Chapter 2
Prejudice

Chapter Objectives

- Differentiate between prejudice and discrimination.
- Apply White privilege.
- Paraphrase the theories of prejudice.
- Describe stereotyping.
- Put into your own words color-blind racism.
- Discuss how members of subordinate groups respond to prejudice.
- Explain how hostility is present among racial and ethnic groups.
- Illustrate research on reducing prejudice.
- Identify ways to reduce hate.

Chapter Outline

Ill feeling among groups of different races, ethnicities, or cultures may result from **ethnocentrism**, or the tendency to believe that one's culture and way of life are superior to all others'. The ethnocentric person judges other groups and other cultures by the standards of his or her own group. This attitude makes it quite easy for people to view other cultures as inferior. Ethnocentrism and other expressions of prejudice are often voiced; but unfortunately, such expressions sometimes become the motivation for criminal acts.

I. Prejudice and Discrimination

- **Prejudice** is a negative attitude toward an entire category of people. The important components in this definition are *attitude* and *entire category*.
  - Prejudice often is expressed using **ethnophaulisms**, or ethnic slurs, which include derisive nicknames.
    - Ethnophaulisms also include speaking to or about members of a particular group in a condescending way.
- Prejudice is a belief or attitude; discrimination is action.
- **Discrimination** is the denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups because of prejudice or for other arbitrary reasons.
  - Discrimination involves *behavior* that excludes members of a group from

certain rights, opportunities, or privileges.

A. Merton's Typology

- Prejudice does not necessarily coincide with discriminatory behavior.
- In exploring the relationship between negative attitudes and negative behavior, sociologist Robert Merton identified four major categories.
- The label added to each of Merton's categories may more readily identify the type of person described:
    o The unprejudiced nondiscriminator—or all-weather liberal
    o The unprejudiced discriminator—or reluctant liberal
    o The prejudiced nondiscriminator—or timid bigot
    o The prejudiced discriminator—or all-weather bigot

B. LaPiere's Study

- Richard LaPiere exposed the relationship between racial attitudes and social conduct.
    o From 1930 to 1932, LaPiere traveled throughout the United States with a Chinese couple.
    o Despite the alleged climate of intolerance of Asians, LaPiere observed that the couple was treated courteously at hotels, motels, and restaurants.
- The LaPiere study is not without flaws.
    o He had no way of knowing whether the respondent to the questionnaire was the person who had served him and the Chinese couple.
    o He accompanied the couple, but the questionnaire suggested that the guests would be unescorted (and, in the minds of some, uncontrolled) and might consist of many Chinese people.
    o Personnel may have changed between the time of the visit and the mailing of the questionnaire.
- The LaPiere technique has been replicated with similar results.
    o This technique questions whether attitudes are important if they are not reflected in behavior.
    o But if attitudes are not important in small matters, they are important in other ways: Lawmakers legislate and courts may reach decisions based on what the public thinks.

II. White Privilege

- **White privilege** refers to the rights or immunities granted as a particular benefit or

favor for being White.
- o This advantage exists unconsciously and is often invisible to the White people who enjoy it.
- Scholar Peggy McIntosh of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women looked at the privilege that comes from being White and the added privilege of being male.
  - o Being White or being successful in establishing a White identity carries with it distinct advantages. Among those that McIntosh identified were the following:
    - ▪ Being considered financially reliable when using checks, credit cards, or cash
    - ▪ Taking a job without having coworkers suspect it came about because of race
    - ▪ Never having to speak for all the people of one's race
    - ▪ Watching television or reading a newspaper and seeing people of one's own race widely represented
    - ▪ Speaking effectively in a large group without being called a credit to one's race
- Typically, White people do not see themselves as privileged in the way many African Americans and Latinos see themselves as disadvantaged.
  - o White people most likely see themselves devoid of ethnicity ("no longer Irish," for example), stigmatized as racist, and victims of reverse discrimination.

III. Theories of Prejudice

A. Scapegoating Theory

- **Scapegoating theory** says that prejudiced people believe they are society's victims.
- The theory of scapegoating suggests that, rather than accepting guilt for some failure, a person transfers the responsibility for failure to a vulnerable group.
- In the major tragic twentieth century example, Adolf Hitler used the Jews as the scapegoat for all German social and economic ills in the 1930s.
  - o This premise led to the passage of laws restricting Jewish life in pre–World War II Germany and eventually escalated into the mass extermination of Europe's Jews.
- Scapegoating of Jews persists.
  - o **Anti-Semitism**—anti-Jewish prejudice and discrimination—remains a very real phenomenon.

- Today in the United States, both legal and illegal immigrants often are blamed by "real Americans" for their failure to secure jobs or desirable housing.
  - The immigrant becomes the scapegoat for one's own lack of skills, planning, or motivation.

B. Authoritarian Personality Theory

- Several efforts have been made to detail the prejudiced personality, but the most comprehensive effort culminated in a volume titled *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al.).
- In Adorno and colleagues' view, the **authoritarian personality** has basic characteristics that mean it is a personality type that is likely to be prejudiced.
  - It encompasses adherence to conventional values, uncritical acceptance of authority, and concern with power and toughness.
- Critics have attacked:
  - The study's equation of authoritarianism with right-wing politics (although liberals also can be rigid)
  - The study's failure to see that prejudice is more closely related to other individual traits, such as social class, than to authoritarianism as it was defined
  - The research methods used in the study
  - The study's emphasis on extreme racial prejudice rather than on more-common expressions of hostility

C. Exploitation Theory

- Racial prejudice is often used to justify keeping a group in a subordinate economic position.
- **Exploitation theory** is part of the Marxist tradition in sociological thought.
  - Karl Marx emphasized exploitation of the lower class as an integral part of capitalism; similarly the exploitation or conflict approach explains how racism can stigmatize a group as inferior to justify the exploitation of that group.

D. Normative Approach

- The **normative approach** takes the view that prejudice is influenced by societal norms and situations that encourage or discourage the tolerance of minorities.
- Analysis reveals how societal influences shape a climate for tolerance or intolerance.

- o Societies develop social norms that dictate not only what foods are desirable (or forbidden) but also what racial and ethnic groups are to be favored (or despised).
  - o Social forces operate in a society to encourage or discourage tolerance.
- Social circumstances provide cues for a person's attitudes; personality determines the extent to which people follow social cues and the likelihood that they will encourage others to do the same.
- Societal norms may promote or deter tolerance; personality traits suggest the degree to which a person will conform to norms of intolerance.

IV. Stereotypes

A. What are Stereotypes?

- **Stereotypes** are unreliable generalizations about all members of a group and do not take individual differences into account.
- Stereotyping causes people to view Blacks as superstitious, Whites as uncaring, and Jews as shrewd.
  - o Faulty generalization creates a stereotype.
- Labeling individuals through negative stereotypes has strong implications for the self-fulfilling prophecy.
  - o Studies show that people are all too aware of the negative images others have of them.
- Stereotyping is not limited to racial and ethnic groups. Other groups are subjected to stereotyping.
  - o **Sexism** is the ideology that one sex is superior to the other. Images and descriptions of women and even girls often reinforce sexism.
  - o **Homophobia**, the fear of and prejudice toward homosexuality, is present in every facet of life: the family, organized religion, the workplace, official policies, and the mass media.

B. Stereotyping in Action: Racial Profiling

- According to the Department of Justice, **racial profiling** is any police-initiated action based on race, ethnicity, or national origin rather than the person's behavior.
- Racial profiling persists despite overwhelming evidence that it is not a predictive approach toward identifying potential troublemakers.
- States and other government units are discussing policies and training that would discourage racial profiling.

- At the same time, most law enforcement agencies reject the idea of compiling racial data on traffic stops, arguing that it would be a waste of money and staff time.

V. Color-Blind Racism

- **Color-blind racism** refers to the use of race-neutral principles to defend the racially unequal status quo.
    - Color-blind racism has also been referred to as laissez-faire, postracialism, or aversive racism, but the common theme is that notions of racial inferiority are rarely expressed and that proceeding color-blind into the future will perpetuate inequality.
- In the post-civil rights era and with the election of President Barack Obama, people are more likely to assume discrimination is long past and express views that are more proper—that is, lacking the overt expressions of racism of the past.
- When White attitudes toward African Americans are surveyed, three conclusions are inescapable:
    - Attitudes are subject to change; during periods of dramatic social upheaval, dramatic shifts can occur within one generation.
    - Less progress was made in the late twentieth and beginning of the twentieth-first centuries than was made in the relatively brief period of the 1950s and 1960s.
    - The pursuit of a color-blind agenda has created lower levels of support for politics that could reduce racial inequality if implemented.

VI. The Mood of the Oppressed

- Opinion pollsters have been interested in White attitudes on racial issues longer than they have measured the views of subordinate groups.
    - This neglect of minority attitudes reflects, in part, the bias of the White researchers.
    - It also stems from the contention that the dominant group is more important to study because it is in a better position to act on its beliefs.
- The results of a nationwide survey conducted in the United States offer insight into sharply different views on the state of race relations today.
    - Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans all have strong reservations about the state of race relations in the United States.
    - They are skeptical about the level of equal opportunity and perceive a lot of discrimination.
    - Hispanics and Asian Americans, overwhelmingly immigrants, are more likely

- to feel they will succeed if they work hard.
  - o Yet the majority of all three groups have a positive outlook for the next ten years.
- One form of prejudice is when one group hates another group.
  - o Another form of prejudice is when a group hates itself.
- People should not assume that minority status influences personality traits in either a good or a bad way.
  - o Such assumptions may create a stereotype.
- Because African American children, as well as other subordinate groups' children, realistically see that Whites have more power and resources and, therefore, rate them higher does not mean that they personally feel inferior.
  - o Studies, even those with children, show that when the self-images of middle-class or affluent African Americans are measured, their feelings of self-esteem are more positive than those of comparable Whites.

VII. Intergroup Hostility

- Prejudice is as diverse as the nation's population.
  - o It exists not only between dominant and subordinate peoples but also among specific subordinate groups.
- Trouble arises when intergroup hostility becomes violent.
  - o Ethnic and racial tensions among African Americans, Latinos, and immigrants may become manifest in hate crimes.
  - o Violence can surface in neighborhoods where people compete for scarce resources such as jobs and housing.
  - o Conflict theorists see this violence as resulting from larger structural forces, but for the average person in such areas, life itself becomes more of a challenge.

VIII. Reducing Prejudice

- Focusing on how to eliminate prejudice involves an explicit value judgment: Prejudice is wrong and causes problems for those who are prejudiced and for their victims.
- The obvious way to eliminate prejudice is to eliminate its causes—the desire to exploit, the fear of being threatened, and the need to blame others for one's own failure.
  - o These might be eliminated by personal therapy, but therapy, even if it works for every individual, is no solution for an entire society in which prejudice is a part of everyday life.

- Prejudice is attacked indirectly when discrimination is attacked.
  - Despite prevailing beliefs to the contrary, people *can* legislate against prejudice: Statutes and decisions do affect attitudes.
  - Laws and court rulings that have equalized the treatment of Blacks, and Whites have led people to reevaluate their beliefs about what is right and wrong.
- Much research has been done to determine how to change negative attitudes toward groups of people.
  - The most encouraging findings point to the mass media, education, intergroup contact, and workplace training programs.

A. Education

- Research on education and prejudice considers special programs aimed at promoting mutual respect as well as what effect more formal schooling generally has on expressions of bigotry.
- Most research studies show that well-constructed programs do have a positive effect on reducing prejudice, at least temporarily.
  - The reduction is rarely as much as one might want, however.
- Studies document that increased formal education, regardless of content, is associated with racial tolerance.
  - Research data show that highly educated people are more likely to indicate respect and liking for groups different from themselves.
  - However, college education may not reduce prejudice uniformly.

B. Mass Media

- Mass media, like schools, may reduce prejudice without requiring specially designed programs.
  - As with measuring the influence of programs designed to reduce prejudice, coming to strong conclusions on mass media's effect is hazardous, but the evidence points to a measurable effect.
- Today, over 56 percent of all youth less than 14 years of age in the United States are children of color, yet few faces they see on television reflect their race or cultural heritage.
  - The programs shown earlier in the evening, when young people are most likely to watch television, are the least diverse of all.
- The absence of racial and ethnic minorities in television is well documented.
  - They are less likely to play recurring roles and are far underrepresented in key decision-making positions such as directors, producers, and casting

agents.
- Reality programs have been analyzed as representing the diversity of the population.
  - They represent a new and significant exception to television dominated by White actors and actresses.

C. Avoidance versus Friendship

The Social Distance Scale

- Robert Park and Ernest Burgess first defined **social distance** as the tendency to approach or withdraw from a racial group.
- Emory Bogardus conceptualized a scale that could measure social distance empirically.
  - His social distance scale is so widely used that it is often referred to as the **Bogardus scale**.
- The scale asks people how willing they would be to interact with various racial and ethnic groups in specified social situations.
  - The situations describe different degrees of social contact or social distance.

Equal Status Contact

- An impressive number of research studies have confirmed the **contact hypothesis**, which states that intergroup contact between people of equal status in harmonious circumstances causes them to become less prejudiced and to abandon previously held stereotypes.
- The key factor in reducing hostility, in addition to equal-status contact, is the presence of a common goal.
  - If people are in competition, contact may heighten tension.
  - However, bringing people together to share a common task has been shown to reduce ill feelings when these people belong to different racial, ethnic, or religious groups.
- The limited amount of intergroup contact is of concern given the power of the contact hypothesis.
  - However, as African Americans and other subordinate groups slowly gain access to better-paying and more-responsible jobs, the contact hypothesis is taking on greater significance.

Avoidance Via the Internet

- The emergence of the Internet, smartphones, and social media are often heralded as transforming social behavior, allowing people to network globally.
  - While this may be the case in some instances, avoiding people online who are racially, ethnically, and religiously different is just another means of doing what one's parents and grandparents did face-to-face.
- Sometimes the avoidance is not necessarily initiated by people but by the helpful technology.
  - There is growing concern that because of an increasingly wired world, in a more subtle fashion people are less likely to benefit from intergroup contacts, not to mention friendships, in the future.
- In his book, *The Filter Bubble*, online political activist Eli Pariser contends that when a search engine filters our searches, it encloses us in a kind of "invisible bubble" or "walled garden" that limits what we see to what we are already familiar with.
  - Thus, people are not likely to discover other people, places, and ideas that are outside their comfort zone.

D. Corporate Response: Diversity Training

- Workplace hostility can lead to lost productivity and even staff attrition.
  - If left unchecked, an organization can develop a reputation for having a "chilly climate."
- If a business has a reputation that it is unfriendly to people of color or to women, qualified people are discouraged from applying for jobs there and potential clients might seek products or services elsewhere.
- In an effort to improve workplace relations, most organizations have initiated some form of diversity training.
  - Typically, these programs aim to reduce ill treatment based on race, gender, and ethnicity.
- It is difficult to make broad generalization about the effectiveness of diversity-training programs because they vary so much in structure between organizations.
  - At one extreme are short presentations that seem to have little support from management.
  - At the other end of the continuum is a diversity training program that is integrated into initial job training, reinforced periodically, and presented as part of the overall mission of the organization, with full support from all levels of management.
- Diversity task forces that bring together people from different departments to

       brainstorm about opening up hiring opportunities appear to eventually increase the diversity in upper management.

- It is not in an organization's best interests if employees start to create barriers based on, for example, racial lines.
- To have a lasting impact, diversity training should not be separated from other aspects of the organization.
- Despite the problems inherent in confronting prejudice, an organization with a comprehensive, management-supported program of diversity training can go a long way toward reducing prejudice in the workplace.
  - The one major qualifier is that the rest of the organization must also support mutual respect.

Identification Items

Items marked by a plus sign (+) are in addition to those listed in the chapter's "Key Terms" section.

+All-weather bigot	(p. 34)
+All-weather liberal	(p. 34)
Anti-Semitism	(p. 37)
Authoritarian personality	(p. 37)
Bogardus Scale	(p. 51)
Color-blind racism	(p. 42)
Contact hypothesis	(p. 51)
Discrimination	(p. 34)
Ethnocentrism	(p. 33)
Ethnophaulisms	(p. 33)
Exploitation theory	(p. 38)
+LaPiere, Richard	(p. 34)
+Marx, Karl	(p. 38)
+Merton, Robert	(p. 36)
Homophobia	(p. 40)
Normative approach	(p. 38)
Prejudice	(p. 33)
Racial profiling	(p. 41)
+Reluctant liberal	(p. 34)
+Scapegoating theory	(p. 37)
Sexism	(p. 40)
Social distance	(p. 50)
Stereotypes	(p. 39)

+Timid bigot   (p. 34)
White privilege   (p. 36)

Lecture Suggestions/Classroom Discussions

- Rebecca Bordt in "Only Some Are Dead Men Walking: Teaching About Race Discrimination and the Death Penalty," *Teaching Sociology* 32 (October 2004): 358-373, discusses an experiment that teaches racial discrimination in her classes. The results of the exercise can be used as a basis for class discussion.

- Ask the class how many of them have worked with and for Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, Arab and Muslim Americans, Native Americans, Japanese and Chinese Americans. You can have a nice class discussion based on the results of your class survey.

- Critique LaPiere's classic study of the reception given to Chinese traveling in the U.S. was conducted nearly half a century ago. Design a study based on the same questions LaPiere asked. What do you predict about the relationship between (prejudiced) attitudes and (discriminatory) behavior?

- Have students reflect on times when they knew their behavior did not reflect their attitude in a particular situation. How would they explain this discrepancy? How much do attitudes tell us about behavior?

- How can childhood socialization increase or decrease negative attitudes toward racial, ethnic, and religious groups? Have students reflect on their childhood and what they learned about groups different from the ones they belonged to. What were the sources of this information?

Classroom Activities

- Have students record all the adjectives that characterize given groups. Include Whites and groups like ex-convicts, doctors, plumbers, etc. Then ask the students whether they hold any of these images of minority groups and how they came to believe in them.

- Find more applications of the social distance scale in Marietta Morrissey's "Exploring Social Distance in Race and Ethnic Relations Courses," *Teaching Sociology* 20 (April 1992): 121-124.

- Have students fill up the following (or a modified) version of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, and discuss their decisions. What factors, including historical context, might influence the way people respond?

  Directions: If you willingly admit members of a group in the specified situation, place a check mark in the blank under the group label.

	Blacks	Jews	Whites	Muslims
To close kinship by marriage				
To my club as personal chums				
To my street as neighbors				
To employment in my occupation				
To citizenship in my country				
As visitors only to my country				
Would exclude from my country				

Student Assignments and Projects

- Look up the following two books: Leonard Reissman's *Inequality in American Society*, (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1973) and Irwin Deutscher's *What We Say/What We Do*, (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1973). Students can choose whether to write a short essay on to what extent is race best considered as a social class, or do our attitudes measure our behavior or even tell us anything about behavior.

- Have students visit the children's section of the local library. Ask them to review any five books on the basis of race and ethnic stereotypes and present a report on their findings.

- Have students diagram their personal social networks, noting the race and ethnicity of the members. Ask students to analyze their social network. Are their networks heterogeneous or homogenous? When there is diversity, what is the nature of the tie?

- Ask students to divide into groups and conduct surveys to assess people's attitudes toward racial issues. All details like participants' race, gender, education, and other variables of interest should be noted down.

- Ask students to research the different ways in which hate crime based on race, sex, religion, etc. can be reduced. Ask them to develop an action plan to fight hate crime

Schaefer, Racial and Ethnic Groups, 14/e, Instructors Manual

on the campus.

- Explore
  KEYWORD: prejudice
  Find five current events that deal with issues of prejudice. Compare and contrast the five events. What similarities and differences exist between the five issues? Are any solutions given for the problems encountered with prejudice? How does the information presented compare with the discussion of prejudice presented in Chapter 2?

- Read Document
  KEYWORD: contact hypothesis
  Pick any two articles that deal with the contact hypothesis. How do the research articles support or not support the validity of the contact hypothesis? What has been your own personal experience with the contact hypothesis? Have you seen it work in your own life? Why or why not?

Multimedia Resources

- "Psychology of Prejudice," (2008, 21 min.). DVD available from Insight Media.
- "Them and Us: Cultural Awareness," (2007, 25 min.). DVD available from Insight Media.
- "The Roots of Prejudice and Intolerance," (2002, 25 min.). DVD available from Insight Media.
- "Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotypes," (2003, 22 min.). DVD available from Insight Media.
- "Race and Sex: What We Think (But Can't Say)," (2006, 40 min.). DVD available from Films for the Humanities & Sciences.
- "A Question of Identity: What Is Race?," (2003, 23 min.). DVD available from Films for the Humanities & Sciences.