



2025-26 FALL

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Faculty of Arts & Sciences

WEEK 13

Prejudice, Discrimination and Stereotyping

«If we were to wake up some morning and find that everyone was the same race, creed and color, we would find some other cause for prejudice by noon.»

George Aiken

Attitudes

- **Attitudes** provide us with a way of **organizing information about objects** and a way to attach an **affective response** to that object (e.g., like or dislike).
- Under the **right circumstances**, attitudes **predict** one's behavior.

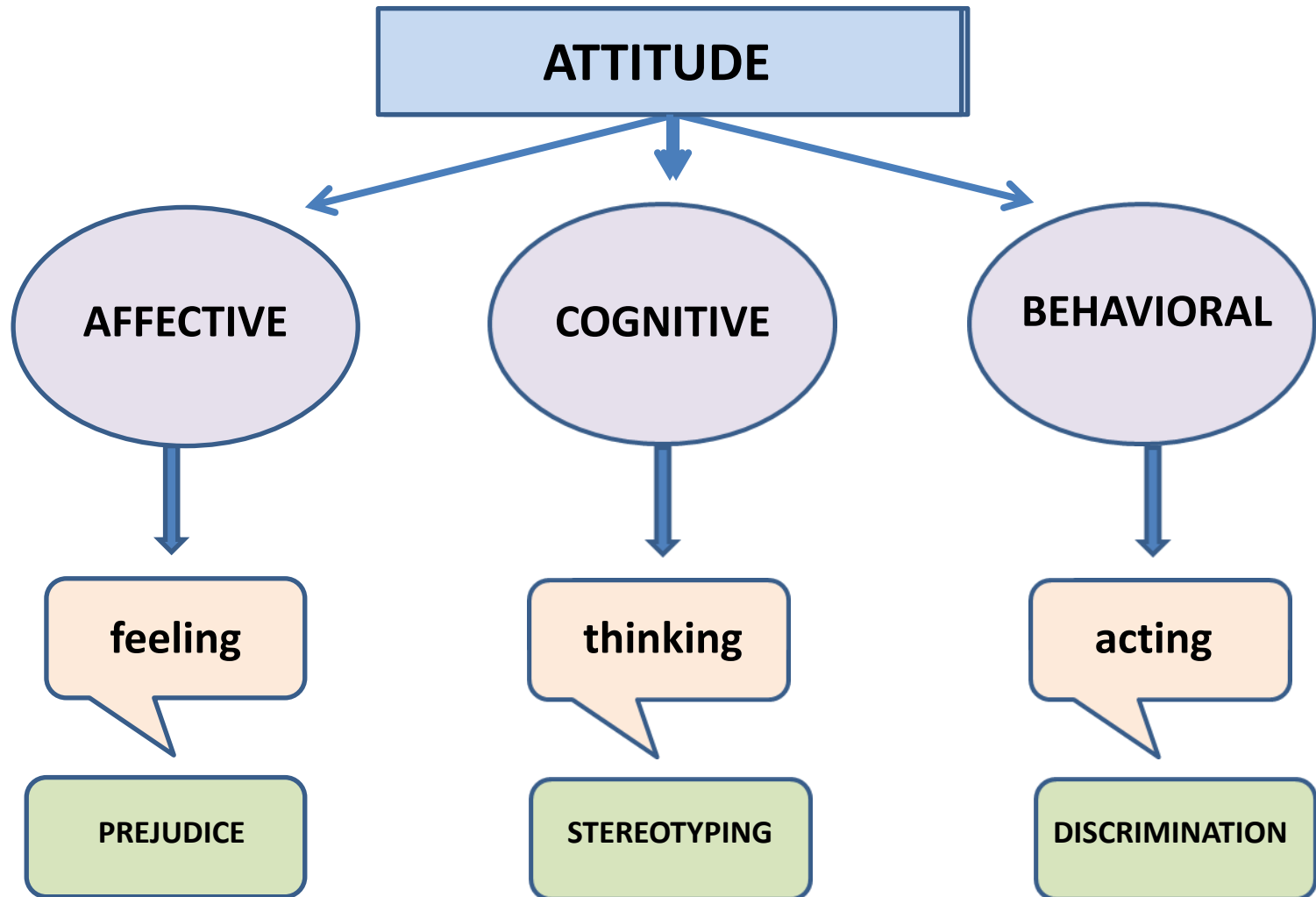
Attitudes

- When we consider **prejudice** we really must consider **two** other **interrelated concepts: stereotyping and discrimination**.
- Taken together, these **three make up a triad** of processes that contribute to negative attitudes, emotions, and behaviors directed at members of certain social groups.

INTRODUCTION

- **Prejudice:** Negative emotional responses based on group membership.
- **Discrimination:** Differential (usually negative) behaviors directed toward members of different social groups.
- **Stereotypes:** Beliefs about social groups in terms of the traits or characteristics that they are believed to share. Stereotypes are **cognitive frameworks** that influence the processing of social information.

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

- **Stereotypes**: the **cognitive component** of attitudes
- **Prejudice**: the **affective component** of attitudes
- **Discrimination**: the **behavioral component** of attitudes
- Some groups are characterized by negative stereotypes and this leads to a **general feeling of hostility** which then results in a **conscious intention to discriminate against** members of the targeted group.

Different Forms of Prejudice

- The most visible are **racism** and **sexism**.
- **Racism** is the **negative evaluation** of others primarily because of their **skin color**. It includes the belief that one racial group is **inherently superior** to another.
- **Sexism** is the **negative evaluation** of others because of their **gender**.

Different Forms of Prejudice

- Other forms of prejudice exist, such as **religious** and **ethnic prejudice** and **heterosexism** (negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians).
- We must be very careful when we want to approach the issue of prejudice from a scientific perspective.



<http://theredcard.ie/what-can-we-all-do-about-racism/>

What Exactly Does Race Mean?

- However, **biologically** speaking, race is an elusive and **problematic concept**. A person's race is not something inherited as a package from his or her parents.
- Consider, for example, an individual whose mother is **Japanese** and father is **African American**, or a blond, blue-eyed person who is listed as **Native American** because her maternal grandmother was **Cherokee**.
- Race does **not** exist as a **biological** concept, it **may** exist as a **social construct**.

What Exactly Does Race Mean?

- People **perceive** and **categorize** others as members of **racial groups** and often act toward them according to **cultural prejudices**.
- In this social sense, **race and racism** are very **real and important** factors in human relations.

Stereotypes

- Prejudicial attitudes do **not** stem from perceived **physical differences**, rather, prejudice relates more directly to the **characteristics** we assume.
- People have a strong tendency to **categorize objects** based on **perceptual features** or **uses**.
- We categorize chairs, tables, desks, and lamps as *furniture*. We categorize love, hate, fear, and jealousy as *emotions*.

Stereotypes

- We **categorize people** on the basis of their race, gender, nationality, and other **obvious features**.
- In general, **stereotyping** is simply part of the way we do business **cognitively** every day. It is part of our **cognitive “toolbox”** .
- Stereotyping is a **time saver**; we look in our toolbox, find the appropriate utensil, and characterize.

The Content of Stereotypes

- There appear to be **two dimensions** underlying stereotypes:
 - **warmth** (liking or disliking) and
 - **competence** (respect or disrespect)
- These two dimensions combine to define **different types** of stereotypes.
- For example, **high warmth** and **high competence** yield a **positive** stereotype involving admiration and pride.
- **Low warmth** and **low competence** results in a **negative** stereotype involving resentment and anger.
- Finally, there can be **mixed** stereotypes involving high competence and low warmth (jealousy) or low competence and high warmth (sympathy).

The Nature and Origins of Stereotyping

- Stereotypes can include more than just **traits**; **physical appearance**, **abilities**, and **behaviors** are all common components of **stereotypic expectancies**.
- The traits thought to distinguish between one group and another can be either **positive or negative**, they can be **accurate or inaccurate**, and may be either **agreed with or rejected by** members of the stereotyped group.

STEREOTYPES AND THE “GLASS CEILING”

- **Glass ceiling**—a final barrier that prevents **women**, from reaching **top positions in the workplace**.
- **Gender stereotypes**: Stereotypes concerning the **traits** possessed by **females and males** and that **distinguish** the two **genders** from each other.
- In corporate settings women are primarily making into **middle management** but **not the higher** echelons.
- Several studies have confirmed that a “**think manager—think male**” **bias** exists and can help explain how the glass ceiling is maintained.

Gender stereotypes

Common Traits Stereotypically Associated with Women and Men	
FEMALE TRAITS	MALE TRAITS
Warm	Competent
Emotional	Stable
Kind/polite	Tough/coarse
Sensitive	Self-confident
Follower	Leader
Weak	Strong
Friendly	Accomplished
Fashionable	Nonconformist
Gentle	Aggressive

Source: Compiled based on Deaux & Kite, 1993; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002.

- Stereotypes of each gender are typically the **converse of one another**.
- **Men** too are assumed to have both **positive and negative** stereotypic traits.
- Such a portrait—being perceived as **high on competence but low on communal attributes**—reflects men's relatively high status .
- **Women face a key problem:** the traits they supposedly possess tend to be viewed as **less appropriate for high-status positions** than the traits presumed to be possessed by men.
- **Women's** traits make them seem appropriate for “**support roles**” rather than “**leadership roles**”.

Discrimination

- Discrimination occurs when members of a particular group are **subjected to behaviors** that are **different** from the behaviors directed at other groups.
- Think about the Blacks in the south of the US. There were separate bathroom facilities, drinking fountains, and schools, even seats on the buses.

The Persistence and Recurrence of Prejudice and Stereotypes

- Throughout history, members of **majority** groups (those **in power**) have held **stereotypical images** of members of **minority** groups (those **not in power**).
- These images supported **prejudicial feelings**, **discriminatory behavior**, and even **wide-scale violence** directed against minority-group members.

The Persistence and Recurrence of Prejudice and Stereotypes

- Prejudice appears to be an **integral part of human existence**.
- After World War II, Americans had negative feelings toward the Japanese.
- The next 40 years, the two countries were at peace and had a harmonious relationship.
- But in the difficult economic times of the 1980s and early 1990s, Americans tend to see Japanese as more competitive, hard working, prejudiced, and crafty. Japanese have a slight tendency to see Americans as undereducated, lazy, and not terribly hard working.

Individual Differences and Prejudice: Personality and Gender

- Social psychologists and sociologists have long suspected a **relationship between personality characteristics and prejudice**.
- One important personality dimension relating to prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination is **authoritarianism**.
- Authoritarianism is a personality characteristic that relates to **unquestioned acceptance of and respect for authority**.
- Authoritarian individuals tend to identify closely with those in authority and also tend to be prejudiced.

Individual Differences and Prejudice

PERSONALITY AND GENDER

The Authoritarian Personality

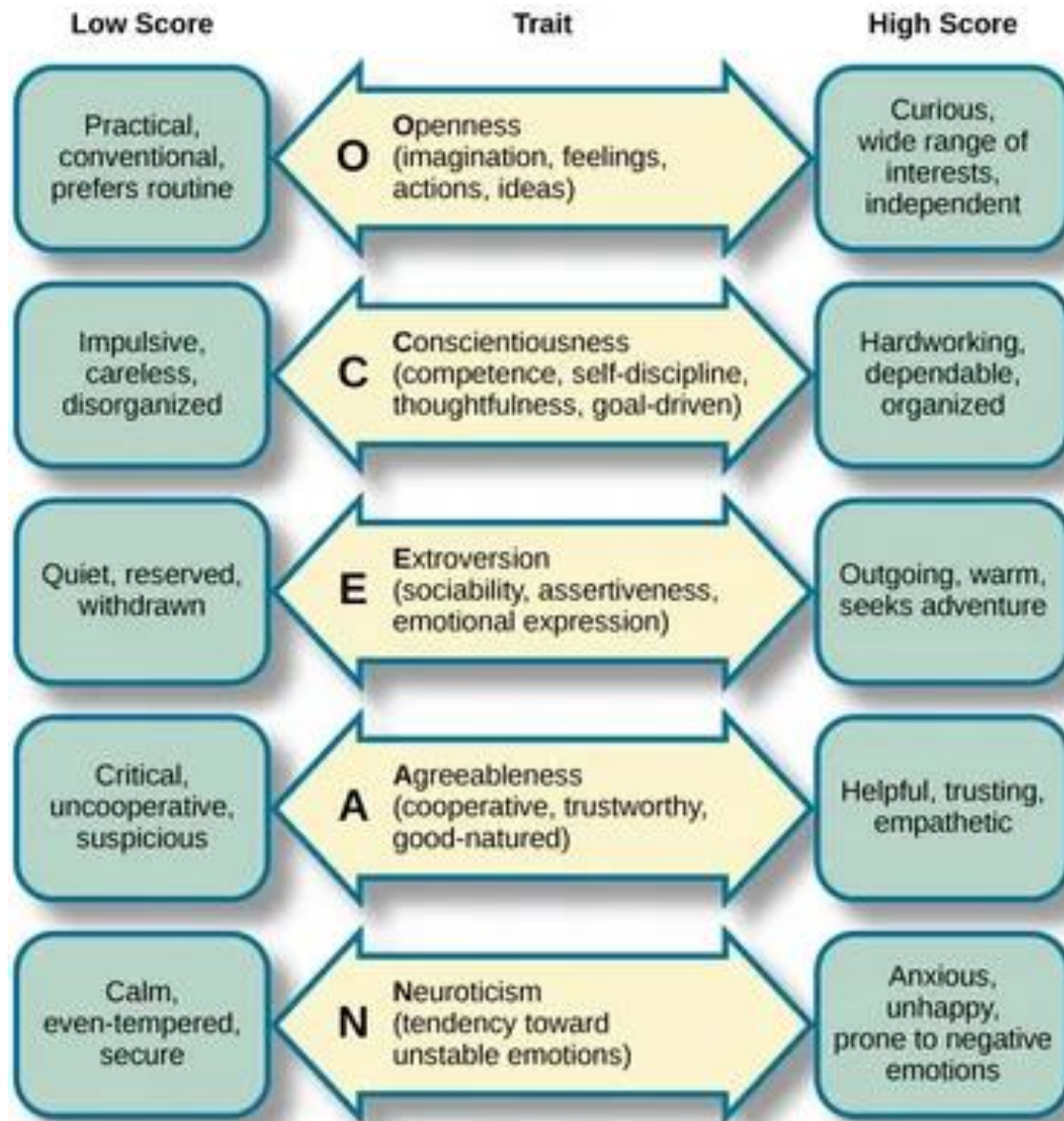
- **Authoritarians** had a particularly **rigid and punishing upbringing**. They were raised at homes in which children were **not allowed to express any feelings or opinions**.
- There is also evidence that **parental attitudes** relate to a child's implicit and explicit prejudice.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

- Desire to have one's **in-group** in a position of **dominance or superiority** to out-groups.
- **High** social dominance orientation is correlated with **higher levels of prejudice**.
- One's SDO also correlates with prejudicial attitudes.
- Social dominance theory focuses on both **individual and structural factors that contribute to various forms of group-based oppression**. The theory views all of the familiar forms of group-based oppression (e.g., group-based discrimination, racism, ethnocentrism, classism, sexism) as special cases of a more **general tendency for humans to form and maintain group-based hierarchy**.

Openness to New Experience and Agreeableness

- A currently **popular** model of personality is the “**big five**” model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1987).
- **Openness to experience** includes **curiosity**, **imagination**, and **creativity**, along with a **willingness to try new things** and **divergent thinking**.
- Those **high** on the **openness** dimension showed **less prejudice**.



<https://www.simplypsychology.org/big-5-personality.jpg?ezimgfmt=rs:380x400/rscb24/ng:webp/ngcb24>

Gender and Prejudice

- Research shows that **men tend to be higher** than women on SDO.
- This **gender difference** appears to be **rooted in** different patterns of **social identity orientations** among men and women.
- Research in this area has concentrated on male and female **attitudes toward homosexuality**. Generally, **males tend to have more negative** attitudes toward homosexuality than women.

The Social Roots of Prejudice

- **Prejudice occurs in a social context.**
- To explore the social roots of prejudice, let's consider the situation of African Americans in the United States.
- During the years before the Civil War, **black slaves were considered the property of white slave owners**, and this arrangement was justified by the notion that blacks were in some way **less human than whites**.

Modern Racism

- Although racist beliefs and prejudicial attitudes **still exist**, they have certainly become **less prevalent** than they once were.
- Many white Americans currently are **aversive** racists.
- **Aversive racist**: Person who believes he or she is **unprejudiced**, but **feels uneasy and uncomfortable** in the presence of someone from a different racial group.

Modern Racism

- **Modern racism:** Also known as **symbolic racism**. Subtle racial prejudice, expressed in a **less open manner** than is traditional overt racial prejudice and characterized by an **uncertainty in feeling and action** toward minorities.
- Modern racists would say that yes, racism is a bad thing and a thing of the past; still, it is a fact that African Americans “are pushing too hard, too fast, and into places where they are not wanted”

Changing Social Norms

- Our society, **primarily through its laws**, has made the obvious expression of **racism undesirable**.
- **Overt racism** has become socially **unacceptable**. But for many individuals, deeply held **racist sentiments remain unchanged**. Their racism has been **driven underground by society's expectations and standards**.

What are the cognitive roots of prejudice?

- As **humans**, we have a strong predisposition to **categorize people** into groups.
- We classify ourselves and those we perceive to be like us in **the in-group**, and others whom we perceive to be different from us we classify in **the out-group**.
- In order to maintain a positive self-concept, we need to **categorize similar and dissimilar others**.

Social Identity Theory

- Henri Tajfel's greatest contribution to psychology was social identity theory. Social identity is a person's **sense of who** they are based on their group membership(s).
- Tajfel (1979) proposed that the groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to were an important **source of pride and self-esteem**. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world.
- We divided the world into “them” and “us” based through a process of social categorization (i.e. we put people into social groups).

Social Identity Theory

- The four basic elements of Social Identity Theory are:
 1. Categorization
 2. Social comparison
 3. Social identification
 4. Ingroup bias (to have a positive social identity and increase self-esteem)

Are stereotypes ever accurate, and can they be overcome?

- However, accurate or not, **stereotypes** are still **harmful**, because they give us a **damaging perception of others**.
- There is a tendency to judge individuals according to the worst example of a group represented by a stereotype.
- Stereotypes **can be overcome** if one uses **controlled processing rather than automatic processing** when thinking about others.
-

What is the impact of prejudice on those who are its target?

- Targets of **prejudice-based jokes** report feelings of **disgust, anger, and hostility** in response to those jokes.
- Targets of prejudice are **affected through the mechanism of the stereotype threat**.
- **Collective threat** comes from a concern that **poor performance** by one member of one's group may be viewed as a **stereotype** and **generalized to all members** of that group.

What can be done about prejudice?

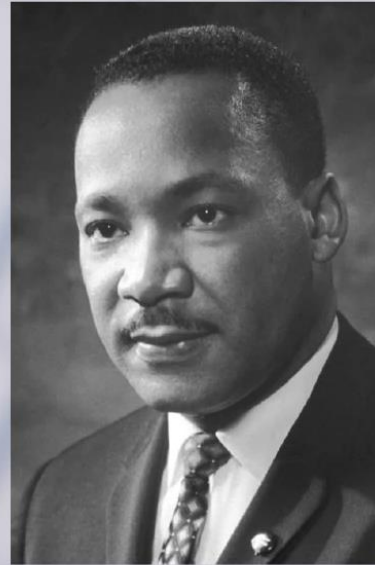
- **Increased contact** between groups should increase positive feelings. **Positive feelings are enhanced** when there is a **superordinate goal** toward which groups **work cooperatively**.
- Another strategy is to **personalize out-group members**; this prevents falling back on
- **Prejudice** may also be **reduced through training programs** that seek to **dissociate negative traits** from minority group members.

A Class Divided

- On the day after Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered in April 1968, Jane Elliott's third graders from the small, all-white town of Riceville, Iowa, came to class confused and upset. They recently had made King their "Hero of the Month," and they couldn't understand why someone would kill him. So Elliott decided to teach her class a daring lesson in the meaning of discrimination. (Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/introduction-2/>)

**"I HAVE A DREAM
THAT ONE DAY
THIS NATION WILL RISE UP
AND LIVE OUT
THE TRUE MEANING
OF IT'S CREED -
WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS
TO BE SELF-EVIDENT:
THAT ALL MEN
ARE CREATED EQUAL."**

Martin Luther King Jr.



<https://www.wmcactionnews5.com/resizer/TmEsLpAHeftORnUdawEifncsqy8=/1200x600/arc-anglerfish-arc2-prod-raycom.s3.amazonaws.com/public/BQHZ7YEXLND5LEAJ06UGHZ6IW4.png>

- **Martin Luther King Jr.** (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) was an African American Baptist minister and **activist** who became the most visible **spokesperson and leader** in the American **civil rights movement** from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King advanced civil rights through **nonviolence and civil disobedience**, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of **Mahatma Gandhi**.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr.

A Class Divided

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPktMLmMha8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2z-ahJ4uws>
- Mrs. Elliott created an experiment that would separate the class by two eye colors (blues and browns). Students with blue-eyes would get special treatment throughout the day since they were the superior ones, the next day it would be reversed. Students that have brown-eyes would be the superior ones. In result the ones who were superior would performed excellent in class. They would have answered questions quickly and accurately, and do better in the tests they were given; those who were not superior for that day would feel discourage, were hesitant and uncertain in their answers, and performed poorly in tests. Since the experiment was created to teach the little third graders about discrimination and racism, Mrs. Elliott's goal was to teach her student how it feel to be discriminated and that they should not judge people but the color of their skin.

(Retrieved from <https://www.coursehero.com/file/34065323/A-Class-Divided-pdf/>)