, a definition that attempted to strip them of dignity. There were contradictions, the most salient, perhaps, being Christianization. As slaves, they were perceived by their masters and society as being human enough, worthy enough to accept the Christian bible and God. Most developed two personas, the humble, usually obedient, self-effacing presentation of self to White people, and freedom-loving, self-respectful, mutually supportive presentation of self to their Black relatives and friends. A mistake often made by the White population was believing that the persona shown to Whites was the true persona. The slaves’ frequent attempted escapes and disobedience were attributed to alleged Black subhuman qualities, as opposed to natural human responses to forced enslavement.

But did the slaves, to some extent, accept the White view of themselves? There is a psychoanalytic concept, identification with the aggressor, that has been used to understand the apparently contradictory reactions of prisoners toward their guards (Bettleheim, 1943). In the Nazi concentration camps, Jews, Poles, and other ethnic groups occasionally accepted the values of their prison guards toward themselves. Some viewed the guards as superior beings, and themselves as inferior, deserving of their dehumanization.

A more recent theoretical view of comparable phenomena is referred to as the Stockholm Syndrome (Graham & Rawlings, 1991). The syndrome derives its name from observations of value and affectional shifts by hostages leading to bonding with their captors. There are four major conditions that