The Development of Prejudice in Children

Chapter 8
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Outline

- Awareness and Social Categories
- Development of Prejudice
- Theories of Prejudice Development
- Reducing Children’s Prejudice
Curious Kids

- "Why are there Black people?"
- "Is Mexican my color?"
- "Why am I called Black if my skin is brown?"
- "Why does Ruben speak Spanish?"
- "If I'm Black and white, and Tim is Black and white, how come he is darker than me?"
- "Do Indians always run around wearing feathers?"
- "Why is my skin called yellow? It's not yellow, it's tan."
- "I didn't know that babies came out Black."
Categorization – children categorize to simplify their world

Implicit Awareness – pre-verbal infants can categorize based on sex, beauty, age, and race

Explicit Awareness – 3 years old for gender verbalization and 4–5 for black and white racial categories
Measuring Preference

- **Category Preference** – preferring one group over another without derogation
  - Different assessment measures can lead to more or less bias
  - **Forced-Choice** – Preschool Racial Attitude Measure (PRAM)
  - **Continuous** – more sensitive assessments (e.g. Likert Scale)
  - **Sociometric Ratings** – rankings of friends/classmates
Development of Prejudice

- White Children’s Attitudes – explicit ingroup bias and prejudice is high for ages 5–7 and lower for ages 8–9
Development of Prejudice

- **Black Children’s attitudes** – show more variation than Whites
  - 3 year olds have a mix of pro-black and/or unbiased attitudes
  - 5–7 year olds show varied preferences
  - 7–10 year olds show gradual pro-black or unbiased shift
- White and Black children demonstrate an overall pro-white bias
- **Other Ethnicities** – children from other ethnic groups mirror Black children’s attitudes
- **Biracial Children** – trend towards unbiased attitudes
#3: Evaluation of an Ambiguous Cross-Race Interaction
Young European-American Children

- Positive Intent: 10%
- Neutral: 20%
- Negative Intent: 70%

#4: Evaluation of an Ambiguous Cross-Race Interaction
Young African-American Children

- Positive Intent: 27%
- Neutral: 35%
- Negative Intent: 38%
**Figure 8.1** Change in Children’s Understanding of Racism as a Function of Age and Ethnic Group Membership

As children become older, their understanding of racism becomes more complex.
Development of Prejudice

- **Racial Identity** – “Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?”
  - Finding ways to resist and be protected from race-based stereotypes and judgments
  - **Oppositional Identity** – embracing one’s ethnic culture and rejecting perceived “White” culture
  - Goal is to establish a positive ethnic identity in a healthy way.
Development of Prejudice – Behaviors

- **Intergroup Behavior** – Preschool girls play with same race and boys prefer white
  - See a mix of no preference or white classmate preference in K–1st grade
  - K–8th grade girls interact with same race and boys more are varied

- High schools see more racial segregation
Development of Gender Prejudice

- **Intergroup Attitudes**
  - 2–5 year olds have a limited understanding of gender
  - 3–4 year olds evidence gender preference and prejudice
  - Preadolescents favor gender-typed kids and dislike kids who violate gender roles the most
Intergroup Behaviors
  ◦ By age 3, girls and boys have same sex play preferences
  ◦ Gender segregation is reduced in high school settings
  ◦ Heterosexism – peaks in adolescence and slowly declines
Theories of Prejudice Development

- **Social Learning Theory** – children acquire prejudice via direct and indirect learning
  - Indirect – children model their parents’ behaviors towards outgroups
  - Parents influence prejudice via the values they teach
  - Peer contact can influence prejudice
  - Acquire **stereotypes** via **books**, toys, magazines, TV, movies, and news
So, as fast as I could;  
I went after my **net**.  
And I said, “With my **net**  
I can get them I bet.  
I bet, with my **net**,  
I can get those Things yet!”
Theories of Prejudice Development – Social Learning

#14: Perceived Parental Approval of Cross-race Friendship: European-American Participants
Without contact

- Would Approve: 56%
- Would Not Approve: 44%

#15: Perceived Parental Approval of Cross-race Friendship: European-American Participants
With contact

- Would Approve: 34%
- Would Not Approve: 66%
Theories of Prejudice Development - Social Learning

#7: Evaluation of an Ambiguous Cross-Race Interaction
European-American Adolescents

- Positive Intent: 13%
- Neutral: 14%
- Negative Intent: 73%

#8: Evaluation of an Ambiguous Cross-Race Interaction
European-American Adolescents
With Contact

- Positive Intent: 35%
- Neutral: 15%
- Negative Intent: 50%
Theories of Prejudice Development

Personality and States

- Authoritarianism – demonstrate more prejudice against those who violate traditional norms/values
- May develop from strict rule-based parenting styles, observing parents, and personal experiences
Theories of Prejudice Development

Prejudice Change – explicit prejudice decreases in adolescence, but implicit remains unchanged.

![Graph](image)

Fig. 1. Implicit race preference in the three age groups. A positive value of D indicates a preference for Whites relative to Blacks.
Reducing Children’s Prejudice

- School desegregation can lead to increased prejudice
  - Desegregated schools can still be internally segregated
- Integration – “supported” positive intergroup contact leads to decreased prejudice
Reducing Children’s Prejudice

- Multicultural/Anti-bias education – developing positive **appreciation** for other **groups**
  - Anti-bias Education – increase awareness of institutional **prejudice**
  - Cooperative Learning – group learning tactics can reduce bias (e.g. Jigsaw Classrooms or Problem–based learning)
Theories of Prejudice Development

- Cognitive Developmental Theories – developmental changes and experiences contribute to prejudice
- Aboud’s Stage Model – 3 fluid stages based on research
  - Stage 1 emotional responses e.g. “stranger distress”
  - Stage 2 overemphasize physical differences
  - Stage 3 rely on physical and internal traits to categorize
Developmental Intergroup Theory – explains why certain prejudices develop
1. Categorize based on physical traits
2. Develop more complex categories
3. Prejudice Development – outgroup homogeneity, ingroup bias, implicit and explicit learned beliefs