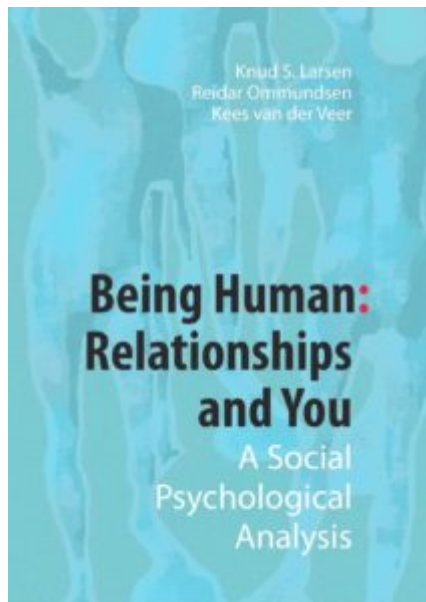


# Being Human. Chapter 9: Hostile Inter-Group Behavior: Prejudice, Stereotypes, And Discrimination



Prejudice is a common attitude in all cultures and societies. We only have to look at the headlines of a daily newspaper to see the dimensions of destructive behavior as a consequence of prejudice. Recent history has seen the liquidation of millions of people as these victims were dehumanized by prejudice allowing for their annihilation. In Europe we thought that after the massacre of the Second World War people would have learned the sad and terrible lessons of prejudice. However, since then we have seen the destructions of thousands of people in former Yugoslavia where Christians killed Muslims

and vice versa.

Some group differences may be important, but most stereotypes underlying these killings are based on myths of no real consequence in truth. Religion rather than being the great unifier has provided the ideology for killing regardless of culture and society. In India and Pakistan, Hindus are pitted against Muslims. In Palestine those who identify with Jewish ancestral myths are pitted against those who believe in Muhammad. In Rwanda the ethnic Hutu's are against the Tutsi's. The list goes on and on, encompassing all societies.

The Vietnamese have reservations about the Chinese, the Chinese think ill of the Japanese. Can you think of any society which does not display negative feelings toward other ethnic or national groups? Do you remember the conflicts in East Timor, the continued struggle in Kashmir (Hindus versus Muslims), in Sri Lanka (Muslims versus Buddhist), the struggle in Northern Ireland within a single religion (Protestants versus Catholics), and Iraq (Shia versus Sunni)? All these examples demonstrate intergroup enmity as a prominent and decisive element of the human condition.

Within society, there is also prejudice. Many, if not most societies, display gender prejudice against females. Under China's one child policy, more boys are born than girls. One result is the presence of many lonely men when the sexes grow into adulthood. In India parents seek to know the sex of a prospective child, and female fetuses are often aborted. Unequal salaries between the two genders continue for equal work in many societies. In the western world we also observe prejudice toward those who do not fit ideal body images. Fat people are viewed negatively, and unhealthy thin body forms are promoted as we have seen in chapter 3.

All minorities are subject to some prejudice. The US has a long and distressing history of prejudice toward ethnic nationalities and minorities. The prejudice toward the native (Indian) population initially led to attempts to use them as slaves. When they proved unsuitable for that, native societies were largely destroyed and survivors placed in controlled reservations. The long and painful history of slavery in the US is known to all. This ended only with the civil war in 1865. The legislation which followed ensured that black people were kept segregated in inferior status and allowed for their continued exploitation. Only in the 1960s did the civil rights movement put an end to the worst visible forms of discrimination in our society. However, even today Black people continue to bear the consequences of a prejudicial society. Poverty, poor housing, disease, and crime continue to afflict those who live in America's racial ghettos. Similar results of prejudice can be found in other nations which also have produced divided and segregated communities.

The presence of prejudice can also be observed in the many derogatory terms used against nationalities in the US. Hispanics are called spics, greasers, or wetbacks; Asians are described with words like slants, slopes, chinks, or japs; Blacks are called niggers, coons, jigaboos, or jungle bunnies; Germans are stereotyped as krauts, and Italians, as wops or dagoes. During the war on Vietnam, the Vietnamese were called gooks by the American soldiers. These terms are all pejorative words used to denigrate the human value of these national groups. Together these words serve the cause of prejudice by increasing social distance between groups and thereby allowing for the brutalities. Every society can find similar prejudice toward their ethnic and social minority groups.

Not only minority groups are targeted, the dominant groups are also subject to prejudicial distortion. Prejudice is indeed a two way street, where any group can

be subject to common ignorance. Today the US is still dominant in the world. However, Americans are also subject to prejudice (Campbell, 1967). Americans are seen by the British to be pushy and excessively patriotic. Some of these stereotypic views are very resistant to change, as certain views have been present for several centuries (Schama, 2003). The prevalence of prejudice suggests that it is part of the human condition. Is that true? If true, we could do little to change the conditions of hostility in the world. As we shall see, prejudice is complex, but is largely learned and can therefore be unlearned.

With the complexity of human behavior, we are not likely to find any one theory or set of principles that can explain all causes of prejudice. Why is it present in every society? What can be done to ameliorate the effects of intergroup hostility? These are questions that will be addressed in this chapter. As we noted, prejudice is an attitude. Elsewhere we have noted that attitudes have affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. Larsen (1971a) demonstrated the importance of both the affective and cognitive components in making social judgments. These three components are also found in prejudicial attitudes. We call the affective component prejudice, the cognitive component which sustains the attitude is a stereotype, and the behavioral component is discrimination manifested toward the target group. Often the three components are just referred to in the social psychological literature by the inclusive term “prejudice”.

### *1. Prejudicial attitudes: The affective component*

In the context of prejudicial attitudes, the term prejudice connotes negative affect toward the target group. It is true that one can favor a group and therefore have positive affect toward it, but in social psychology, prejudice is referred to as a negative phenomenon. When we say someone is prejudiced, this person has negative attitudes toward some group as a class of people. In practice this means that the prejudiced person pays little or no attention to individual traits or variations within the group, but describes all members as having similar undesirable characteristics. A person prejudiced toward blacks ascribes negative traits to the entire race, and will dismiss individual personality traits as unimportant. In the presence of a targeted group, a prejudiced person will feel negative, and dislike the group as a whole. Negative feelings are not always expressed, as with changing social norms people may try to hide their true feelings.

### *2. Stereotypes: the cognitive component*

All attitudes have a supporting cognitive structure. In the case of prejudicial attitudes, we call these stereotypes. We have schemas of other groups which are based on our selective experiences in society. In the past black people were shown in American movies and other media in subordinate positions as servants or doing menial work. Our stereotype of black people is therefore less than flattering, and many think that being uneducated is the natural condition of black people.

Once incorporated, stereotypes are very resistant to change. Contradictory information is dismissed as the exception which proves the rule. When confronted with an educated black person, we split our prejudice into a new subset of the “educated” black. We continue to harbor our negative stereotype as the subset allows us to deal with exceptions. Some Nazi’s created a subset of “good Jews”, which allowed them to continue to support the German government and endorse the holocaust. When we stereotype, we simplify the world. It helps us process information before any interaction occurs. When we meet a black person, we do not have to know the person since our stereotypes will prepare our responses.

Stereotypes are primarily cognitive in function, allow for more efficient decision-making, and shorten our response time. Cognition that follows uses mental shortcuts or simple heuristics (see also chapters 4 and 8), that Black people are “lazy”. When using simple heuristics or similar stereotypes we need a minimum effort when confronted with representatives of the target group (Fiske & Depret, 1996; Jones, 1990). Stereotypes can be personality traits which describe unfavorable qualities of members of the other group. Black people are perceived to be ignorant, and so forth. Stereotypes can also take the form of attributions. If blacks are poor, it is because of personal dispositions like black people lacking a work ethic. We attribute motivations to many victims of stereotypes, explaining their poverty or ill health in terms that fit our conception of living in a just world: “People get what they deserve”.

### *2.1 The harmful effects of stereotypes*

Recent research has demonstrated the harmful effects of stereotypes on the target group. The phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophecy shows that when prejudiced people behave consistent to a stereotype and convey their expectations, the victims come to believe in the stereotype and act consistent with the expectation. The stereotype elicits behavior which confirms the stereotype for both the victim and the perpetrator. The stereotype that black people are lazy and

unreliable may cause employers to be unwilling to offer employment. Unemployment in turn causes hopelessness in the black person, the belief there are no jobs, and subsequently the need to rely on welfare. The welfare dependency cycle is completed when white people act on their stereotypes, thereby reinforcing the expected behavior.

Research shows that victimized groups embrace stereotypes and often fulfill the predicted behavior (Snyder & Swann, 1978; Swim & Stangor, 1998). The self-fulfilling prophecy has been demonstrated in varying circumstances. It is a common stereotype to believe that people's memory deteriorates with age. Many elderly believe it is true (Levy & Langer, 1994). Since this is a common belief in our society, many people act with that prejudice toward the elderly. Many jokes are made about "senile moments", and the elderly comply with developing the expected memory loss.

Minority self-awareness is painful when living in a prejudicial society. Targets of prejudice are frequently aware of the stereotypes describing one's group. Self-awareness causes apprehension when the minority person is confronted with a task related to the stereotype. White males competing with Asian males in mathematics do so knowing the common stereotype that Asians are wizards in math. Likewise females are aware of the common perceptions that they are inferior to males in mathematics. The stereotype offers therefore a plausible explanation for poor performance. This is today called stereotype threat, or stereotypic threat.

When victims of stereotypes feel under scrutiny or threat, the stereotype produces poor performance. Even females who are high achievers display lower performance when they are made aware of the common stereotype (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). Stereotypes are by their very prevalence in society difficult to ignore, and the consequences are very real. The stereotype about racial differences in athleticism favoring blacks has similar consequences for white students. In one study white students were led to believe they were participating in a study on native athletic ability. Since the stereotype of white students is generally one of having less native athletic ability, whites also made less of an effort. They accepted the limits imposed by the stereotype (Stone, 2002). In one intriguing study of Asian women's mathematical ability, the stereotype about racial differences had positive consequences when their racial identity was made salient. However, when the female gender identity was

emphasized they did poorly (Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). There are many who believe the result of stereotypic threat is long term, and may even produce negative physiological reactions commonly associated with stress (Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001).

## *2.2 Common stereotypes ignore overlap and individual differences*

Some stereotypes seem harmless. As noted it is a common stereotype in America that black people are athletic, and this is the reason why some sports are dominated by blacks. Since there are many positives associated with athletics are there any negative consequences? The main negative result is that the stereotype ignores the overlap in abilities between the racial groups, and individual differences (Stone, Perry, & Darley, 1997). Although it is true that blacks dominate some sports like basketball, it is also true that there are many great white players, and indeed players from any race. The stereotype is not fair to any group, because it assumes that black students should concentrate on sports, and the athletically gifted white student should choose academics. The stereotype limits the potential of all groups.

Gender stereotypes also limit the potential of both males and females. There are acknowledged biological differences between the sexes, and most of us are grateful for these complementary traits. Some traits evolved from the evolutionary need to specialize tasks during the course of the development of the human species. Women have the assignment by nature to bear children. Those who are good mothers help their gene pool to continue, as their offspring has a greater likelihood of surviving (Buss & Kendrick, 1998). These powerful biological causes may have produced greater nurturing in females, and contributed to the stereotype of female nurturing behavior.

In all cultures, females are accepted as more nurturant and passive (Deaux & La France, 1998). Research supports the presence of common perceptions of females as more socially adapt, more friendly, and more supportive. Men, on the other hand, are typically seen as more dominating and controlling (Eagly, 1994; Swim, 1994). The problem with stereotypes is that they limit both male and female behavior. There are indeed fathers who are very nurturant and supportive of their children, and some mothers who abuse their children. Common experience shows that there is an overlap in behavior between the two genders and room for individual differences. Still overall the gender differences in nurturing remain and are consistent (Eagly, 1996).

### *2.3 Stereotypes and discrimination*

The effects of stereotypes go far beyond perceptions. They can and do affect female opportunity for employment, and her subsequent work related evaluations and success. Participants in one study evaluated a highly competent female physician. Male participants perceived her as less competent, and as having had an easy time becoming successful when compared to a male physician (Feldman-Summers & Kiesler, 1974). The female participants were more egalitarian and perceived that male and female physicians were equally competent, but that there was less obstruction for males to overcome. More recently similar results were obtained (Swim & Sanna, 1996). When men are successful people attribute this to native ability, whereas females are seen to rely on hard work. When men fail, it is considered bad luck or because they did not make sufficient effort. Failure for females is perceived to reflect lack of native ability, and therefore impacts negatively on self-esteem.

Victims of stereotypes come to accept the common beliefs. Socialization by parents, school, and society, passes on the common stereotypes about gender. In one study, mothers who had stereotypic beliefs about gender differences in math produced daughters who had the same mind set, and who subsequently performed poorly on math tests (Jacobs & Eccles, 1992). The mother's acceptance of the negative math stereotype served as the self-fulfilling prophecy we discussed earlier.

Merton (1957) first used the term "self-fulfilling prophecy" to describe that the way we act toward the stereotypic target may encourage the behavior we expect. If we think blacks are hostile we may approach them with anxiety or weariness. To these restrained responses, blacks may understandably behave with their own distance and hostility. In a study on job interviews (Wood, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974) the experimenters noted that the white interviewers treated black and white applicants differently. When the applicant was black, the white interviewer increased the physical distance, and finished the interview earlier when compared to white applicant interviews. The interviews were rated, and collaborators trained to interview a new group of white applicants the way the black applicants were interviewed. When the white applicants were treated the same way as the black applicants were in the first phase, the white applicants were also evaluated negatively. The physical distance and indifference produced the same behavior in white applicants as in black applicants. The self-fulfilling prophecy suggests that

through our expectations we elicit and reinforce the stereotypic consistent behavior.

More serious consequences result when the prejudiced person is required to make quick judgments about the target group under stress conditions. One common stereotype is the presence of a large criminal element in the black community, and the proneness to violence among black men. If you were a white police officer would that stereotype affect your behavior when making an arrest? One experiment studied the effect of the black criminal stereotype on reaction time in video game shooting. The participants were presented with symbolic representatives of both black and white stimulus persons, and told to shoot those who were armed. The results showed shorter reaction time toward the black person holding a gun, than a similar white target (Corell, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002). The reaction time was consistent with the stereotype, and could have serious consequences for young black men who might appear threatening to arresting officers.

## *2.4 Functions of stereotypes*

We categorize people according to the common beliefs in society. Stereotypes are communicated and socialized through the media, traditions, and our educational system. Stereotypes do not allow for the evaluation of the individual, but attribute to the entire group what we think are common characteristics. Stereotypes help make the world more simple, otherwise we would have to stretch our minds when trying to understand the targeted individual. It is the lazy man's response to the bewildering array of information presented by many different representatives of the same group. Consequently, stereotyping requires the least or minimal effort (Allport, 1954). It is similar to the heuristics rule of thumb discussed earlier in the chapter on cognition.

Is there some truth to stereotypes? A grain of truth is present in stereotypes, but they are generalizations which do not take into account individual variations. Also stereotypes do not allow for an evaluation of the history that brought about the "grain of truth". Perhaps some females do poorly on math tests when compared to males, but there are historical explanations which are unrelated to native ability or intelligence. Yes, there is more crime in black neighborhoods, but there is also more poverty. There is some truth, but the stereotypes do not offer explanations. They serve only to simplify judgment and decision-making. Stereotypes overemphasize negative or positive traits, and underestimate the variability which



is present in all social groups (Fiske, 1998).

### *3. Discrimination*

The third component of any attitude refers to behavioral consequences. These have also been referred to above, as it is difficult to separate the components of attitudes. Now we focus directly on the discrimination suffered by the victims of prejudice. Discrimination proceeds from the very common ethnocentric assumption that the groups to which we belong are better on some criteria than out-groups. We shall discuss the in-group-out-group phenomena in a review of the minimal group research. More broadly, these feelings are described as ethnocentrism, the belief that our school, church, religion, and nation are superior to all others. The most extreme example of ethnocentrism was found in the Nazi campaign to promote subhuman stereotypes of all socially undesirable groups

The world presents a history of discriminatory behavior. During the Second World War the American government sent 120,000 Japanese Americans to camps, purely on racial grounds. No individual review was performed and all were treated alike. Yet there was no reason to suspect that these Americans were a threat to the nation. In the McCarthyite period that followed the war, thousands of Americans lost employment and were otherwise persecuted purely for reasons of their political beliefs or for associating with unpopular groups. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had particular assignments to follow and intimidated political dissidents, a pattern which continues till this day. This is the historical legend of the US. More recently Pettigrew (1998) has reviewed the substantial body of research on prejudice against and discrimination toward new immigrant minorities of Western Europe.

The in-group-out-group distinction applies equally to all groups. In one study white and black participants evaluated applicants for employment, and made some attribution why the person had been fired or lost their previous job. White participants made more favorable evaluations and attributions of white applicants, and blacks held similar views on black applicants (Chatman & von Hippel, 2001). This discriminatory assessment has been found for other groups as well (Munro & Ditto, 1997). Even the mere innocent exposure to a stereotypic target can bring negative evaluations. Just sitting next to an obese woman produces negative evaluations of applicants for jobs (Hebl & Mannix, 2003). Stereotypes have survival implications for those in the targeted group, and those

with whom they associate.

Discrimination occurs because society gives permission. Many societies tolerate sexist humor, because while funny, it also puts women in their place. Do funny sexist jokes have other consequences? Some suggest that funny sexist jokes put the mind at ease, and therefore prepare the way for discrimination. Much discrimination is disguised as norms about gender and race. These norms have changed drastically over the past three or four decades. Resulting ambiguity can make a targeted person feel unsure if rejection is discrimination or the consequences of some personal failure. When we know that negative decisions are the result of discrimination, we can accept that for what it is, and it does not impact our self-esteem (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). However, in many cases, discrimination is not so clear-cut. When a person is not retained or promoted, self-doubt may exist since the perpetrator usually covers his tracks with elaborate rationalizations. In his study Van Beek (1993) showed that lower skilled unemployed job-seekers on the Dutch labor market are primarily selected by employers on the basis of characteristics that they cannot influence themselves, like age, gender and ethnic background.

Racial discrimination is all too real in our society. The treatment of psychiatric patients was influenced by race in one study (Bond, Di Candia, & McKinnon, 1988). The hospital used two methods of restraining the patient's violent behavior. One easy way separated the patient in a room whereas the other harsher method used straitjackets or drugs to tranquilize the patient. In examining the records of the all white staffed hospital results showed that the straitjacket and drugs were used four times more frequently on black patients than whites. This discriminatory treatment was used despite any difference in violent behavior between white and black patients. It seems clear that the white staff had a stereotype of black violence, which translated into a harsher reaction to any problems by black patients.

If you are a member of a minority group, the results can be very negative in areas of great importance to you and your family. In one study Larsen (1977b) investigated discrimination against Aborigines in Australia. Three areas important to the daily life of Aborigines were access to jobs, housing, and equal treatment in restaurants and public service venues. The method of the study involved sending out a white stimulus person to ask for the positions and services thereby knowing the availability. Subsequently an Aboriginal person of same age, dress, and

gender was sent to the same location within a short time interval. The results were truly astounding. Most establishments refused to consider employment for Aborigines, or renting housing facilities. Even in public bars the service was discriminatory as Aborigines found themselves ignored by waiters, or delayed in getting service. The study got the attention of the Australian parliament which debated the merits of the civil rights legislation which at that time contained few sanctions for discriminatory behavior.

Other social groups such as sexual minorities have also been subject to discriminatory actions, and are usually not protected by any legislation. Some research has shown that visible individuals from these groups are treated as pariahs in job application procedures (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002). Although society has experienced many changes with respect to sexual norms, discrimination continues to affect the daily lives of many.

#### *4. Changing social norms*

We live in a world that has experienced massive migration over the past decades. More and more people have met representatives from other races and ethnic groups. Contact by itself does not improve intergroup prejudice, but may remove some of the most extreme stereotypes. In the southern part of the US, a great amount of contact occurred between slaves and slave owners, but this did not improve the attitudes of the white owners. On the contrary, contact reinforced bigoted attitudes about the natural place of blacks in society, and the natural born rights to own and exploit human beings. Part of racist ideology was the belief that blacks were not fully human, and in census taking they represented but a fraction of whites. On the surface racial bigotry has plummeted since the 1950s when support for segregation was high (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1956).

The devastating effects of racial norms could be observed in the preference of little black girls for white dolls. The implication was clear, white was better (Clark & Clark, 1949). The negative impact of racist norms on the self-esteem of black people encouraged change, as did the “black is beautiful” movement. A later study showed that black children increasingly preferred black dolls, and there was an acceptance in the black community that there were no important native differences between blacks and whites (Jackman & Senter, 1981).

#### *4.1 Gender stereotypes*

Beliefs about gender are deeply rooted in biology, history, and culture. It should

not surprise us that gender stereotypes are still with us, and are resistant to change. There are those who would argue that gender based beliefs are stronger than racial stereotypes (Jackman & Senter, 1981). Males often view themselves stereotypically as more dominant and assertive, whereas females see themselves as more compassionate (Martin, 1987). Both genders accept the prevailing stereotypes.

However, gender based attitudes are also rapidly changing. From the common accepted position of women as homemakers, attitudes now reflect the modern reality of women in the work place (Astin, 1991). The self-depreciation that was part of women's psyche in the mid century had largely faded by the 1980's (Swim, Borgidia, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989).

#### *4.2 Prejudice in intimate relationships?*

The concept of social cost is defined by the approval or disapproval by significant others for interaction with targeted groups. People are aware of and sensitive to social costs, and it affects hostile and aggressive behavior (Larsen, Martin, Ettinger & Nelson, 1976). Disapproval (or social costs) from significant others is greatest for intimate relationships like marriage. Larsen (1974e) and Larsen, Ommundsen, & Larsen (1978) investigated the relative importance of social costs, dogmatism, and race, and found social costs to be the most significant variable affecting relationships in Norway as well as the US. They used the Bogardus Scale which was essentially a scale of decreasing intimacy ranging from choosing the targeted person for marriage to wanting to exclude members of various ethnic groups from the nation. You might not mind an immigrant coming into your country, you might even condone working with immigrants, and having them participate in social life. However, you might also demand your daughters to marry someone from your own ethnic group. In the most intimate relations, racism is alive and well, and present in nearly all cultures and societies (Sharma, 1981). Intimate relations contain the greatest potential social costs, as most people conform when disapproved by our closest significant others, our parents and our family. Some twenty years ago fifty seven percent of white US respondents would be unhappy if their children married a black person (Life, 1988). The trend is away from these remaining barriers, but it is interesting that intimate relationships are the last remaining barrier to full equality. For example students at the end of college felt more pressure not to date members of other racial and ethnic groups (Levin, Taylor & Caudle, 2007).

#### *4.3 Subtle bias in racial and gender relationships*

Changes in social norms have changed racial and gender stereotypes, it is no longer profitable to be a bigot. There was a time in America, from the colonial times to the 1960's, when you could not be elected to even the lowest office unless you displayed bigoted attitudes. Now there are laws and an emerging social consensus that discourages blatant display of prejudice. Perhaps this is just another way of saying that most people are conforming to new social expectations. They want to avoid punishment or gain the approval of society as contained in the social cost concept. However, conformity is surface behavior. A person may continue to harbor negative feelings and stereotypes underneath the conforming behavior.

Subtle racism, or prejudicial gender attitudes, can be determined by the bogus pipe line method where the participant believes that the experimenter can read the person's true attitudes by the use of a sensitive "lie detector" test (Jones & Sigall, 1971). The participants in the study were assigned to either a traditional survey method of attitudes, or the bogus pipeline where they were instructed that the machine could detect if they lied. Knowing that they would be found out, participants showed more prejudice in the pipeline condition.

Similar results were found for gender-based attitudes. On surveys men and women had very similar attitudes on gender related issues. When using the pipeline method, men showed considerably less sympathy for the cause of gender equality (Tourangeau, Smith, Rasinski, 1997). However, even in using traditional methods of surveys, we can still observe subtle racism and prejudicial gender attitudes (Swim, Aikin, Hunter, & Hall, 1991).

In this "modern" form of prejudice, bigoted people are just more careful in expressing their views. No one wants to be labeled a racist as today it can have negative consequences and connotations. At the same time, when the racist is in comfortable company, these prejudicial views are expressed. Subtle prejudice is a whole new arena for social psychologists to study and to try to understand the remaining intergroup hostility (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; Pettigrew & Mertens, 1995).

An important tool in achieving racial equality in education is the use of busing students from racially segregated communities to racially integrated schools. Some studies have shown that most white parents accept the busing of their

children from one white institution to another, but object vigorously when the educational system uses busing for interracial integration.

Perhaps old-fashioned racism is on the wane in the United States and Europe reflecting normative changes and conformity. Race relations remain hostile however, but are expressed in more carefully and subtle forms (Kinder & Sears, 1981; McCanahay, 1986; Haddock, Zanna, & Esses, 1993; Swim, Aiken, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Modern racism rejects past beliefs in the racial inferiority of blacks, and other outmoded stereotypes. These outdated views are supplanted by more modern beliefs which sustain prejudice. Some contend in self-righteous anger that blacks through affirmative action are undermining self-reliance and fundamental family values. Modern racism depends heavily on dispositional affirmation where racists see minority disadvantages as caused by personal inadequacy and not by situations of poverty and discrimination. The disproportionate share of welfare assistance to blacks, and the crime rates in black ghettos, are viewed as the consequence of personal inadequacy, and not brought on by unending discrimination. So on the surface of life racial norms have changed since many bigots reject blatant racism, yet embrace subtle racist beliefs. It is an irony that egalitarian values can coexist with prejudice toward minorities (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). This apparent contradiction occurs because of the beliefs that unequal treatment has dispositional causes. The cause of unemployment among black people is attributed to black people being uneducated or lazy. Since racists generally benefit from the status quo in society, it should not surprise us that they favor the dominance of the in-group (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Modern racists will operate within the norms of our changing society, but will not help in improving the lot of minorities, and depending on the specific situation, may hinder attempts to improve intergroup relations.

Several studies have demonstrated the functions of modern racism. In one study, participants were led to believe that they were the only ones able to help a black victim. In that situation, they came to assist the black victim slightly more times than a white victim. However, when the participants thought others could help the black victim, their implicit racism dominated. (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977). In that condition, they assisted a black victim less frequently than a white victim (38 % versus 75 %).

Another study viewed the implications for employment. Prejudiced and unprejudiced participants rated black and white applicants for employment the

same, when they had the similar credentials on all pertinent variables. However, when one applicant had variable qualifications, so they excelled on some but not other characteristics, prejudiced participants rated black applicants less favorably (Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2002). The varied credentials allowed the prejudiced person to favor some credentials and not others, but always at the expense of the black applicant. The variable credentials supplied the cover which allowed the prejudiced person to rationalize his racism. Under conditions of variable credentials the bigot can pick and chose what is important, and make biased judgments without offending his self-perception as a fair person.

At the beginning of the chapter, we mentioned examples of intergroup hostility from various regions of the world. The history of the world is one of continuous warfare fed by stereotypes and prejudice toward supposed enemies. Norms may change, and the most blatant forms of discrimination cease. However, an underlying reservoir of hostility may remain to be tapped at a time of future conflict. Research on prejudice in Europe shows similar patterns to those of the United States. Subtle forms of prejudice also exist in Europe, as it too has experienced changing norms over the past few decades (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew, Jackson, Brika, Lemaine, Meertens, Wagner, & Zick, 1998).

In a world where illegal immigration is becoming an increasingly controversial issue (Van der Veer, Ommundsen, Larsen, Van Le, Krumov, Pernice, Pastor Romans, 2004; Ommundsen, Van der Veer, Van Le, Krumov, & Larsen, 2006) it should come as no surprise that we see examples of both subtle and blatant forms of prejudice (Meertens & Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). These studies included both measures of blatant and subtle prejudice. In one study, those who scored high on blatant prejudice wanted to send the illegal immigrants home. Those who scored low on both scales wanted to improve the lives of the immigrants, and had a tolerant outlook toward them as their fellow human beings. Those who scored high on subtle prejudice did not approve of sending the immigrants home, but on the other hand did not want to do anything to help or improve their lives (Pettigrew, 1998). Subtle prejudice may therefore have an effect through crimes of omission rather than commission, through acts of indifference rather than overt acts of discrimination. In either event, the outcome is negative for the targeted group.

Modern forms of racism may be even more potent than blatant prejudice. The underlying attitudes can be rationalized by well-established values such as social

equality. Why should affirmative action benefit racial minorities and women? Many whites object, not on racial grounds, but because they see affirmative action as “unfair” discrimination toward poor whites and other groups, and insulting to values of equal treatment (Tarman & Sears, 2005; Sears & Henry, 2003). Whether it is called modern racism (McConahay, 1986) or racial resentment (Kinders & Sanders, 1996), a reserve of ill will continues to be directed toward minority groups. Many whites have negative feelings toward ethnic minorities, and what they consider demands for special treatment. Modern racists view for example blacks as lazy, and believe they violate American values of thrift and hard work.

There are researchers who believe that racial attitudes have been replaced by concerns over issues of merit, and the value of color-blind equality (Sniderman, Crosby, & Howell, 2000). These assertions are modern forms of racist ideology, and provide the justification for continued racial inequality. Racism can be observed in the modern racist’s opposition to black leaders and against affirmative action (Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997). Is racial prejudice just an issue of past history? Most of the evidence would not support that perspective.

In the case of gender prejudice the norms have also changed. Are there still more subtle forms of gender bias in society? By choosing which traits we consider important in females, we can still observe subtle but powerful effects on gender equality. Many men have ambivalent attitudes toward women. Ambivalence can be expressed by saying that women are less competent and intelligent than men, but they are more kind and warm human beings and have greater interpersonal skills. Glick and Fiske (2001) studied ambivalent sexism in a study of 15,000 men and women in 19 countries. They found support for the presence of a chivalrous sexism which included positive and protective attitudes toward women who occupied traditional gender roles of wife and mother. At the same time, the men manifested hostile sexism toward those women who were seen as usurping traditional male power. These ambivalent attitudes are particularly difficult to change, since there is ample rationalization for the prejudiced man to claim he has “positive” attitudes toward women, and wants to protect them. The chivalry allows the sexist person to deny feelings of hostility, but still prevents gender equality. Whether sexist or racist, the ambivalent person supports the status quo by favoring those blacks and females who occupy the traditional roles of servant,



and treating those who deviate from that image with hostility.

Many today deny that prejudice still exists toward women. Some men feel resentment toward the demands that women make. In a competitive society; men perceive that they are losing out by the advancement of women (Swim, Aiken, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). The feeling of unfairness fuels active opposition to affirmative action for females.

#### *4.4 Subtle measures of authentic attitudes*

How can we measure a person's authentic attitudes toward minorities? In the "bogus pipeline" study mentioned above, subjects were led to believe that a lie detector would reveal when they were lying. Consequently participants admitted to much higher rates of racism (Jones & Sigall, 1971). Another technique is called the Implicit Association Test (IAT). This test aims at uncovering prejudice among those who claim to be unbiased. The measure is based on reaction time to visual stimuli (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). A series of pictures and words are presented on a computer screen (e.g., black faces and negative traits or white faces and positive words). The participant is asked to press a key with either the right or left hand depending on whether the stimuli conform to one or another rule. The basic argument is that reaction time will be shorter when the picture and words are consistent in the participant's mind. If the black face is followed by positive words, the prejudiced person may hesitate, and this hesitation can be a measure of unconscious prejudice. To put it another way, unconscious prejudice toward black people can be assessed by the difference in reaction time between black faces with positive words and black faces with negative words. If there is no prejudice present, there should be no need to evaluate the positive words and reaction time would be the same. Out of the million responses to the Web version of the IAT, about two thirds of the white participants show prejudice (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002).

In other studies using priming methods employing pictures of a minority person followed by words that belong or do not belong, reaction time is used to assess prejudice. Many people deny the presence of prejudice, but nevertheless show reaction times that indicate the presence of these attitudes (Bessenoff & Sherman, 2000; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Fazio & Hilden, 2001). The more blatant aspects of discrimination and prejudice have been removed from people's lives as a result of changing norms. Nevertheless, people have maintained many prejudicial attitudes even if they do not dare to show these

openly. There is still much ill will in the world, and much must be done to create societies free from prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. To work on these issues we must understand how we come about developing prejudice.

### *5. Causes of prejudice*

This section examines the major ideas which explain prejudice. Some researchers emphasize the importance of early learning. Social inequality motivates prejudicial behavior, and rationalizes prejudice. Realistic group conflict weighs the importance of competition in a world of scarce resources. Many people are frustrated, and take out their anger on minorities as described by scapegoating theory. Group categorization theory research shows that in competitive societies even trivial groups produce in-group bias. Social dominance theory describes our world as a hierarchy of winners and losers. Those dominant fear loss of status and real advantage in the struggle for equality. In social conformity theory, prejudice is an outcome of the desire to get along in communities with prejudicial norms. Social institutions lend support through the mechanism of segregation in access to education as for example in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. In western societies there are jobs considered unsuitable for women like being CEO's of large companies. Personality dynamics points to the authoritarian personality and belief incongruence as instrumental in producing prejudice. Social cost is an integrating variable underlying personality dynamics and conformity.

#### *5.1 Theories of learning: The socialization of prejudicial attitudes*

None of us are born with prejudicial attitudes. Prejudiced attitudes are formed through socialization at the home, in school, in the community, and through culture. This is an optimistic statement, because what can be learned can also be unlearned. Learning theories are essential concepts in understanding how some people become bigots and others are tolerant. If a child grows up in a home where the parents are prejudiced, the child may socialize these attitudes by simple imitation. Social learning theory describes how children learn concepts and attitudes by watching the behavior of significant others. If a father or mother uses pejorative words in describing racial groups, then the child will be influenced and accept this version of reality. Likewise teachers and other significant people are powerful role models for children who lack the critical faculties with which to question prejudice.

The community also plays a powerful role in shaping behavior. Many people are

prejudiced just from a desire to get along in a prejudicial community. In the United States the South was the traditional repository of prejudice and bigotry. Prior to the civil rights movement in the 1960s, a person was in danger of ostracism or worse if he expressed tolerant attitudes toward black people. Prejudice was functional to obtaining social rewards and avoiding disapproval. As we have seen, this blatant attitude has been in retreat for some decades. However, the more subtle forms of prejudice may still be reinforced by norms in the community. Since the community cannot reject for example black people as a category they can do so indirectly. Noting the unemployment, crime, and prevalence of AIDS among black people in the US, and attributing these to dispositional (personal) causes, is a key ideology of current bigots.

Reinforcement theory is a learning theory which asserts that behaviors followed by reinforcement are strengthened and will therefore be expressed on future occasions. The values of parents and the community play a role of reinforcing even subtle attitudes. Classical conditioning theory also plays a role, as we may come to associate positive or negative concepts with gender or race.

### *5.2 Early learning of prejudice*

Normative prejudice is learned very early in life. As early as 4 or 5 children begin to discriminate between racial groups, and understand the dominant community norms with respect to race. Some groups may not be salient for some children, as racial, ethnic or national minorities are often segregated. However, by age 7 children are generally aware of the dominant norms in regard to all major groups (Aboud, 1988). The reason early socialization in prejudice is so important is that once learned prejudicial attitudes are not easily changed (Sears & Levy, 2003). Prejudice serve selective perception, traits which conform with the stereotype are remembered, the rest discarded. The power of early socialization was shown in the study by Miller and Sears (1986). The norms where the child grew up have more powerful effects in later adulthood than other and later experiences like adult occupations or regional attitudes. Freud said “the child is the father of the man”. By that he emphasized the all powerful effects of early childhood experiences. The literature on prejudice tends to confirm this viewpoint. As the child grows up he is reinforced by the community for expressing the accepted prejudicial attitudes. For the most part this occurs at low levels of awareness and reflection.

### *5.3 The media and social learning*

The media provides a forum for the social learning of prejudicial attitudes. Many who grew up in the United States would remember the old Andy and Amos show which utilized black actors in very stereotypic happy-go-lucky terms. Minorities are often described in old movies in unflattering ways as servants or in doing other menial work. Although these stereotypes have changed in recent decades other problems remain. The lack of visibility of a targeted group supports ambivalent attitudes. If children and adults do not see positive role models of gender or race, it is easy to rely on subtle prejudice.

The appearance of minorities in the media is largely stereotypic. The New Yorker is known for its cartoons reflecting on society. Thibodeau's (1989) study showed that less than 1 percent of the cartoon characters were black, and these were most often described in stereotypic roles such as doing menial work. Another study of television in 2003 showed that although the Latin population is now about 13 percent of the American population, only 4 percent of television characters were Latin (Hoffman & Noriega, 2004). Other researchers have shown that minorities are repeatedly depicted in unflattering terms on television shows, as being linked to crime (Pachon & Valencia, 1999); or taking advantage of society through welfare (Gilens, 1999). Is this stereotypic depiction in the media one reason that welfare funding is under attack? Do many whites think that undeserving blacks take unfair advantage of social support? The media rarely covers poor whites on welfare. Is the media supporting a stereotype of blacks as lazy and therefore undeserving? The media is a forum for social learning reflecting common social stereotypes and norms. After all script writers must get their ideas from somewhere, and look to their own attitudes and those prevalent in the community to describe social reality. The presence of stereotypes in the media can therefore be thought of as a subtle measure of prejudicial social norms.

#### *5.4 Social inequality and prejudice*

We live in a world of real or imagined scarce resources. In many places people lack sufficient resources in the struggle for survival. Competing groups may encroach on territory deemed essential to sustain life, as in the control of water or productive agricultural land. In other cases the scarcity is created by advertisement in modern capitalist societies. Many of the goods that people yearn for are based on desires that are manufactured in advertisement. How many people really need electric toothbrushes, or expensive perfumes? In capitalist society, envy is created by the lack of equality in consumption. Inequality in

consumption led to the revolution of rising expectations which many felt caused the riots in black communities in the 1960s. The deprived in society have a unique window on what they are missing from television and modern communication. When desire is provided equally through advertisement, but consumption unequally, there is dissatisfaction and potential conflict. In social inequality we see the seeds of intergroup hostility.

### *5.5 Rationalizing social inequality*

Life is a struggle over scarce resources. In that struggle some nations win out in the battle for improved standards of living, others fall behind, relatively speaking. Within a country, similar patterns of winning and losing are played out between social classes. Some people and classes are able to control and concentrate wealth, whereas others are struggling just to survive. Prejudice is one way to rationalize social inequality. The exploitation of slaves was justified on biblical grounds and as “the white man’s burden”. From that point of view, slaves were better off being confined, and white people did the slaves from Africa a favor by enslaving them. Likewise the building of empires was supported by prejudicial attitudes (Allport, 1954). The colonized people were seen as inferior, and colonization an altruistic act that brought civilization and improved the lives of the native population. The stereotypes we have of gender and race help justify discrimination. If women are paid less for equivalent work, it is because they do not work as hard, and they have their minds on the domestic scene.

Dehumanization and pejorative stereotypes follow discriminatory behavior. In extreme those who torture develop contemptuous attitudes toward their victims with the participants unable to discern any humanizing traits. By shocking or torturing, the perpetrators depersonalize victims and justify their behavior. The acceptance of waterboarding by the current US administration is due to the dehumanization of enemies as evil terrorists. The torturers in all societies rationalize their conduct by similar depersonalization of their victims.

Religion has been employed by some countries and communities to justify prejudicial attitudes. Several studies have shown that those who profess traditional beliefs are more prejudiced than those who see religion as an open-ended search for meaning (Gorsuch, 1988). Religion has been exploited in rationalizing prejudice throughout history. The German army went into World War I with belts on which were emblazoned the slogan “God is with us”. There is much in religious practice and writing that argues in favor of the existing social

order. Some religions argue that God ordained some people to be poor and slaves and others to be rich and powerful. The Apartheid regime in South Africa in the last century was based on the interpretation of the bible by a white minority. In war, many religious organizations bless soldiers on opposing sides as they go about slaughtering each other.

Not all religions justify social inequality. For some adherents who are very devout, religion is not related to prejudice. Some religious people view religion as a means of serving mankind (Allport & Ross, 1967). Other religious people are open-minded in their search for truth and meaning (Batson, Bolen, Cross, Neuringer-Benefiel, 1986). Religious people put their lives on the line in opposing the Nazi regime (Reed, 1989). In making these distinctions between the dogmatic and the open-minded we see a difference between those who are religious for reasons of social conformity who tend to be more prejudiced, and those who are religious in an open-ended search for truth and service to their fellow human beings and are less prejudiced.

### *5.6 Realistic group conflict*

Realistic group conflict theory maintains that conflict occurs because of the limited resources in society and the unequal advantage of some groups. The economic advantages of some groups lead to the support for stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination toward the less fortunate (Jackson, 1993; Sherif, 1966). As early as 1938, Dollard documented the effects of economic competition on discriminatory behavior. As jobs grew scarce in the community, anger was directed toward new immigrants. We see similar results from various parts of history. Each wave of immigrants coming into United States has had to deal with discrimination as they threatened the jobs of the native born. These threats are currently being felt with now some 12 million illegal immigrants in the US, and millions more in Europe. People who feel most threatened by immigration, frequently poor whites, develop the most prejudicial attitudes. During the California gold rush, Chinese laborers came into the country in large numbers and competed for jobs with white miners. The resulting threat produced very prejudicial stereotypes, and the Chinese were described as primitive and depraved (Jacobs & Landau, 1971).

Realistic conflict theory predicts an increase in prejudice when the country experiences economic difficulties. In a classic study, Hovland and Sears (1940) examined the correlation between the price of cotton in the south and the number

of lynchings of black people from 1882 to 1930. Since cotton was then the economic backbone of the southern economy, a drop in price signified difficult times for workers and the community. The economic frustration made it likely that deprivation of white workers would be expressed in aggression toward minorities. That is exactly what occurred. Whenever the price of cotton dropped, the number of lynchings increased (Hepworth & West, 1988). Did the poor black people have anything to do with the white people's economic frustration? Not at all, other than the fact that both groups competed for the same resources.

### *5.7 Scapegoat theory*

When times are difficult, and the culprit of frustration is not immediately apparent or too powerful, a scapegoat is often found. In Nazi Germany the scapegoats were the political and ethnic groups considered undesirable in society. Scapegoat theory is different from realistic group conflict theory. In Palestine Jews and Arabs are struggling over real resources in a non-zero sum game. Whatever one sides gains in territory is at the expense of the other. In scapegoat theory the source of the frustration is not easily identified, or otherwise too powerful to confront. In the case of poor whites and blacks struggling for survival, a realistic target of the frustration would have been the economic system and those who upheld the status quo in society. The system was responsible for the poverty of both whites and blacks. The system however was difficult to confront, and black people became a convenient substitute target. When a group is easy to identify, but unable to defend themselves, they become easy targets for scapegoating (Berkowitz, 1962).

One experiment created an experimental situation which made the participant angry. Subsequently, the subjects shocked a black confederate of the experimenter at significantly higher levels (Rogers & Prentice-Dunn, 1981). When people are frustrated or angry, scapegoating becomes an easy substitute for the real targets of aggression. This is a tangible idea which finds support in many modern conflicts. In Eastern Europe the collapse of existing societies brought along great economic uncertainty and worry. These societies have seen an increase in chauvinistic nationalism, the growth of intergroup hostility, and attacks on those who can be identified as outsiders.

### *5.8 The Robbers Cave study*

Perhaps our societies by their very competitive nature produce more or less automatic hostility whenever groups are formed. In the classic study by Sherif,

Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif (1961), Sherif and his collaborators investigated intergroup hostility in a Boys Scout camp. They succeeded in observing the boys as participant observers by posing as the maintenance crew in the camp. The researchers carefully noted the development of group relations as a consequences of competition. Many hours were spent initially screening a pool to find 22 boys who were equivalent on all significant dimensions. The participants did not come from broken homes, had no significant school problems, and were ethnically the same. This sample was then divided into two groups of eleven boys each.

Initially each group experienced considerable group cohesion as they enjoyed the varying camp activities. Each group chose a name for self-identification, the Rattlers and the Eagles. The experiment began as the boys were brought together for a tournament. The competitive part of the tournament brought on feelings of frustration as each group impeded the other from achieving coveted prizes. Frustration brought on feelings of enmity and the two groups hurled insults at each other, burned the opposing group's flag, and challenged members of the opposing group to fist fights and so forth. It appeared to Sherif that the mere presence of the two groups under conditions of competition brought on the intergroup hostility. If hostility can be created around such minimal competition which after all did not threaten the boy's survival, how much more hostility can be created when intergroup competition occurs around issues that do threaten survival or group identification.

### *5.9 Group categorization: the in-group versus the out-group*

Historically groups have served important functions for its members such as survival, identity, and self-esteem. Given these important functions it is no wonder that most of us develop a favorable bias toward our own group. When we identify ourselves with a group, the in-group, we at the same time describe those who do not belong, the out-group. In a competitive society that unfortunately is also associated with a negative bias toward all who are not "us".

In fact it takes very little to create in-group bias, the mere membership of a group is sufficient. Early experiments concentrated on the minimal group categorization design. The experimenters sought to understand the minimum differences between groups required to produce in-group bias (Tajfel and Billig, 1974; Tajfel, 1970; 1981; 1982). By dividing subjects into arbitrary groups the distinction between the groups was minor. They were supposedly distinguished on the liking of abstract paintings. With this trivial distinction the experimenters could already



create in-group bias.

In another study, Doise, Csepeli, Dann, Gouge, Larsen, & Ostell (1972) created experimental groups in the laboratory by asking the participants their aesthetic opinions of blown up pictures of blood corpuscles. These pictures were abstract and did not form a basis for making aesthetic judgments. We asked for these opinions so we could form two trivial experimental groups on the basis of their "aesthetic" preferences. All the participants (German soldiers) were asked to state their preference on a series of paired comparisons of these meaningless abstractions. After stating preferences, we removed ourselves as if scoring the results.

Following an interval we returned and stated that this experiment has been carried out in various parts of the world and people generally fall into one of two groups of esthetic preferences which we call X and Y. The discerning reader will now have observed that we created two nonsense groups based on a meaningless task. We then provided the participants with their group identification as randomly half of the participants were told they belonged to group X, the other half to group Y. Note that the participants did not know who were members of either group, only their own identification. On the basis of such meaningless group identification did the participants demonstrate in-group bias? The answer was yes. The participants were asked to describe members of group X and Y on a semantic differential attitude measurement, to describe each group's physical traits, and to distribute money for participation in the experiment. The distribution of money could favor either group, or be distributed equally.

The results showed significant in-group bias consistent with the experiments performed by others (Wilder, 1981). On the basis of a meaningless group categorization, participants had more favorable attitudes toward members of their own group, described them with more favorable physical traits, and distributed more money to an anonymous member of their own group. In this minimal group design we emphasized again that the in-group bias was the result of a task asking bogus esthetic preferences, and without the participant knowing who in the room belonged to either group. If it takes so little to create in-group bias, how much more bias is present toward groups which are meaningful, like groups formed by gender, religion, or political views.

Many other experiments have confirmed the in-group bias (Ashburn-Nardo, Voils,

& Monteith, 2001). The participants know they are not making choices for themselves, that the money they distribute goes to an anonymous participant. Yet time and time again participants show favoritism toward members of the in-group. In-group bias is even manifested when conditions do not favor in-group outcome. Participants are willing to receive less if their choices lead to a lower outcome for the other group, showing the underlying competitive motivation. In a competitive society group distinctions are almost automatic (Brewer & Brown, 1998). In the real world the outcomes frequently involve much more than the mere distribution of money. The in-group bias has been found in both genders, and in many nationalities. However, the in-group bias effect is less in interdependent cultures where people identify more with the cultural group, and make fewer competitive distinctions (Gudykunst, 1989).

#### *5.9.1 Groups and social identity theory*

Groups serve complex functions in the psychological economy of the individual. Our sense of who we are is defined by our group membership (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). The groups give us a sense of belonging that is related to positive feelings (Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, & Tyler, 1990), and our sense of well-being. Some groups may have little importance like those in the minimal group design. Other groups, however, are central to our understanding of meaning or our sense of security. These may be ideological in nature or express central values of the member in some other way. The stronger we are attached to a group the more likely we are to see competing organizations as threatening, and to react to that threat.

Perceived threats are strong if the values of the competing organization resemble your group values, but still differ from your group on some crucial dimension. "Civil wars" are always the most violent. Historically we can observe this during the civil war in the US, in the battles between religious groups (e.g. the Shia versus Sunni), or between related political organizations (Trotskyist versus Pro-Soviet parties). We act in prejudicial and hostile ways toward competing organizations (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990).

Group identification is also important to our sense of self-esteem (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freman, & Sloan, 1976). Cialdini and his collaborators recorded how often students wore school T-shirts when their athletic teams experienced victory or defeat. As expected, the students were more likely to wear school colors after victories, when they could feel good about their association

with the school. When our group achieves important goals we bask in its reflected glory. Witness the Olympic games. The pride of an Olympic championship is not only shared by the players or spectators, but indeed by all members of the national group.

The commercial world has caught on to the possibilities of social identity. The marketing of Nike shoes for example uses the concept of social identity. There are few differences between Nike shoes (other than brand name) and shoes costing a few euros, but when an esteemed sports star is associated with the product, it encourages more buying. Fans feel that by wearing the clothing they partake somewhat of the identity of the successful athlete. On more personal levels, we seek to associate with successful people, since doing so offers social recognition and self-esteem. Tajfel and Turner (1979) showed that a person's self-concept and self-esteem does not derive from individual achievement alone, but also from the groups to which we belong.

Since our self-esteem is derived from group membership, it logically leads to in-group favoritism. Fighting for the prestige of the group lifts our spirits and self-esteem. Some studies have examined this phenomena by testing for self-esteem after a participant performed some act favoring the in-group. Studies (Lemyre & Smith, 1985; and Oakes & Turner (1980), show that people feel improved self-esteem by engaging in in-group favoritism. Those who identify strongly with the group also take stronger offense when the group is attacked. Strongly attached people take criticisms personally (McCoy & Major, 2003).

### *5.9.2 Social dominance theory*

Social dominance theory describes societies as hierarchies with some people as winners and others as losers. Several researchers have suggested that dominance is created because it brings about evolutionary success (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In hierarchical societies, those at the top have an interest in stable social relations. The socially dominant defend the status quo by controlling the political apparatus and organizations in a country. Those lower in hierarchy, on the other hand, have an interest in establishing equality. They work in organizations like unions that promote egalitarian relations. The dominance orientation has strong prejudicial consequences for ethnic minorities (Duckitt, 2003). The socially dominant favor social conformity at any price, and display tough mindedness in dealing with outcasts like illegal immigrants (Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002).

On some occasions dominant groups maintain their privileged positions through physical force. The guardians of the state might exercise coercive power when required. However, the less dominant groups can also be co-opted. People can be seduced by apparent benevolence, the “father” dictatorship, whether at home or by the nation. In Turkey for example the founder Ataturk was called the “father of the nation”. Jackman (1994) calls this benevolent paternalism.

On an interpersonal level many men are both paternal and dominant. Women are loved, but also told to stay in their traditional roles. In the privacy of the homes those who were “house” slaves during slavery were often treated like members of the family. This held true as long as they remained servants and stayed in their subordinate roles. Supporting ideologies were developed to justify the dominant role of master and slave owner. These dominance ideologies ascribed negative traits to the subordinate group in this case the slaves (Klugel, 1990). In racist ideology for example blacks were perceived as apathetic at work, and promiscuous in interpersonal relations. Nowadays the debate on racial differences focuses on differences in intelligence. This extends the dispositional attributions to genetic differences. In this modern dominance theory, blacks are viewed as genetically inferior. Such “scientific” explanations had historically also found support among certain religious groups in the selective readings of religious scripture.

Under competitive conditions there is always the fear that the dominated group will successfully fight for its place in the sun. In a zero-sum world of scarce resources, equality between groups means that the socially dominant lose out. Some whites worry that their lives will deteriorate when minorities are given equal rights. The dominant group may also perceive threats to the welfare of the entire group or class. Individual self-interest is not the primary factor in prejudicial attitudes (Sears & Funk, 1991). Group deprivation seems to aggravate people the most, not personal deprivation. As a group, whites fear threats from immigrants, even when they are not personally affected (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). The reason seems apparent. Personal deprivations can be attributed to misfortune or to being unfit for a job. Group threat, however, is more serious, it is something beyond our control.

Those who see competition as a major cause of prejudice do not think that people in advantaged positions will willingly give up their dominance. There are so many economic and other advantages that accrue to those who dominate society.

Perhaps the apparent declines in blatant racism are primarily illusory. Since blatant racism is socially unacceptable, bigots keep their own counsel. Underneath social politeness lurks the same opposition to racial equality and unfavorable attitudes toward minorities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Whites try to avoid offending racial minorities, and may even compensate and treat blacks more politely (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997). Others, however, have found support for persistent racist attitudes in face-to-face interviews (Krysan, 1998). Whether attitudes are changing or not, for many whites the issue is resolved by conforming to social expectations.

#### *5.10 Social conformity and prejudice*

Our desire to belong and be accepted by our reference groups produces conformity whether in the family, the community, or the nation. Most people's behavior follows the easiest path and expresses attitudes that correspond to group norms. When it comes to behavior towards minorities, people act more from a desire to get along in their communities than from individually felt hatred. Like already noticed in chapter 7, surprisingly normal people acted in the as guards German concentration camps and conformed to Nazi expectations in committing heinous acts, and in the process believed they did the right thing. The link between conformity and prejudice is well established. Pettigrew (1958) found that prejudice among whites in both South Africa and the American south were largely motivated by conformity to established community norms. People who were prejudiced were rewarded, and those who did not conform were shunned. Pettigrew showed that those members of society who were most conformist were also the most prejudiced.

Socially conforming people have strong desires to avoid sanctions from significant others, and avoid experiencing the social cost of defying prejudicial norms. Reitzes (1953) and Minard (1952) showed white miners displaying no prejudice in the mines where racial interdependency was required and accepted. At the same time, however, these miners lived in rigidly segregated communities above ground. The dual behaviors can best be explained by the different norms which governed the mines and the community. The conformity perspective argues that people are prejudiced because they want to be accepted by valued reference groups.

The institutions of society work to perpetuate the norms that allow prejudicial behavior to appear "normal". During his work in Australia, Larsen (1977b)

observed the effect of community norms on white discriminatory behavior toward Aborigines. The norms allowed for discrimination and prejudice, although challenged by the 1975 Anti-discrimination Act. When some white Australians let their guard down in confidential conversations, one could observe the normative support for many of the prejudicial attitudes (Larsen, 1978; 1981).

#### *5.11 Institutional support for prejudice*

The institutions of society lend crucial support to prejudice through the mechanisms of segregation. In the South of United States (just like during the Apartheid regime in South-Africa) public facilities were rigidly segregated until the civil rights victories of the 1960's. Black people could not sit down in a restaurant and have dinner with their families, but might be fed through the back door. They could not drink from the same water fountain as whites, nor sit anywhere except in the back of the bus. School facilities were also segregated. The institutions of society conveyed the inferior status of black people to both whites and blacks. The fighters for black equality and freedom understood the institutional basis of racism. It is no wonder that the first assault on racism came during the "sit ins" in restaurants, and in the attempt to integrate the transportation system, by mixed groups of whites and blacks. The changes that followed the Montgomery bus strike, and integration efforts by the interstate freedom riders, came because the structures of segregation were undermined and destroyed by these efforts.

Today, most of these overt forms of institutional support for prejudice have been removed in US society. But it was not until year 2000 that a university in the United States ended its ban on interracial dating (CNN, 2000). However, that does not mean that there are not discriminatory norms still in place. There are still norms about minorities and women that prevent fair treatment in the workplace. These views persist despite laws that make discriminatory behavior illegal. Discriminatory norms just require the unspoken consensus within a company that blacks are not suited for managerial responsibilities, and a woman's place is in the home looking after children and husband. Stereotypes still find their way into television programs and the movies (Shaheen, 1990) depicting minorities and women in stereotypical ways. Women for instance are still under represented in the media, being outnumbered by 3 to 1 (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Lovdal, 1989). There are also new stereotypes created of the "fanatic Arab", and "dangerous black criminals", which at best represent over generalizations of

social reality. Normative conformity continues because of the support in society (Pettigrew, 1985; 1991) and its resistance to change. Changing the institutional support for prejudice is the most crucial weapon in the arsenal of those who want to build a society free of discrimination. The removal of institutional support for racism in the United States allows for new norms that largely favor integration (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1956; Knopke, Norell, & Rogers, 1991).

### *5.12 Personal dynamics and prejudice*

Some attitudes derive from differential personality development. We are not all equal in opportunity or childrearing experiences. Some of us have been favored by good fortune. Other people developed in harsh environments and suffered permanent insecurities as a consequence.

Sources for prejudice are found within individuals rooted in personality or our way of thinking. In a competitive society we gain status by ranking higher than others on socially valued dimensions. The ranking, in turn, is a source of self-esteem, and function to support our self-perception as valued members of society. In a competitive university, it is not the student's individual achievement that gives pleasure, but ranking with respect to other students. Student competition has at least one detrimental effect. In academically competitive environments fellow students are not looked upon as resources, but as competitors for a place on the ranking order of excellence.

When threatened, status conscious people may respond with prejudice. Those low on the economic ladder, and under threat of slipping further down, are most prejudiced (Lemyre & Smith, 1987). This effect can be demonstrated in a study on university sororities. Women who belonged to sororities that ranked relative low in status tended to be prejudiced toward higher ranked sororities (Crocker, Thompson, McGraw, & Ingerman, 1987). Attacks on self-esteem, being humiliated, also produce prejudicial reactions (Meindl & Lerner, 1984). In general, anything which diminishes the individual or produces insecurity increases prejudicial attitudes (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Rosenblatt, Veeder, Kirkland, & Lyon, 1990).

#### *5.12.1 The authoritarian personality revisited*

Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford (1950) discussed several authoritarian traits that explained prejudice. Personality traits predictive of prejudice included submissiveness to authority, an intolerance for anything that

indicated weakness, and a punitive attitude toward those seen as outcasts of society. The insecurity of the authoritarian person leads to an exaggerated concern with status and power. Authoritarians want to solve international problems through violence, and have contempt for those seeking peaceful solutions. Many authoritarians in the American population are convinced of the need for toughness, and lend support to military adventures. They are also contemptuous of criticism of the military establishment which they see as the ultimate guarantee of security. Many authoritarians seek careers in the military or security services.

The authoritarian sees everything in absolute terms, there is a wrong way and a right way. There are black people and white people, and the two should not mix as why did God create the races? Ambiguity is not easily tolerated by authoritarians, and they favor political leaders who appear tough and decisive. Authoritarians are those who, for example, would not admit defeat in Vietnam, but argued that the proper placement of atomic bombs would have decisively ended the conflict.

Domestically the authoritarian tendencies seem to increase in times of economic difficulties and distress (Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1990). The Nazi ideology gained adherents in Germany after the economic depression and defeat during the First World War. Other upheavals seem to confirm the underlying insecurity and hostility manifested in prejudice (Larsen, 1969; 1970). In chapter 10 we will discuss in more detail the psychology of torturers. Torturers often display submissiveness toward authority, and have contempt for their victims (Staub, 1989). In international relations, authoritarian tendencies are unleashed in chauvinistic attitudes. Chauvinism is the idea that one's nation is better than any other nation. It is not pride in cultural achievement that motivates authoritarians, but rather a belief in the real or mythical high ranking of the nation. "God's country" or "blessed land" are synonymous descriptions of the nation for people who gain self-esteem vicariously, and who are fundamentally motivated by insecurity.

#### *5.12.2 Social cost, belief incongruence and race: some theoretical comparisons*

Social cost is a concept which argues that prejudice derives from our desire to avoid disapproval and gain the approval of significant others in intergroup relations. Intimate relations produce the greatest potential social cost. As we discussed earlier families are likely to express strong feelings, positive or



negative, when a loved one proposes marriage to someone from another ethnic or racial group. The concept differs from normative conformity (Pettigrew, 1958) in being specific in regard to who enforces the norms of a prejudiced community. How do we identify norms except through the perception of punishments or rewards administered by significant others? Esteemed religious or community leaders may also be a source of social costs when they are in contact with the person. Normative conformity has little meaning apart from this specific vehicle of enforcement that is the social cost of acceptance or rejection (Larsen, 1971).

Rokeach (1960) extended the theory on authoritarianism. Rightwing authoritarianism (Adorno et al, 1950) referred to the content of people's beliefs thought responsible for prejudice and much destruction in the world. Rokeach argued that close-mindedness was the operative form of authoritarianism and that it could occur at any point of the political spectrum. The critical factor in dogmatism is the relative open-mindedness or close-mindedness to information. When our minds are closed, we are high in dogmatism and prejudice. Rokeach would argue that we reject others primarily because of perceived differences in beliefs or belief incongruence. Therefore what matters is not so much the content of a person's beliefs, but the belief structure, whether the mind was open or not. If we are prejudiced toward black people, Rokeach would argue, it is because we perceive differences in values and beliefs

Unfortunately the literature is largely silent on the relative importance of various theories of prejudice. Researchers are content with establishing the validity of conceptual ideas, and not the relative importance of each. Larsen (1974; 1976; 1978) found relative support for the social cost concept. Why is belief incongruence a factor in prejudice? It could be argued that close-mindedness is a consequence of the approval-disapproval process, as it requires some motivating function. The point argued here is that people become close-minded for reasons of social costs, and the need to sharply differentiate between approved and disapproved thought. Again, why is racial categorization a factor? Social norms about race are powerful determinants precisely because they bring perceived social costs from significant others. In other words social norms are all about conforming to gain approval and avoid disapproval. Social cost may be seen as the integrating variable that explains prejudicial behavior.

### *5.13 Social cognition: ways of simplifying the world*

As discussed previously we stereotype because doing so helps us make sense of

the bewildering array of stimuli which demands attention. By developing social categories like black and white we simplify our world and reduce attentional stress. Simplifying social cognition requires that we bypass a lot of information, and focus on what is most important: people's membership in social categories. Social categories help us to think more quickly, and bring to mind all relevant information even if much of that is distorted and inaccurate. Stereotypes help us recall quickly from memory all the relevant and salient information. Do you greet a woman the same way as a man? If not, it is because you have categorized men and women, and before interaction have brought to bear the salient stereotypes.

There are problems in social categorization. Keeping in mind our discussion of stereotypes, social categorization simplifies social reality, and in the process robs the individual of what is truly salient. Social categorization bypasses individual evaluations and makes judgment based on group stereotypes. Yet we all know that there are many individual differences within groups. Not all women are nurturant, some women take the lives of their children. Not all men are dominant, some pursue other lives of fulfillment like nursing. When we categorize people, we direct attention away from these salient individual characteristics. Stereotypes may distort social reality and produce false memories. We tend to remember traits and behaviors that are consistent with the category even if false (Lenton, Blair, & Hastie, 2001).

Nevertheless category impressions are universal and resistant to change. We attend only to individual differences if we have time, or if the categorization process is challenged. A realistic view of others would require evaluations of personal attributes, a very time consuming process (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). It is easier to apply our value-laden stereotypes, which are readily available as they are largely emotionally based (Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991). The behavioral utility of social categorization can be easily shown (Payne, 2001). In the experiment, participants were shown black and white faces followed by objects. Participants found it easy to remember a gun when it was preceded by a black face, evidence for the presence of the "black as criminal" stereotype. In The United States, the white versus black categorization goes to extremes as anyone with even a drop of black blood belongs to the category. It is reminiscent of the Nazi categorization of Jews; anyone with minimal genetic connection was categorized as such. Nevertheless all people carry schemas of typical representatives of social categories (again consult chapter 4 on social cognition),

and it is those typical facial traits that elicit stereotypes for many people (Lord, Lepper, & Mackie, 1984).

Are there evolutionary advantages which derive from group membership? If so those people who survived and passed on their genes may well have a predisposition to favor in-groups and disdain out-groups. Does evolutionary advantage explain the unconscious favoritism found in the minimal group design? Other researchers would point to the competitive nature of many human groups, particularly in the western countries. Competition produces unconscious biases toward those we share something with, even if meaningless (Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992, Wilder, 1981). Even when all that is shared is a mindless category, it resulted in attribution of positive personality traits to members of the in-group.

#### *5.13.1 Out-group homogeneity*

The process of simplifying the world requires us to use stereotypes, resulting in perceiving members of out-groups as more similar than they in fact are. This is called out-group homogeneity (Linville, Fischer, & Salovey, 1989). Males think that females are more alike than justified by real behavior. Perhaps you believe in the stereotype that all women want is to raise families? In fact there are important individual differences overlooked in the perception of out-group homogeneity. Some women want to have families, some want careers, others want both families and careers. However, by using the perception of out-group homogeneity we can simplify our world, and treat women as a class of people. Perception of out-group homogeneity has consequences for employment. If you believe the only purpose of women is to have children, would you hire a woman for jobs requiring expensive training, or promote women to positions of responsibility? Likewise discrimination toward other groups is justified in similar ways. If you meet a member of the out-group you can call on the appropriate schemas, and your responses will be based not on individual differences, but the stereotype. Perception of out-group homogeneity has been found in other studies (Hartstone & Augoustinos, 1995; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992).

People believe that members of the out-group think and act alike. In studies of simple music preference at neighboring universities, participants see more similarity among students at the other university. Perception of out-group homogeneity generalizes behavior to all members of the out-group, while allowing for more diversity within the in-group (Qattrone, & Jones, 1980; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992; Park & Judd, 1990). We meet more with members of the in-

group, and therefore have more opportunity to observe differences. Lacking that person-to-person experience with members of the out-group, we form opinions based on the common stereotype.

#### *5.13.2 Simplification of in-group similarity and perceived out-group differences*

Despite having more common experiences with the in-group, some studies show that stereotypical cognition produces less variability within both the out-group and in-group. Further, we perceive greater differences between the two groups (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). It is difficult to build bridges between groups when the stereotypes accentuate differences, and do not allow for all that they have in common. In fact, humanity probably holds most values in common. All societies appreciate the importance of family, the search for meaning, the importance of peace, and respect for the dignity of the individual. We probably all put value on ending global warming so our species may survive, and our children have a more secure future. The hostility generated by stereotypes does not allow us to consider these common values. In all societies and cultures people have much more in common than perceived differences. All societies have a desire to survive and prosper, support families. All people face developmental tasks, and the ultimate ending of existence. These communalities provide a basis for the human discourse which stereotypical thinking interrupts or destroys.

Stereotypes help us conserve intellectual energy, which can be applied elsewhere (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). The downside is obvious. As constructs, stereotypes are over-generalizations, and inaccurate descriptions of other groups. Stereotypes may save time for the cognitively lazy person, but they produce unfair judgments of others, and lend support to discriminatory practices.

#### *5.13.3 Stereotypes determine interpretation of interaction*

Part of the resistance to change comes from the biased information processing. The individual's behavior is seen as being typical of the group as a whole. Information about the out-group is also not evaluated fairly (Bodenhausen, 1988; Kunda & Thagard, 1996). Information consistent with the stereotype is placed in memory for future interactions, facts that are inconsistent are forgotten or ignored. How the information is interpreted is influenced by the stereotype. In one study, white participants watched a heated debate between two men, one white one black. At one point, one of the participants in the debate gave the other a shove for disapproval. Half of the participants saw the black confederate giving the shove, the other half the white confederate. At various points in the

discussion, the participants were asked to rate the interaction. The racial stereotype affected how the same behavior was coded. When the black member shoved, it was perceived as aggression, whereas when the white person did the shoving, it was perceived as “playing around”. In another study (Stone, Perry, & Darley, 1997) participants listened to a play-by-play account of a basketball game. Half had a picture of a white basketball player, for the other half the picture was darkened so the same person now looked black. Those who thought the player was black attributed more athleticism and thought him a better player, consistent with the stereotype of blacks in society. Those who thought the player was white, rated him as showing more energy and hustle, and as playing a smart game. Both of these studies show that biased stereotypes affect how the same information is processed.

#### *5.13.4 Stereotypes of others affect behavior*

Other people’s stereotypes may affect your behavior. In a study investigating the effectiveness of a white and black debater on nuclear energy, the participants were asked to rate the skill employed in the debate. In one experimental condition, a confederate of the experimenter made a highly racist remark about the black debater, to the effect that there was no way a “nigger” could win the debate. In two other conditions, he made either a non-racist remark, or made no remark at all. If the racist comment had no effect there should be no difference in evaluation. The results showed that the participants rated the debaters equally when a non-racist remark was made. However, the black debater was perceived lower in skill after the racist remark. These results show that we can be influenced by the comments of those around us, and the study is a strong argument for rules prohibiting prejudicial and hostile commentary. Stereotypes are easily elicited, and difficult to remove. As part of our cultural heritage they are always available and ready to use.

#### *5.13.5 Implicit and explicit stereotypes*

Devine (1989) used a distinction from cognitive psychology between automatic and controlled processing. Prejudicial attitudes may also be either explicit or implicit. Explicit attitudes exist as a result of rational awareness and conclusions. However, at times explicit racist attitudes are repressed as unacceptable to the individual or society. Attitude scales measure conscious attitudes on which the individual can reflect, i.e. explicit attitudes. Explicit measures correlate with important behaviors such as evaluations determining a black defendant’s guilt, or

assessment of the adequacy of black interviewers.

Implicit attitudes on the other hand are measured (as discussed earlier) by priming the respondent's attitudes with racial pictures, and measuring response time to stereotypically consistent and inconsistent words (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). Implicit attitudes correlate with other involuntary responses like blinking, or to aversion of physical or eye contact (Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2005). The differences between implicit and explicit prejudice continues to be a subject of debate in social psychology (Blair, 2002).

#### *5.13.6 Resistance to changing stereotypes*

Stereotypes are heuristic shortcuts (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000) and prepare us for interaction with little information. They reflect broad social and cultural beliefs. Most people would not find it difficult to describe other cultural groups using stereotypical traits (Gilbert, 1951; Katz & Braly, 1933). Many of these descriptions have remained the same even after many years (Devine & Elliot, 1995). When people have no personal experience with other national groups, they find it easy to describe that group in stereotypical terms. Bulgarians have stereotypes about Gypsies and Turks; Danes about Germans and Swedes; Vietnamese about the Chinese, and in all national groups similar processes of simplistic social cognition. Do you have stereotypes about Americans? Are they favorable or unfavorable? What are some of the descriptions you would use? In the Karlines, Coffman, & Walters (1969) study, Americans were described as materialistic, ambitious, pleasure-loving, industrious, and conventional. On the other hand, American Blacks were described as musical, happy-go-lucky, lazy, pleasure-loving, and ostentatious. Which of these stereotypes has negative consequences for members of the group?

A major reason for the invariability of stereotypes is that they are descriptions of groups of people not easily disconfirmed by individual behavior. Any individual variation can be rationalized as the exception. Information in support of the stereotype is supporting evidence, and factual evidence which disconfirms is the exception that proves the rule. The frequency of crime in the black community is attributed to black culpability and dispositions to live a criminal life. Black members of the police force are seen as an exception due to fortunate family or community experiences (Kulik, 1983; Swim & Sanna, 1996).

Information intended to change people's stereotypes often has little effect. In fact,

information may be counterproductive as it elicits the counter arguing process in the prejudiced person (Kunda & Oleson, 1997). New information favoring the targeted group causes the prejudiced person to counter argue, and in his mind produce all the reasons for holding his racist beliefs and resist influence. It takes more than a few examples of the incorrectness of stereotypical views to change attitudes. The person must be bombarded with disconfirming information over a sustained period of time (Webber & Crocker, 1983). Since there are both cognitive and emotional reasons for resistance, stereotypes are difficult to change. Most prejudicial attitudes have strong emotional components which rational appeals do not address. Further, stereotyping simplifies the world, and we selectively attend to the information which confirms our beliefs.

Further support for stereotypes is found in the way we encode behavior, how we use relative abstract or concrete level of descriptions (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). We can “help someone” across the street, or we can behave in “altruistic ways”. The level of abstraction used carries different connotations about the behavior. A black police officer “arrested” a criminal. A white officer is a member of the “thin blue line”. The more concrete we make a description, the less it says anything noteworthy about the individual. All police officers can arrest someone, but you have to be ascribed altruistic value to be part of the thin blue line that protects society.

In fact, stereotypes are almost automatic for many people. However, some people can indeed overcome prejudicial attitudes by controlling their cognition. A fleeting prejudicial thought can be suppressed as being unworthy or unrealistic. Other people, however, do not take the time to reflect on bigoted thinking. In the entrenched prejudicial person, the control processes are not activated. Bigots more or less automatically incorporate the common stereotypes without hesitation.

Devine (1989a) and Zuwerink, Monteith, Devine, & Cook (1996) developed a two-process theory of cognitive processing. The automatic processing brings the stereotypes to mind, the control process enables us to refute the distorted views. However, there is considerable variability in the use of automatic processing of negative stereotypes, we do not all process automatically to any common standard (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995).

#### *5.13.7 How to draw the wrong conclusions: illusionary correlations*

Our cognitive processing perpetuates stereotyping through the perception of illusionary correlations. This occurs when we think two objects or variables are correlated, when in fact they are not. Some people believe that the inability to have children is caused by stress, and therefore when couples adopt and remove the stress they conceive. In fact there is no relationship between stress and pregnancy. However, at some point an adoption occurred for a couple close in time with pregnancy and stress as a cause of infertility became a common belief (Gilovich, 1991).

Illusionary correlations also promote more serious stereotypes. The idea that minorities are dangerous may be based on an illusionary correlation of Black actor's behavior in violent television episodes. Blacks are a minority and therefore distinctive. Hence, events featuring black actors are better remembered because of their distinctiveness, even though many white actors also appear in violent programming. Many stereotypes directed toward minority groups are confirmed by illusionary correlations (Hamilton, Stroessner, & Mackie, 1993). The distinctiveness of minority representatives leads to a belief in the illusionary correlation between observed behavior on television and the behavior of the entire racial group. When people with stereotypes observe new behavior, their expectations and perceptions are guided by the illusionary correlation. If black actors appear in nonviolent programming, that is an exception or not relevant to the situation. Because of the selectiveness of perception, it is very difficult to disconfirm the illusion. We see what we want to see (Hamilton & Sherman, 1989).

When the events believed correlated are both distinctive, the illusionary correlation is strengthened (Fiedler, 1991; Hamilton & Gifford, 1976; Smith, 1991). In a recent eating contest, a skinny young woman won hands down. Eating contest is novel in society, and we do not expect skinny women to win these events. The event and the skinny woman winning are both distinctive, and could form the basis of a new illusionary correlation. Skinny women as champion eaters! However, the stereotypes of big fat men being heavy eaters probably outweigh such distinctiveness.

Salient people are perceived as the cause of whatever is occurring (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Distinctiveness brings attention and creates illusions of differences that do not exist. We use distinctive cases as a heuristic rule in judging members of minority groups. A black person in an all white group is distinctive, and we may see outcomes in the group as due to his behavior. If the group is frustrated, we



may be tempted to think this is due to the hostile behavior of the minority person, an illusory correlation. We see a black person driving a Cadillac and come to the conclusion that they do not care about housing if they are poor. Alternatively, the Cadillac as a status symbol may lead to the illusory correlation that all black men have gotten rich by ill-gotten means. One or two similar cases are sufficient to form an illusory correlation.

The mass media reinforce illusory correlations. A couple of years ago a mentally ill patient killed his psychiatrist in Oslo. There was subsequently much debate on the potential danger to society from the mentally ill. This singular event formed the basis of an illusory correlation. In actual fact, there is little danger from psychiatric patients, only few pose a danger to themselves or society. Stereotyping encourages people to see correlations where there are none, (McArthur & Friedman, 1980).

#### *6. Modern racism: the fundamental and ultimate attribution errors*

The fundamental attribution error occurs when we attribute behavior predominantly to inner dispositions, disregarding significant situational determinants. According to Pettigrew (1979, 1980), this becomes the ultimate attribution error when we explain behavior of groups. The in-group is given the benefit of the doubt, and we think the worst when it comes to the out-group.

Since society changes racist ideology takes on new forms. To prove blacks are inferior to whites serves important ideological functions. Genetic racial inferiority is a strong argument against integration, since the average intelligence of a nation would decrease from integration of racial inferior and superior groups. The debate of the relative intelligence of racial groups has a long history. The most recent contribution to the debate is the book by Herrnstein and Murray (1994). In a review of research on intelligence, they presented evidence of statistically significant differences in academic performance between blacks and whites. These differences, the authors concluded, derive from genetic components. Learning can therefore modify performance only within these genetic parameters.

Besides these tests "proving" that whites perform better than blacks, other tests showed that Asian Americans perform better than whites. The important question is why these differences occur? Should we attribute these differences to genetic components as Herrnstein and Murray would argue? That argument would be in conformity with racist ideology that poor performance be attributed to

dispositional causes, to some inadequacy within the group targeted.

However, the differences can also be attributed to situational causes. Nowhere in the United States do blacks or whites have comparable social environments. Blacks typically suffer from inferior social support, from poverty, inferior school systems, inadequate nutrition, and many other discriminatory factors that also explains racial differences. Since it is not possible to separate the genetic from the environmental component, the decision favoring situational or dispositional factors becomes a choice of ideology.

Racism impacts the self-concept and creates insecurity. Under conditions of evaluation, blacks feel apprehensive, debilitating self-esteem and lowering performance. Blacks are well aware of the common stereotype about inferior academic performance, and feel “stereotype threat” from the expectations (Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). The apprehension centers on feelings that the black respondent will confirm the existing stereotype of intellectual inferiority. In the above experiment, whites and blacks performed equally well when blacks did not believe they were being evaluated (when they thought the exam was for the purpose of improving the test itself). However, blacks did poorly when they believed the test evaluated individual performance. Most of you have experienced test anxiety, and know how it inhibits thinking and performance.

Similar stereotype threats are found for gender (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). When women thought the purpose of the test was to demonstrate differences between males and females, stereotypic threat created poor performance (see also the discussion earlier in this chapter). However, when women believed that the test was not designed to show gender differences, they did as well as men on the math test. Stereotype threat affects the performance of the targeted group. Remember stereotypic threat consequences are found also in white males when they believe they are competing with Asian males in math (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, Steele, & Brown, 1999). A common stereotype in the US supports the superiority of Asian males in mathematics.

We have a choice whether we attribute these differences to dispositional causes, e.g., the inferiority of women and white males in mathematics, or situational causes, i.e., different social environments and opportunities. We have a choice whether to believe in a dispositional cause, the genetic inferiority, or a situational

cause, the inferior environment. The attributional conclusions drawn have important implications for social policy. If the dispositional cause is promoted, the resulting policy supports segregation, and blames the victim. If attribution is made to situational causes, the policy required is improvement of the social environment.

Nevertheless, there is a strong tendency to blame the victim for any shortcomings (Lerner, 1991). By attributing poor performance to the victim, we can rationalize what otherwise would be an unjust world (Furnham & Gunter, 1984). Beliefs in a just world require an attribution of blame to the victim. Blacks are personally responsible for misfortune. Dispositional attribution would argue that the rape victim's seductive behavior brought on the rape (Wagstaff, 1982).

### *6.1 A just world or racist ideology: The ultimate attribution error*

The fundamental attribution error occurs then when we attribute significant social behavior to personal dispositions, and devalue the situational forces that may be responsible. The situational context of black behavior in America is slavery and the institutions that supported segregation and discrimination. Pettigrew (1979; 1980) suggested that this attributional bias could be defined in racial relations as the "ultimate attribution error". When we understand individual behavior within the context of group stereotypes, we commit the ultimate error, and we expect the worst from targeted groups. If a black person is intelligent and performs at high levels, we dismiss this as a special case. Intelligent behavior could even be used against minority people as we found in our conversations with some whites in Australia. Intelligent Aborigines were perceived to be those of mixed race, and were also considered the most dangerous, according to this racist view.

The persistence of racist perspectives derives from ideological beliefs in a just world. Many people subscribe to the idea that we live in a fundamentally just world, and misfortune is a consequence of our own behavior (Lerner & Miller, 1978; Lerner, 1980). Becoming a victim, produces a negative evaluation, as we saw in the studies of attitudes toward rape victims (Carli, & Leonard, 1989). Is the victim ultimately responsible? Just world ideology is closely tied in to beliefs in individualism, and may be more dominant in western societies. Believing that the world is just, explains much of the opposition to social welfare, or national medical care. If you are poor or ill, this misfortune comes from bad choices you made in the past, and you are individually responsible.

The just world concept is related to social dominance theory. Those who are dominant can think of their fortune as an entitlement from a just God. Those who are unfortunate do not deserve sympathy, as they are responsible for their own lives. The just world concept applauds the winners of life, and denigrates the losers. Sick people are responsible for their illness (Gruman & Sloan, 1983); and rape victims should have appeared less seductively (Borgida & Brekke, 1985). The just world concept supports many stereotypes and much discriminatory behavior. Social inertia is an ideological consequence since ultimately misfortune is not the responsibility of society of the community. What are we to do?

### *7. The reduction of prejudice in society*

As we have seen, prejudice affects millions of lives all over the world. What is to be done? Does prejudice derive from ignorance? Many people are prejudiced without having any personal experiences with the target group. Perhaps ignorance can be reduced by education? Education may provide facts that help us see other people in a better light. Yet, we have seen that many stereotypes are sustained because they satisfy emotional needs and factual information would change few minds because of the selective information processing of the prejudiced person. Facts that support the stereotype are retained whereas the information that is disconfirming is discarded. Would more contact be helpful?

#### *7.1 The right type of contact can lead to reduction of prejudice*

Perhaps we need more personal contact with minorities. The 1954 Supreme Court decision, which outlawed school segregation in the US, was seen by many as the beginning of the end of prejudice. There were good reasons to feel that way. Deutsch and Collins (1951) had studied attitudes among whites who lived in segregated and integrated housing. They found that housing integration led not only to more contact between the races, but also to more positive attitudes among whites. However, the research that followed (Stephan, 1978; 1985) did not lend support to the idea that contact led to a decrease in prejudice.

The self-esteem of black children also did not improve after desegregation. In a majority of the studies, prejudice actually increased following desegregation. Increase in contact did not produce better interracial relations or an improvement in the self-concept. Formal desegregation did not result in real integration as de facto segregation continued. In the integrated armed services, soldiers continued being segregated in friendship patterns, in schools children ate lunch in separate corners, and played primarily with same race companions (Aronson & Thibodeau,

1992; Schofield, 1986).

Clearly contact did nothing to improve attitudes in these studies so does contact have any effect? Some would maintain that contact at least reduces the most bizarre stereotypes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2003). However, it is not contact that matters, but the type of contact. Historically, in the South of the US, there was lots of contact between blacks and whites, but under conditions of inequality. Inequality served to confirm existing biases, as a result of both selective treatment and information processing. What mattered then was the type of contact (Allport, 1954). In his pioneering work, Allport noted the importance of equal status during the contact, the perception of common goals, that contact received institutional support, and led to the perception of common interests.

Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif (1961) came to similar conclusions. Hostility was reduced when the boys studied at camp, perceived common goals, and developed feelings of interdependence. In the housing study (Deutsch & Collins, 1951) the racial groups had equal status, and stereotypes were therefore confronted. The importance of friendly interaction has also been emphasized (Wilder, 1986). Formally desegregating interaction between groups does little to promote friendly feelings essential to the development of empathy. Also, contact should be with many representatives to avoid the “exception to the rule” rationalization. Multiple contacts are necessary to encourage the disconfirmation of stereotypes. Since conformity plays so large a role in prejudicial behavior, it is also essential to change the social norms. Creating high quality contact may result in new social norms which lend support to equal treatment and valuations (Amir, 1969; Gaertner, Dovidio, Rust, Nier, Banker, & Ward, 1999). High quality contacts are personal and allow for friendship (Cook, 1978). Prejudice is reduced when contact is frequent enough, and has a personal quality that promotes empathy.

In today's USA blacks and whites continue to live in segregation. Despite laws that favor integration, the large majority continues to live in segregated neighborhoods (Fasenfest, Boozy, & Metzger, 2004). Real segregation continues as there is little friendship between the races (Jackman & Crane, 1986). In Europe those who have interracial friendships tend to be the less prejudiced (Pettigrew, 1997), which supports the importance of high quality contact. These results underline also the problem. Those who are prejudiced simply avoid interaction, and display anxiety about interracial contact (Plant & Devine, 2003), whereas the

non-prejudiced seek (intimate) contact.

At the end of the day, is there to be a common destiny? In the Sherif study, the boys cooperated on a number of tasks that subsequently changed their attitudes. These tasks were called “super ordinate goals” by Sherif, goals held in common by all which transcended any group differences. There is no shortage of super ordinate goals in the world. Controlling global warming is a super ordinate goal which must be reached through the cooperation of all parties, and is essential to the survival of civilization. Nuclear disarmament is another super ordinate goal. Today so many years after the cold war, the superpowers are still heavily armed and can destroy the entire world within 15 minutes. Everywhere in the world we face religious and ethnic divisions and conflict. The blood bath that is Iraq reminds us of what happens when the same national group decides that their ethnic subcategory is more important than the overall national welfare. We need to view society with more inclusive categories (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998b) and strengthen the perception that we are all part of humanity.

Societies must be created that meet the needs of all citizens. A cooperative world contributes to feelings of common destiny and the reduction of prejudice. Increasing national income and wellbeing would reduce the competitive cause for prejudice. Competitive societies can best be described as those playing a non-zero sum game. However in competitive societies, what one person or group gains is at the expense of other individuals or groups. Can we develop a vision for more cooperative societies?

#### *8. The jigsaw puzzle method in the classroom: An experiment in cooperation*

The initial efforts at desegregating classrooms did not bring the desired improvement in self-esteem or racial cooperation (Stephan, 1978). Aronson (1978) did an experiment in cooperation with Texas school children. He pursued classroom integration through a new effort at student cooperation called the jigsaw puzzle classroom. The class was divided into six person units. Each group was assigned a learning task based on assigned reading material, and each member of the group had to learn one sixth of the material. The individual student possessed a fraction of the material which all the students needed to learn. Each participant then had to teach the other five students their segments so all the material could be put together like a jigsaw puzzle. In traditional classroom settings, students compete for grades and attention. The competition supports the idea that other students are competitors, not resources. By contrast, the jig saw

puzzle method made the students interdependent. Even the weakest student had an important role, because the other students needed him to get the complete picture. Encouragement to transmit learning was provided in jigsaw classes, as otherwise important information would be excluded. In contrast to the competitive class rooms, in the jig saw classes it was in everyone's interest to perform at high levels.

A great deal of research has now been completed on the jigsaw classroom. The results strongly favor the method over the competitive classroom (Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978; Aronson & Gonzales, 1988; Walker & Crogan, 1998; Wolfe & Spencer, 1996). Students in the jig saw classes demonstrated less prejudice, and developed more cross ethnic liking relationships. The children also demonstrated improved self-esteem. Cross ethnic groups spent more time together out of the class room and with enough quality contact to truly change stereotypic views. Improved relations are produced by removing in-group-out-group distinctions (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, & Murrell, 1990). In the process, students developed more empathy. It is a wonder that this method has not been more broadly applied, as it could be used in a variety of arenas where competitive or hostile categories prevent empathy and effective communication.

### *Summary*

Prejudice is common to and prevalent in all modern societies. Prejudice is an attitude with three common components. The affective component is called prejudice, the cognitive component stereotype, and discrimination refers to behavioral consequences. In the literature, the term prejudice is an umbrella term used for all three components. In the US, prejudice toward blacks derives from our history of slavery and the Jim Crow laws which followed that supported racial segregation. Our common history targeted all ethnic groups as can be seen in the many pejorative terms available to the bigot. Intergroup enmity is pervasive and it is a part of the human condition. However, prejudice is learned and can be unlearned.

Victims of bigotry suffer many harmful effects. Stereotypes produce self-fulfilling prophecies, when the victim behaves in accordance with social expectations. When stereotypes are made salient to minority group members, it causes stereotype threat and lower performance on a variety of tasks. Stereotypes unfairly limit expectations since they ignore the overlap in behavior between

groups and individual differences within groups. Stereotypes also support the evaluation of performance, and eventual success. When rapid responses are required, stereotypes can be deadly for targeted people. Reaction time in video games and in real life shows that people depend on simple heuristics in making life or death decisions. The reaction time in stereotypic consistent situations is short. For example in a situation in which blacks are perceived as threatening.

Stereotypes which sustain prejudice are often based on ancestral myths or religious enmity. There is a grain of truth in all stereotypes. There is more crime in black communities, but not all blacks are criminals. Females are more nurturant, but some mothers kill their children. Socialization determines the form of stereotypes in all societies, they are vast over-generalizations, and do not evaluate the historical conditions creating behavior. Discrimination occurs because society allows it or is indifferent. Stereotypes support discrimination, a discrimination that proceeds from ethnocentrism. People tend to give the in-group the benefit of any doubt, and consistently show in-group bias.

The history of the world is one of intergroup hostility and discrimination. The treatment of the Japanese Americans in the US during World War II, and the persecution of political progressives, labeled communists, during McCarthyism, are examples of societal prejudice. Members of in-groups are rated favorably in employment, and indeed in all walks of life. It is a challenge for social psychologists to understand why intergroup enmity is so prevalent and decisive in human interaction.

Changing norms often create ambiguity. The targeted person is unsure if prejudice, or personal inadequacy is responsible for misfortune. We have experienced significant changes in racial and gender norms over the past decades. Black people recognized that stereotypes negatively impacted self-esteem. The "black is beautiful" movement arose in direct response to assaults on the self-concept of black children. Gender stereotypes have gone through a similar transformation. In the past, both genders accepted gender-limiting stereotypes. However, in the modern woman, self-depreciation has largely faded. In intimate relations, there is a reserve of prejudice, when the social costs are very high.

Blatant prejudice is fading in modern society, but subtle biases remain. Prejudiced people are conforming to new norms of racial equality. The bigoted



person still exists but may no longer tell the truth about his attitudes, his racism has taken on a different form. Modern forms of racism are expressed in opposition to busing as a means to integrate schools. Much opposition is also expressed against affirmative action. This opposition is derived from individual rights and community values. Egalitarian values are used to maintain the status quo and resist integration. A victim's behavior is attributed dispositionally, and the victim is perceived as personally responsible for his misfortune. In refusing to consider the situational factors affecting behavior, the bigot can uphold, in his own mind, belief in equality of treatment. The focus of concern becomes the "equal" treatment of the majority. Underlying support for "egalitarian behavior" is a reserve of ill will.

Flagrant racism is also fading in Europe, but indifference toward victims is also a form of racism. Modern racism promotes an ideology of merit and colorblind judgment, although this concern for equality is merely an excuse for indifference toward victims and racial inequality. The bogus pipeline and the Implicit Association Test uncover prejudice even among those who deny it to themselves.

Prejudice is complex behavior. It is learned, and therefore relies on the basic methods of learning: classical conditioning, reinforcement, and social learning. Early learning is of particular importance, by age seven the child understands discriminatory community norms. Once learned, stereotypes are difficult to change. The media plays a role in the learning of stereotypes by how it portrays minorities and women. Often the depiction is unflattering or menial. At times there are no role models for members of the minority.

As mentioned before, in modern racism social inequality is a precursor to prejudice in times of rising expectations. Intergroup conflict is caused by inequality in consumption. Social inequality is used as a justification of prejudice. Inequality is presented as a desirable condition for the oppressed. Colonizers saw themselves as carrying the "white man's burden", and believed that they provided "civilization". Once discrimination has occurred, it is easy to justify it by stereotypes and pejorative terms. Another example is dogmatic religion which is exploited to preserve the status quo of inequality, explained as a consequence of God's will or fate. Realistic group conflict also occurs. The economically advantaged justify the status quo by prejudice toward the disadvantaged. The greater the economic and status differences the higher the prejudice.

Scapegoating theory explains why hostility is directed toward substitute targets such as the disadvantaged rather than the real source of frustration. Often the source of the frustration is not easily identified, at other times it is too powerful. The aggression is displaced toward those who cannot respond and have little power. In the Robbers Cave study Sherif demonstrated how competition elicited hostile behavior. That classical study also showed how to overcome prejudice through super ordinate goals.

Research on group categorization has identified predictable in-group versus out-group distinctions. Groups serve functions of both survival and identity, the basis for in-group bias. The minimal group design experiments demonstrate convincingly that even trivial group membership produces significant in-group bias. Although in-group bias has been demonstrated in varying national samples, it is less prevalent in interdependent cultures. When strong attachments are felt for groups central to our values, other groups are perceived as threatening. We gain great vicarious satisfaction from reference groups which is why people identify with winning sports teams.

Social dominance theory describes society as a hierarchy of winners and losers. The tranquility of a social system is maintained by the dominant political apparatus. All dominant groups, races, or nationalities want to maintain the benefits of their position, and do not willingly yield power. Prejudice derives from the perceived threat that equality creates in a zero-sum world where the gain of one group is someone else's loss.

People have abiding desires to be accepted by reference groups and significant others. Conformity and bigotry go hand in hand in societies where prejudicial norms are present. Prejudice is motivated by the desire to get along, and gain acceptance by valued reference groups. Traditionally, the southern parts of the US had the most prejudicial norms. However, when the norms which sustained blatant prejudice changed, so did the bigots. Blatant prejudice gave way to new norm's which allowed for more subtle forms racism or sexism.

Institutions support prejudicial norms. Social institutions keep the targeted groups segregated or in defined menial status positions. Blacks were historically segregated in schools, in public transportation, and in public venues. They could not even get a drink of water from the same water fountain as whites. When the structure of segregation was dismantled, this was the great victory of the civil

rights movement. Still today, however norms prevent fair treatment of women and minorities. Norms may be an unspoken consensus about the aptitudes and abilities of females and minority groups. Although some new norms favor integration, many problems remain in the stereotypic descriptions in the media, and the lack of appropriate role models.

Personality dynamics explain some prejudice. Through differential childrearing some people develop insecure personalities expressed in search for status and the formation of authoritarian traits. Insecure persons have a need to rank higher than others on socially valued dimensions to support their self-esteem. Typically the authoritarian person possesses punitive attitudes toward the outcasts of society. In times of social upheavals, authoritarian tendencies increase as insecurity underlies authoritarian beliefs and practices.

Social cost is an integrating concept which explains prejudice as a function of a desire to be accepted and not rejected by significant others. It is a more specific concept than normative conformity, as it explains the mechanism by which prejudice is enforced. Intimate relations have the potentially highest levels of social costs, which is probably why white parents still do not endorse interracial marriages. It is in intimate relationships that prejudice exacts the highest price in rejection by those most significant, parents and other important people. While the literature is largely silent on the relative importance of various theories of prejudice, some studies point toward social cost as an integrating concept.

The topic of social cognition and prejudice cover several important concepts. The basic idea is that people become prejudiced as a result of trying to simplify the world. It is easier to stereotype and have prepared positions about the characteristics of people. Prejudice is a consequence of simplistic thinking and relying on heuristics in recovering important information from memory. At the same time, stereotypes rob the individual of salient properties and dismiss individuality in groups.

Members of out-groups are perceived as similar, and variability in traits and abilities are disregarded. There is also evidence that stereotypic categorization also works to create more perceived similarity within the group. These heuristic shortcuts are consistent over time, and conserve intellectual energy. Stereotypes are very resistant to change. Rational appeals to reconsider stereotypic information create counterarguments and have little weight as stereotypes are

largely based on emotions. Bigots accept information consistent with the stereotype, and reject inconsistent information. Biased information processing also determines interpretation of interaction. The very same event is interpreted differently depending on the stereotype. Even stereotypes of other people can affect our behavior; witness the devaluation of someone just sitting next to an obese person.

Some researchers make a distinction between explicit and implicit attitudes. Attitude scales measure explicit prejudice of which the person is aware and can self-report. In times of changing norms, the bigot may be afraid to report truthfully. Implicit measures utilize priming methods with stimulus pictures and recorded reaction time to lay bare the stereotypic consistent and inconsistent words.

Stereotypes are so resistant to change that only high quality contact and relationships are effective. The bigoted person needs to be bombarded with many examples of inconsistent information over long periods of time. Some stereotypes become automatic, and stimulate little reflection. Still some people do control their thinking when they observe contradictions between the stereotypic response and their values. Stereotypic thinking is aided by illusionary correlations when we think variables are correlated that in fact they are not. The relationship between red hair and hot temper is a common illusionary correlation. Red hair is uncommon and distinct people or events lead to these illusions.

Modern racism is based on fundamental and ultimate attribution errors. The in-group is given the benefit of the doubt, and dispositional causes are attributed to the out-group. The accumulated consequence of modern racism is stereotypic threat where members of the minority fear they will confirm the stereotype. All groups experience stereotypic fear when perceiving a competitive disadvantage during some scrutiny or examination.

How can we reduce prejudice? Some believe that more education and contact will reduce prejudice, but education is not very helpful because of the selective information processing. Research shows that only the right type of contact is helpful. Contacts leading to perception of communality as found in super ordinate goals create feelings of common destiny. A cooperative world meets the needs of its people, and will remove many sources of prejudice. The jig saw puzzle method of learning points the way toward improved intergroup relations.