HANDBOOK OF
Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination

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Development of Racial and Ethnic Prejudice Among Children

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A 5-year-old girl refuses to work with a classmate of a different ethnic group. A 9-year-old boy mutters a racial slur about a different-race peer. Such acts do not typically capture national and international headlines as instances of pervasive intergroup conflict. Although most of the headlines capture the intergroup struggles of adults, prejudice is expressed among children as early as 4 years of age (e.g., Aboud, 1988; Bar-Tal, 1996).

Researchers, educators, parents, and other concerned individuals have long tried to understand and reduce prejudice among children. Some would suggest that the behaviors of the 5-year-old and 9-year-old children just described do not represent the children’s true attitudes, but rather reflect their oblivious mimicry of the behavior of others. Thus, there is no prejudice to reduce and the acts should be ignored. In contrast, others would argue these behaviors reflect the children’s true attitudes as taught in their environment; consequently, children’s prejudice could be reduced by additional teaching, such as learning about the cultural traditions and customs of different racial and ethnic groups, as well as by learning about historical and contemporary racial and ethnic injustices. An additional interpretation is that children’s negative racial attitudes and behaviors grow out of perceiving other groups (outgroups) as too different, and therefore outgroup attitudes could be greatly improved by focusing on shared identities (e.g., as students from the same school). Yet another interpretation is that children’s attitudes and behaviors in part reflect their lack of social sophistication or ability to be tolerant; thus, reducing children’s prejudice requires developmentally appropriate training toward more sophisticated thought processes. These interpretations reflect some of the main theories of the development of prejudice among children and some of the allied techniques for reducing prejudice among children.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a summary of the tremendous strides researchers, mainly developmental and social psychologists, have made in understanding and reducing negative racial attitudes and behaviors among children. We begin by defining key concepts and measurement tools relevant to children’s racial attitudes and behavior. We then elaborate on the main theories of the origins of racial attitudes and behaviors among children, describing traditional theories and then highlighting more contemporary theories. We discuss the empirical research relevant to these theories including, when relevant, prejudice-reduction techniques that have grown out of these theories. Finally, future directions for research on understanding and addressing racial attitudes and behaviors among youth are discussed.
DEFINITIONS AND MEASURES

Most research on children's racial and ethnic attitudes has focused on prejudice. *Prejudice* has been defined as holding negative feelings toward a group and its members or exhibiting hostile or negative treatment directed at a group and its members (e.g., Brown, 1995). Although there are distinctions between race and ethnicity (e.g., Quintana, 1998), racial and ethnic group memberships appear to have similar implications for prejudice; thus, we discuss the findings of research on race and ethnicity together. We focus only on ethnic and racial prejudice because of the combined set of features differentiating it from other prejudices. For example, the category of race is less malleable (e.g., people may move in and out of the category of overweight), more visible (e.g., people's sexual orientation is not a visible category), and allows for social separation more readily (e.g., people may be biased toward members of the other gender, while also engaging in intimate relationships with them) than other prejudices. Because research on racial and ethnic prejudice may not, therefore, generalize to other forms of prejudice, the focus of this chapter is research that contributes to our understanding of the development of racial and ethnic prejudice in children.

Developmentally appropriate assessments of children's racial and ethnic attitudes are critically important. Whereas older children can complete surveys on their own, most younger children complete surveys with the help of an experimenter.

Prejudice measures typically assess affect toward an outgroup with the use of “liking” or emotion words. One of the early measures of prejudice among young children, for example, was the doll preference task developed by Clark and Clark (1947). Experimenters asked children to select a black or white doll that best fit several attributes, such as goodness and niceness.

Whereas prejudice is considered an affective component of intergroup attitudes (Aboud, 1988), stereotyping is considered a cognitive component of intergroup attitudes and refers to associating attributes (e.g., personality and morality traits) with a group (Allport, 1954). Yet, there are very few “pure” stereotyping measures in the children's literature. Many of the measures that assess attributes concern evaluative traits (good, bad), which suggests they should be classified as prejudice measures. Others have evaluative traits (e.g., good, bad) along with stereotypical traits (e.g., smart, aggressive). For example, in the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure (PRAM) designed by John Williams and colleagues (Williams, Best, & Boswell, 1975), children were shown a series of line drawings of two children (e.g., African American and European American), and asked to select the figure that best completed the story: “Here are two girls; One of them is happy and smiles almost all the time. Which one is the happy girl?” The Multi-Response Racial Attitude Measure (MRA; Aboud, 2003; Doyle & Aboud, 1995), which builds on the PRAM and uses similar attributes, requires children to distribute positive and negative attributes to members of the ingroup, outgroup, both, or neither.

One relatively new measure of racial stereotyping and prejudice developed for use with children is the Black/White Intergroup Attitude Scale (BIAS; Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007). The stereotyping component of the BIAS assesses children's stereotyping of African American and European American groups in three domains—occupations, activities, and traits—similar to measures of gender stereotyping (e.g., Children's Occupations, Attitudes, and Traits; Liben & Bigler, 2002). The prejudice component of the BIAS, the Black/White Evaluative Trait Scale, assesses children's positive and negative views of African American and European American groups. The BIAS differs from other prejudice and stereotyping measures in two ways. The first is that the stereotyping and prejudice items included in the BIAS were chosen specifically not to conflate the cognitive and affective components of children's racial attitudes, but instead to assess them independently. A second unique characteristic of the BIAS is that it assesses children's attitudes toward African Americans and attitudes toward European Americans independently, by asking children to evaluate one racial group on all of the scale items, and then the other racial group on all of the items. Thus, children's racial attitudes toward the two groups are scored independently, in line with recent
theorizing that ingroup and outgroup attitudes are in fact independent constructs (e.g., Aboud, 2003; Brewer, 1999; Cameron, Alvarez, Ruble, & Fuligni, 2001).

Another cognitive measure of intergroup attitudes, group knowledge, assesses the participants' existing knowledge of a group (e.g., customs, heritage; see Gimmestad & de Chiara, 1982), but unlike stereotyping measures does not assess knowledge of associated traits. As is the case with the BIAS, measures of group knowledge face the challenge of maintaining construct validity over time and across samples, given appreciable temporal variation in the stereotypes and knowledge that people hold regarding various ethnic groups (see Allport, 1954; Karlins, Coffman, & Walters, 1969).

Discrimination is considered the behavioral component of prejudice, and refers to partial or biased treatment of people based on group membership (Aboud & Amato, 2001). Measures of discrimination assess behavior toward a group or group member, such as reward allocation, or punishment (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Amato, 2001). There are also measures of preferred social distance (i.e., Bogardus Social Distance Scale; Hartley, 1946), particularly willingness to play with a member of the ingroup or outgroup (e.g., Abrams, Rutland, & Cameron 2003; Karafantis & Levy, 2004; Katz, 1973; Levy & Dweck, 1999). For example, in a recent measure by Levy, West, Bigler, et al. (2005), children were shown a sheet of 16 black-and-white photographs (balanced by race—in this case, African Americans and European Americans—and gender) in yearbook format (e.g., “Who would you rather NOT sit next to at a movie theater? Circle as many pictures of people who you would rather NOT sit next to at a movie theatre. If you would be willing to sit next to all these people, do not circle any pictures.”). This measure allows for assessment of ingroup and one or more outgroup attitudes, and is covert because it is unclear to participants that race is the key variable under study.

Most measures of children’s racial attitudes are overt measures. Although a straightforward technique has advantages, there are also disadvantages. Straightforward questions, for example, may be offensive to some children. In addition, the socially desirable response may be obvious to older children. Although some research suggests that social desirability issues are not problematic (e.g., Doyle, Beaudet, & Aboud, 1988), other studies show its effect increases with age (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005). However, most developmental researchers, like researchers with adults studying sensitive topics, take steps (e.g., ensuring confidentiality, using anonymous responding, providing some privacy) to reduce social desirability effects, because such effects cannot be eliminated.

Indirect measures of prejudice also exist. For example, in some assessments, children are asked to make judgments about ambiguous situations involving members of different racial groups (e.g., Katz, Sohn, & Zalk, 1975; Margie, Killen, & Sinno, 2005; McGlothlin, Killen, & Edmonds, 2005; Sagar & Schofield, 1980). An early indirect measure is the Katz–Zalk projective test, in which elementary school children were shown ambiguous interracial slides of common school situations and asked to select which child is likely to receive a good outcome (e.g., win a trophy) and which one is likely to receive a bad outcome (e.g., get reprimanded by a teacher). More recently, in Killen and colleagues’ Ambiguous Pictures Task (Margie et al., 2005; McGlothlin et al., 2005), children are presented with colored pencil drawings of African American and European American children, potentially performing moral transgressions (e.g., stealing money from someone, pushing someone off a swing). Children evaluate two versions of the story (one in which a member of each racial group is the potential transgressor) and describe their understanding of the scene and evaluate the characters’ motivations. Such measures are unique and advantageous in that the context of the intergroup judgment is taken into account.

There are also measures of children’s implicit intergroup attitudes (i.e., attitudes outside their awareness). Rutland et al. (2005) and Baron and Banaji (2006) have adapted the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995), which was developed with adults, for use with children. The measure assesses children’s positive and negative association with racial groups (e.g., African American, European American) by measuring how quickly children classify a word as positive or negative when
it is paired with a particular racial group. For example, quick responses to the pairing of African American and positive evaluative words suggests a positive association to African Americans.

THEORIES OF THE ORIGINS OF PREJUDICE AMONG CHILDREN

PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH

Early theories of the development of prejudice suggested that prejudice among children was a rare, abnormal problem. This limited viewpoint was put forth by the psychodynamic approach to prejudice as articulated by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) in their classic book *The Authoritarian Personality*. Adorno and colleagues’ research was an attempt to understand the atrocities of Nazi Germany. Adorno and colleagues proposed that parenting styles characterized by punishment and threats created racial prejudice in children. They suggested that children exposed to threat and punishment in response to expressions of unconventional behavior developed inadequate egos. In an environment forcefully promoting conventionalism and submission to authority, children relied on defense mechanisms to release their aggressive impulses, such as projecting their anger onto social deviants, rather than onto their “powerful” parents (on whom they relied). Children projected their anger onto social deviants because authority figures approved of aggression toward these targets. The projection of anger onto social deviants, which in some contexts could include members of racial or ethnic minorities, was thought to give rise to prejudice toward certain outgroups. The *authoritarian personality* was thought to develop during adolescence, based on these childhood experiences.

The original psychodynamic theorizing suggested that therapy is the appropriate treatment for children who exhibit prejudice (Cotharin & Mikulas, 1975), but such therapeutic techniques are not common today. This is in part because the psychodynamic approach to prejudice has been criticized on theoretical (nonrefutable theory) and methodological grounds (subjective interviews of adults about their past; see Altemeyer, 1981). Contemporary research as discussed later has made it clear that the authoritarian personality does not reflect any one national climate (e.g., a “German personality”). Prejudice is pervasive, and atrocities have occurred all over the world at the hands of many different groups. Prejudice, then, is no longer considered an abnormal occurrence (although acts of discrimination are, in many countries, illegal).

Contemporary work on the authoritarian personality has shed most of the psychodynamic framework, and instead focuses more on a social learning framework. Although this work has established a conceptual link between racial and ethnic prejudice and authoritarianism as a learned belief system including excessive conformity, submission to authority, and hostility toward those deviating from authority-sanctioned standards of behavior (e.g., Altemeyer, 1981), this work is typically done with college-age samples. Thus, there is little understanding of the potential contributing role of authoritarianism to prejudice among children.

SOCIAL LEARNING APPROACH

Another early theory of the development of prejudice among children is social learning theory, originally proposed in Allport’s classic (1954) work, *The Nature of Prejudice*. According to this theory, children learn prejudice by observing and imitating role models such as parents. Similar to the psychodynamic approach to prejudice, the social learning approach suggests that children’s prejudice increases with age. Allport suggested, however, that children mimic, and then come to believe, what they are exposed to in their environments.

There is much evidence supporting social learning theory more generally (e.g., Bandura, 1977). Research, however, has provided inconsistent evidence regarding the relation between children’s racial attitudes and the racial attitudes of others in their environment, such as parents. For example, a positive relation was found between the racial attitudes of European American fathers and
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their adolescent sons, but not for African American father–son pairs (Carlson & Iovini, 1985). Other research has revealed that as African American children age, their attitudes toward African Americans and European Americans gradually become more like their parents’ attitudes (Branch & Newcombe, 1986). Further, approximately 8-year-old White Canadian children’s racial attitudes were not strongly related to their mothers’ racial attitudes (Aboud & Doyle, 1996b).

Another potential source of prejudice, according to social learning theory, is children’s peers. One study found little overlap between the racial attitudes and behaviors of approximately 14-year-old European American and African American children and those of their peers (Patchen, 1983). Other studies have shown school-aged European American children and their peers do not generally possess similar racial attitudes, although the children perceived their peers to hold attitudes similar to their own (Aboud & Doyle, 1996b; Ritchey & Fishbein, 2001).

Why might children not share their racial attitudes with many of their role models? Some evidence suggests that parents, particularly members of race-majority groups, rarely discuss prejudice with their children (see Aboud & Amato, 2001). Ironically, it appears that more racially tolerant parents may not discuss racial issues with their children for fear of bringing attention to race. Yet, it has been shown that when adults and peers address prejudice, it is decreased (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a).

For example, Aboud and Doyle (1996a) found that low-prejudice (as assessed at pretest) White Canadian third and fourth graders who discussed their racial attitudes with a high-prejudice peer actually lowered their peer’s prejudice. Thus, the lack of strong relation between attitudes of children and their role models may stem from a lack of explicit discussion, not a lack of influence. Indeed, cognitive developmental work suggests that when children are actively engaged in the learning strategy, it is more likely that the information will be internalized, generalized, and acted on (e.g., Teasley, 1995).

Linguistic Connotation Theorizing

Linguistic connotation is one subtheory of social learning theory that has specifically focused on very young children. Williams and colleagues (e.g., Williams & Edwards, 1969) hypothesized that racial attitudes developed in part from the connotative meaning of color names in U.S. culture. They showed that European American preschoolers tend to evaluate the color white positively and to evaluate the color black negatively. Further, other research has demonstrated a causal relation between color associations and racial attitudes. Williams and Edwards (1969; also see Elliot & Tyson, 1983) used positive reinforcement (e.g., “all right”; receipt of three small candies) and negative reinforcement (e.g., “no”; loss of two pennies) to train preschoolers to make positive associations with the color black (black animals) and negative ones with the color white (white animals). The training weakened, but did not reverse, the children’s original color concepts, and promoted less negative evaluations of African Americans on the PRAM measure described earlier. Thus, interventions that target evaluative dimensions of racial labels have the potential to increase tolerance among this age group. Such techniques may be less effective among older children who have more sophisticated understandings that are not addressed by simple reconditioning of color concepts. The findings do suggest, however, that if children learn prejudice from their environment, they can unlearn prejudice, too.

Merely replacing old beliefs with new beliefs may be an overly simplistic approach (e.g., Bigler, 1999) especially among older children. Active teaching strategies may be necessary to counter children’s preexisting biases. Unfortunately, many of the studies in which children are given counterstereotypic information about socially stigmatized groups apply a passive learning strategy such as direct instruction from the socializer to the participant (e.g., Elliot & Tyson, 1983) or viewing material from the media (see Graves, 1999). These strategies have a minimal effect on children’s racial attitudes. The information may need to be rich and complex, reflecting the reality of racial and ethnic issues, and to be communicated in ways that facilitate children’s active processing of the information.
Multicultural Theorizing

Multicultural education is one popular approach to prejudice reduction, derived from social learning theories. Multicultural education theorizing suggests that prejudice develops because of a lack of both knowledge and understanding of diverse groups. Multicultural theory suggests that through learning about cultural groups, individuals will understand and respect other cultures, thereby reducing negative attitudes (Banks, 1995). Often, multicultural education involves children's participation in and out of the classroom, such as class art projects in observance of a cultural holiday, or trips to museums with a cultural focus as well as direct learning about the culture.

Although laudable in many ways, a criticism of the multicultural approach is that the celebration of cultural “differences” may increase the likelihood that children and adolescents will place individuals into rigid categories, thereby increasing racial and ethnic stereotyping and prejudice. This is especially true among children who lack the cognitive sophistication to recognize that individuals fit into multiple categories (e.g., age, race, or gender; Bigler, 1999). Similarly, Bigler and colleagues (e.g., Bigler, Brown, & Markell, 2001; Patterson & Bigler, 2006) have demonstrated that explicit mention of perceptually salient social categories results in the development of biased attitudes. Educational curricula that focus specifically on the history of certain racial groups within a racially diverse society may, by highlighting race and racial differences, inadvertently increase children's racial biases. For example, the presentation of race-related educational material during Black History Month differentiates people according to racial group membership. Children exposed to this information may conclude that race is an important dimension along which individuals differ—thus, stereotyping and prejudice will increase rather than decrease. This work points to limiting the use of race as a differentiating characteristic in the classroom, or, when discussing race, to emphasize the similarities across, and differences within, racial groups.

Banks (1995) further suggested that effective multicultural education requires that the total school environment reflect the cultural diversity of American society and to help children all experience educational equality. Banks suggested that changes be made in the “values and attitudes of the school staff, curricula and teaching materials, assessment and testing procedures, teaching and motivational styles, and values and norms sanctioned by the school” (p. 329). Banks's multicultural school reform proposal appears less susceptible to some of the concerns raised about proposals that include minimal additions to school curricula (e.g., inclusion of race-related material only as part of a month-to-month recognition of nonmajority groups).

Antiracist Theorizing

Similar to multicultural education theorizing, antiracist education theorizing suggests prejudice derives in part from a lack of intergroup knowledge, namely an awareness and understanding of the history and roots of inequality (e.g., McGregor, 1993). Antiracist education often goes hand in hand with multicultural education efforts in elementary and secondary schools. Antiracist teaching involves descriptions of past and contemporary racial discrimination and inequalities, pointing out the forces that maintain racism. This may increase empathy and at the same time discourage future racism. However, if not done carefully, such teaching could be counterproductive for both perpetrators and targets of racism. Providing insight into the prejudice of the students’ ingroup and the students’ own prejudiced reactions may make students feel angry or self-righteous (Kehoe & Mansfield, 1993). In addition, “classroom materials and activities used to illustrate the existence of racism may appear stereotyped, threatening, or humiliating from the point of view of minority children” (McGregor, 1993, p. 216). Yet, a reaction of guilt may have positive outcomes in older adolescents. For example, research with college-age students suggests that guilt can be a motivating force in reducing people’s expression of prejudice (Monteith, 1993). Therefore, although perhaps a powerful intervention, it is necessary that steps be taken to minimize potentially negative side effects of antiracist education, for example, by providing examples of majority group members who are working to end racism and by pointing out similarities between groups to avoid stereotyping (see Hughes, Bigler, and Levy, 2007).
One pair of studies reported by Hughes and colleagues (2007) examined the effects of learning about historical racism on the racial attitudes of European American and African American children. The experimental groups in these studies received lessons about famous African American leaders, and embedded in these lessons were examples of the racial discrimination they experienced. Children in control groups received the same biographical information about the leaders, with the exception of any mention or examples of racism. Posttest examinations of European American children’s racial attitudes revealed significantly lower degrees of anti-African American prejudice among children in the experimental group compared to the control group, which exhibited significantly more negative than positive evaluations of African Americans. Although there were no differences between conditions among African American children, both they and the European American children also exhibited greater valuing of interracial fairness in the antiracism condition than in the control condition. Thus, these studies are one example of positive consequences of teaching children about the pernicious effects of racial discrimination.

In the preceding studies, children were more or less passive recipients of antiracist messages. In other studies, researchers have tested the impact of direct engagement in the emotional experience of being the target of prejudice on children’s racial attitudes and behaviors. Firsthand experiences with prejudice may motivate children to alleviate others’ distress as if it were their own—that is, by acting in a less biased way toward racial outgroups (Underwood & Moore, 1982). One of the earliest examples of antiracist empathy training was a classroom demonstration devised by Jane Elliot in the late 1960s. In response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Elliot, a teacher in a predominately European American rural town, taught her approximately 8-year-old students how it would feel to be a target of discrimination. Elliot chose eye color as a characteristic that would differentiate the students, telling students on one day that blue-eyed children were superior, and on the next day, that brown-eyed children were superior. She enhanced the lesson by showing preferential treatment to the “superior” group the entire day, and pointing out the successes and failures of group members as evidence of the group’s superior or inferior position. Therefore, for one day, each group of children had a firsthand experience with discrimination on the basis of an arbitrary characteristic.

However, actual evidence of the effectiveness of the blue eyes/brown eyes simulation is minimal. Weiner and Wright (1973), as an exception, tested a variation of the blue eyes/brown eyes simulation with approximately 8-year-old European American students. In this case, the classroom teacher told children that they were members of “green” or “orange” groups and asked to them to wear colored armbands. Like Elliot, the teacher encouraged discrimination against each group for 1 day. Compared to the control classroom, participants in the simulation reported more willingness to attend a picnic with Black children. These results provide encouraging support for the impact of antiracism role-playing on intergroup attitudes.

One caveat with empathy training is that age-related cognitive and affective skills are necessary to benefit from the training. Older, more cognitively sophisticated children generally have more sophisticated empathy skills than younger children (McGregor, 1993). Thus, it is possible that if children lack the sophistication to engage in perspective taking, as well as the ability to properly interpret the emotional arousal induced by experiencing discrimination, empathic activities may not effectively reduce children’s prejudice. Rather, it is possible for cognitively unsophisticated children to experience increased negativity or avoidance of other racial groups as a result of intervention efforts.

Colorblind Theorizing

The aforementioned work on the social learning approach suggests prejudice can be reduced by highlighting social categories such as race and ethnicity and directly countering some of the learned prejudice. A contrasting hypothesis, offered by the colorblind approach, is that prejudice derives from people’s emphasis on race, and therefore prejudice can be decreased by deemphasizing race. Researchers have long suggested that the colorblind theory should facilitate social harmony in the racially diverse U.S. society. It is captured by the “melting pot” metaphor, which suggests that differences between people immigrating to a country such as the United States
eventually melt away such that there is “no longer any visible or psychological basis for prejudice” (Allport, 1954, p. 517).

The main thrust of the colorblind approach that suggests that race should not be emphasized has been tested in various interventions with children with some success. One way to implement the colorblind theory—or the notion of deemphasizing race—to reduce racial prejudice is to turn people’s attention toward the universal qualities of humans instead of racial group membership. Houser (1978), for example, examined whether stereotyping toward several ethnic groups would be reduced among 5- to 9-year-old children who watched (vs. did not watch) films promoting the message that it is important to focus on universally shared qualities. For example, one film called The Toymaker depicted the story of two puppets who were best friends until they looked in the mirror and realized that one had stripes and the other had spots. The toymaker pointed out that they were both created by the same person and were essentially connected to each other (each covering one hand of the toymaker). Although the film clips were brief (approximately 10 to 15 minutes), children who watched them reported a decrease in stereotyping toward several ethnic groups from pretest to posttest, relative to children who did not view any films but rather participated in regular classroom activities.

Alternatively, children’s focus on racial group membership could be redirected to the unique internal characteristics of individuals such as likes and dislikes. Aboud and Fenwick (1999), for example, found that 10-year-old White Canadian children who participated (vs. did not participate) in an 11-week school-based program that trained them to focus on the internal attributes of people demonstrated a decrease in prejudice toward Blacks. Experiments that deemphasize race by directing children’s attention to individual differences within a group have also showed promise for reducing prejudice (e.g., Katz, 1973). For example, Katz (1973) trained 7- and 11-year-old African American and European American children to attend to the unique characteristics of people. In one condition, the uniqueness of individuals within a racial group was highlighted by having children associate names with photographs of children of a different race. In the other condition, children were explicitly prompted to determine whether pairs of photographs were the same (thus to attend to individual differences). Both experimental conditions led to reduced reported social distance and prejudice among both African American and European American children of both age groups studied, when compared to a control condition in which children simply viewed the photographs.

Several experiments (e.g., Jones & Foley, 2003) have used a combination approach in which attention is diverted from social group category information to how people are both similar and unique (all people are the same in a way, but each person is also unique). In one experiment, Levy, West, Bigler, et al. (2005) had African American and Latino children, 11 to 14 years old, read two science readers (one about the weather, the other about recycling), which featured an equal number of light- and dark-skinned males and females. For example, in a scene in the “weather” book in which the depicted children appeared frightened by thunder and lightning, the similar–unique combined message was: “All humans are the same. Everyone gets scared sometimes, but each person also is a unique individual. Different things scare different individuals.” Children who were randomly assigned to the control condition read only about the main topic of the book (e.g., weather). Children in the similar–unique condition reported greater levels of egalitarianism and greater desired social closeness to unfamiliar European American peers compared to those in the control condition. The combination message, suggesting that people are both similar and unique, was most successful in increasing participants’ beliefs in social equality and treatment, also leaving positive views of their own group intact. The combined message may be the most effective and appealing, because it is the most realistic and serves people’s needs to be both similar and different from others (e.g., see Brewer, 1991).

In sum, diverting attention from racial and ethnic categories shows some promise. Yet, a total colorblind approach to education is controversial because race and other grouping characteristics do affect people’s lives. For example, efforts to assimilate immigrants and ethnic groups into
the dominant culture often do not work (Garcia & Hurtado, 1995). The colorblind approach may facilitate intolerance by glossing over the rich histories of less dominant cultures and by ignoring past and present U.S. racism (e.g., Schofield, 1986). When racism occurs, the colorblind theory can be used to justify inaction through denial, thereby helping maintain the current power structure and preserving the privileges of the dominant group (e.g., Schofield, 1986). This more intolerant aspect of the colorblind theory appears to develop with age and reveal itself in late adolescence and adulthood (Levy, West, & Ramirez, 2005).

**Mere Exposure Theorizing**

Another variation of the social learning approach is captured by mere exposure theorizing. This theory suggests that negative attitudes arise from a lack of exposure to outgroup members. Allport (1954) referred to this as “fear of the strange” (p. 300). Through repeated vicarious exposure to and observation of outgroup members via multiethnic readers, pictures, and television (e.g., Graves, 1999; Litcher & Johnson, 1969), positive intergroup attitudes presumably will emerge (Graves, 1999; Litcher & Johnson, 1969). The results from studies based on the theory of mere exposure have not been encouraging. For instance, there was no significant reduction in negative attitudes among sixth graders exposed to excerpts from children’s stories about Mexican Americans (Koeller, 1977); thus, mere exposure may not be adequate to change negatively held attitudes (see Banks, 1995; Bigler, 1999; Bigler & Liben, 1993). Additional challenge to the theory is posed by continuing existence of prejudice among children even in contemporary times (e.g., Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Hughes et al., 2007), when media provide much exposure to racially diverse characters.

**Extended Contact Theory**

Extended contact theory goes beyond mere exposure theorizing. The “extended contact effect” or “indirect cross friendship hypothesis” (e.g., Cameron & Rutland, 2006, 2008; Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006) suggests that knowing that members of one’s own group (e.g., Latinos) are friends with members of another group (e.g., European Americans) leads to more positive attitudes toward that group (e.g., European Americans). Support for the extended contact hypothesis is widespread, with applications across development from childhood to adulthood (see Cameron & Rutland, 2008).

For example, in studies by Cameron and Rutland (2006), children read and discuss several fiction books in which members of their ingroup have close friendships with outgroup members. Afterward, children tend to show more positive outgroup attitudes (a measure similar to the MRA discussed earlier) and more willingness to interact with an outgroup member in the future (a measure similar to the intended behavior ones discussed earlier), whereas their attitudes and intended behavior toward the ingroup are not changed. Optimal conditions of extended contact include the salience and typicality of the ingroup and outgroup members, as well as high ingroup identification on the part of the participant or the observer (e.g., Cameron & Rutland, 2006). Also, Cameron and Rutland showed that among children, one avenue through which extended contact can lead to more positive outgroup attitudes is through psychologically including members of the outgroup in the recipient’s self-concept.

**Intergroup Contact Theory**

Intergroup contact theory goes one step further by suggesting that interacting with outgroups facilitates developing positive concepts about them. According to intergroup contact theory originally proposed by Allport (1954; Pettigrew, 1998), prejudice, develops, in part, out of a lack of personal, positive contact among members of different groups. It became clear after the initial desegregation of U.S. schools that simply providing the opportunity for intergroup contact did not always lead to improved intergroup relations. That is, even though there was racial diversity in the schools, students continued to segregate themselves socially according to race, and to express racial prejudice. Unfortunately, schools help create “resegregation” by “tracking” children according to ability,
which tends to occur in discriminatory ways, separating children across race lines, thereby reducing opportunities for positive contact in the classroom, which transfers to the lunchroom and schoolyard (Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999).

There is now a large literature with children and adults showing that intergroup contact that is individualized and cooperative, maintains equal status between individuals, and is sanctioned by authorities tends to promote intergroup understanding and friendships (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). Researchers have shown that intergroup harmony can be promoted by altering features of the classroom environment in accordance with these principles. For instance, Aronson and Gonzalez (1988) designed what is called the jigsaw classroom, in which students work cooperatively to learn and teach each other components of an academic lesson. This technique replaces competitive aspects of the classroom with cooperative ones. For example, students in a classroom are divided into six racially and academically mixed groups, each consisting of six students. Each group learns one sixth of the information that is unique, valuable, and necessary to understand the full lesson. Then, participants in each of the original groups are divided so that new groups are composed of one member of each of the original groups, thereby allowing them to teach each other the entire lesson. Thus, the jigsaw technique promotes interdependence and cooperation in a racially diverse classroom. This form of cooperative learning successfully improved children's relationships with each other and increased self-esteem, and provided the fortunate side effect of enhancing students' academic success. Other variations of cooperative learning have been successful at increasing intergroup harmony (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 2000), including bilingual education (e.g., Wright & Tropp, 2005).

One unfortunate weakness of the cooperative learning strategy in improving intergroup relations is that cross-race friendships may not persist after cooperative learning ends. In general, cross-race friendships tend to decrease with age (e.g., Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999; Mendelson & Aboud, 1999). This trend is somewhat surprising, given that there do not appear to be qualitative differences between cross-race and same-race friendships, which would warrant a greater reduction in cross-race friendships (Mendelson & Aboud, 1999). However, some have suggested that cross-race friendships are generally more fragile (Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999), leaving them more likely to end when peer groups shrink and dating begins. Research on social reasoning by Killen and colleagues (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002) suggests that shifts in children’s reasoning may in part account for why cross-race friendships decline. Killen and colleagues’ work has shown that, with increasing age, children think that it is more acceptable to exclude other-race peers from friendships because they believe that groups function better when everyone is of the same race (assuming that they share interests).

Summary

Many theories fit under the heading of social learning approach to the development of prejudice. Research to date suggests that being raised in a prejudiced environment does not necessarily translate into developing prejudiced attitudes, nor does a tolerant environment necessarily lead to tolerant attitudes. This is likely because children are socialized by many agents in their environment (e.g., parents, peers, media). There is some evidence that those messages that are communicated in the most direct and interactive ways are the most relevant and effective. Simply reconditioning or providing counterstereotypic information is overly simplistic and thus not effective, especially among older children. When the environment is racially diverse, implementing a cooperative learning technique is an effective vehicle for reducing prejudice and also for enhancing academic success. Other interventions based on social learning theory, such as multicultural education and antiracist teaching, do not rely on a racially diverse setting; but they include some counterintuitive traps that could actually increase prejudice. Social learning theorizing continues, but is also being increasingly incorporated into other theories, as discussed later.
Cognitive Approach

Research on cognitive theories, like social learning theories, suggests prejudice derives from fundamental, normal psychological processes. The cognitive-developmental theory was originally articulated by Piaget (Piaget & Weil, 1951) and was applied to the understanding of prejudice by Katz (1973), Aboud (1988), and Bigler and Liben (1993), among others. The cognitive-developmental theory suggests that children’s attitudes toward racial and ethnic groups are influenced by their ability to think about group information in complex ways. For example, a child cannot express empathy for another person until he or she has the ability to see the world through another person’s perspective.

According to cognitive-developmental theorizing, prejudice is inevitable among young children because they lack the skills necessary to view people as individuals. Cognitive-developmental theory suggests that children are initially focused on themselves and then on social categories in which they tend to focus on surface features and to exaggerate differences among groups (such as assuming that all members of group A do X). Only later, as their cognitive systems mature, can children recognize similarities across groups (e.g., some members of group A and of group B do X) and differences within the same group (some members of group A do X, and some members of group A do Y). As children obtain these skills, they are more able to judge people as individuals and thus their prejudice is reduced. With age, presumably all children obtain the cognitive skills that allow for reduced prejudice. These skills are apparently obtained between the ages of 7 and 11. However, prejudice is not perpetually reduced with age.

There is some research to support this theorizing. As early as preschool and kindergarten, race-majority group children exhibit prejudice; examples include prejudice of English Canadians toward French Canadians (Doyle et al., 1988), Euro-Australians toward Aboriginal Australians (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996), and Jewish Israelis toward Arabs (Bar-Tal, 1996). Young majority children typically assign more positive and fewer negative attributes to their own groups (ingroups) than to other groups (outgroups), but show a decline in prejudice at around age 7 (e.g., Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Doyle et al., 1988). Research indeed shows that shifts toward reduced prejudice levels are explained in part by acquisition of the social cognitive skills thought to enable prejudice reduction, such as the ability to classify others on multiple dimensions (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Katz et al., 1975), the ability to perceive similarities between members of different groups (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Doyle & Aboud, 1995), and the ability to perceive differences within the same group (Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Katz et al., 1975). There is some evidence that these age-related differences cannot be easily explained by increased concerns with appearing prejudiced (Doyle & Aboud, 1995).

The cognitive-developmental approach has much in common with adult social psychological literature on motivated social cognition. This line of work has shown, consistent with the developmental work, that mature social perceivers who exhibit lower levels of stereotyping are high in their perception of similarities across groups, high in attributional complexity, high in need for cognition, and low in need for simple cognitive structure (see Levy, 1999). Thus, cognitive skills that are acquired with age are also known to express themselves as individual differences among adults and influence levels of stereotyping. Thus, after developing cognitive-developmental skills, children may not necessarily use them. Differential use of these skills or differential accessibility of such conceptions over time may account for stable individual differences (see Levy, 1999).

The causal role of cognitive-developmental skills in prejudice among children has been tested. Katz (1973) trained children to perceive differences among members of the same group. This intervention targeted children who were just obtaining this ability (7-year-olds) and those who likely had already obtained the ability (10-year-olds). In this brief intervention lasting approximately 15 minutes, Katz taught European American children to differentiate among photographs of either African American children (experimental condition) or European American children (control condition). Two weeks later, children in the experimental condition gave fewer prejudiced responses than those in the control condition, regardless of age.
It is notable that the aforementioned experiments incorporated aspects of cognitive-developmental theory in addition to social learning theory. That is, focusing on the evolving social-cognitive ability of noticing cross-group similarities overlaps with teaching shared qualities. Likewise, similar to the evolving social-cognitive ability of noticing within-group differences is focusing on unique qualities of individuals. This overlap is an important one, and suggests that social cognitive skills can be taught and strengthened through antibias messages.

Other experiments to test the causal role of cognitive-developmental skills in children’s prejudice roles have been less successful. These have focused on the multiple classification skill training. Bigler and Liben (1992) trained 5- to 10-year-old children to sort or to classify photographs of people into piles based on salient features of the group (in this case, gender and occupation). Although in this case less gender stereotyping was observed in the training condition, the impact of multiple classification training on levels of prejudice has not been demonstrated (see Bigler et al., 2001; Cameron et al., 2006).

Summary
Accumulating evidence indicates that cognitive-developmental skills play a role in prejudice development. Thus, cognitive-developmental theory has served as a base for several interventions, generally involving cognitive skill training. More work is needed. The cognitive-developmental theory, despite supportive evidence, is not currently defined in a way that explains individual differences in prejudice among children exhibiting similar cognitive skill levels; thus, both environmental and cognitive factors may need to be considered (e.g., Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Levy, 1999; Levy & Dweck, 1999), as discussed in the next section.

Social-Cognitive Developmental Approaches
Social-cognitive developmental approaches combine key elements from the aforementioned social and cognitive approaches and, thus, represent hybrid approaches that emphasize both aspects of the person (e.g., age, cognitive skills) and aspects of the social environment (e.g., influences in the immediate context, broader context).

Social Identity Development Theory
As noted, according to cognitive developmental theory, a key shift in children’s focus is from themselves to social categories (ingroups, outgroups). Social identity theory (e.g., Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979), a prominent theory in social psychological research with adults and more recently with children, focuses on the pivotal role of people’s numerous social identities (e.g., gender, nationality, social class, race), which become salient in different situations and impact social judgment and behavior. Unlike cognitive-developmental theory, social identity theory highlights the role of context in eliciting one or more social identities more than others and thereby highlights the interaction between the person and the situation. People are motivated to see their salient ingroups as positive and distinct from outgroups, which can help maintain positive self-esteem and coherence of one’s self-image (e.g., Abrams & Hogg, 2001).

To elaborate, social identity research with adults has been expanded and applied to children via social identity development theory (SIDT; Nesdale, 1999; Nesdale, Maass, Durkin & Griffiths, 2005). Consistent with the adult literature on social identity theory, SIDT focuses on the pivotal role that context plays in eliciting a particular valued social identity, leading people to favor their ingroup, derogate the outgroup, or both. For example, Nesdale (1999) found that children’s intergroup bias, like that of adults, is likely to be dependent on other factors, such as the extent, stability, and legitimacy of intergroup status differences. Children’s subjective identification with social groups, for example, may not be a necessary precondition for exhibiting preference for one’s social ingroups. Bennett, Lyons, Sani, and Barrett (1998) found that children (ages 6, 9, 12, and 15 years) who did not identify with their national group, but who were immersed in a culture that exposed
them to positive information about their national group, evidenced a preference for that group. This suggests that in a context that strongly favors one’s ingroup, ingroup favoritism can emerge in the absence of ingroup identification.

Common Ingroup Identity Model
According to the common ingroup identity model by Gaertner and Dovidio (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; see Gaertner et al., 2008), another prominent theory in social psychological research with adults and more recently with children, prejudice can be reduced by increasing the salience of common superordinate memberships (e.g., a school) or shared features relevant to the shared group membership (e.g., common goals). A shared common identity suggests that previous outgroup members are now ingroup members, receiving the rewards of ingroup favoritism—similar to the extended contact hypothesis reviewed earlier.

In a study with almost 1,000 6- and 7-year-old U.S. elementary school children (approximately two thirds European American, one third African American), Houlette, Gaertner, and Johnson (2004) examined the impact of a widespread U.S. intervention program in which children engaged in a variety of activities with the overall message that all people belong to the human family. The intervention led to greater interest in playing with hypothetical outgroup peers. Further, in studies with 9- and 10-year-old African Portuguese and European Portuguese students and 13- to 17-year-old U.S. students (e.g., African American, Chinese, European American, Hispanic, Japanese, Jewish, and Vietnamese students), the more students felt like they shared an identity, the lower their level of intergroup bias (see Gaertner et al., 2008).

Developmental Model of Subjective Group Dynamics
As noted earlier, an important focus of several theories (cognitive-developmental theory, SIDT) is understanding when and why children favor their ingroups, derogate outgroups, or both. In that work, there is little discussion of the processes that may lead to favoring the outgroup or derogating the ingroup. Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, and Marques (2003) proposed a developmental model of subjective group dynamics (DSGD), which focuses on such processes in the context of social exclusion and inclusion. Their work builds on adult research on small group processes, namely the subjective group dynamics model and the “black sheep effect” in which unlikable or excluded ingroup members are evaluated more negatively than unlikable outgroup members (see Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, et al., 2003). According to the DSGD model, the ingroup needs to be validated to ensure the subjective superiority of the ingroup over relevant outgroups. A deviant outgroup member, who expresses loyalty to the ingroup, can validate the ingroup more than a deviant (or disloyal) ingroup member. Thus, the outgroup member can be favored over the ingroup member. Compared to other models, DSGD focuses on both intergroup processes (evaluations of the ingroup as a whole compared to the outgroup) and on intragroup processes (evaluations of individual members of both ingroup and outgroup).

For example, Abrams, Rutland, and Cameron (2003) had children aged 5 to 12 years evaluate ingroup (English) and outgroup (German) members, including members of these groups who were normative (supported England’s soccer team in the 2002 soccer World Cup) or deviant (supported Germany’s soccer team). As expected, older children were more sophisticated in their understanding of group loyalty, and exhibited subjective group dynamics. Although favoring the normative over the deviant ingroup member, older children also favored the deviant outgroup member over the deviant ingroup member. Also, older children who identified more strongly with England exhibited greater subjective group dynamics. This research shows that with age, children do not simply use category memberships when they judge group members. DSGD highlights that context, the characteristics of individual group members in relation to group norms, also drives older children’s group attitudes.
Social Domain Model

Another prominent theory that has emerged and expanded on children’s understanding of group-based exclusion is the social domain model (SDM; e.g., Killen et al., 2002). However, unlike DSGD and SIDT, SDM has its origins in developmental psychology. According to SDM, children’s social judgments from a young age are context-specific and influenced by three types of reasoning: moral (e.g., justice, rights, others’ welfare), social-conventional (e.g., traditions, rules, norms, including ensuring group functioning), and psychological (e.g., personal choice). In applying this model to the intergroup domain, Killen and colleagues have tested children’s application of these three forms of reasoning to intergroup contexts. For instance, Killen and Stangor (2001) found that most children reported that straightforward exclusion of a child from a club because of his or her race (excluding an African American child from the chess club) was wrong for moral reasons, and Killen and colleagues (2002) found that almost all children and adolescents thought excluding a child from school because of race was morally wrong. However, when the context was multifaceted, for example, when the children learned the qualifications of a stereotypic and nonstereotypic child who wanted to join a club, children (particularly older children) used social-conventional reasons (e.g., group functioning) in addition to moral reasons for excluding some other-race children from the club. In a friendship context, sometimes participants (namely older children) tended to judge exclusion as okay because of psychological reasons (personal choice to select friends). This line of research, then, also highlights the need to study context, but also to focus on the reasoning children bring to intergroup contexts.

Social-Developmental Perspective on Lay Theories

Complementary to other work that has emphasized the interaction of person variables and context variables in intergroup judgments, Levy and colleagues have tested a social-developmental perspective on the role of children’s and adults’ pervasive lay (everyday) theories on their intergroup judgments. Their social-developmental perspective, drawing on ecological perspectives (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979), social identity theories (e.g., Turner et al., 1979), and social domain theory (e.g., Killen et al., 2002), emphasizes that people interact with and are nested within many potentially different environments; further, this perspective highlights the role that personal characteristics (e.g., age, race, psychological motivations) play in the interpretation of lay theories children receive from their environments. For example, African American and European American children (ages 10–15) tend to see the Protestant work ethic (PWE), the pervasive lay theory that people who work hard succeed (e.g., “All people can pull themselves up by their bootstraps”), as a belief about social equality—everyone can put forth effort and succeed, so everyone is equal (Levy, West, Bigler, et al., 2005; Levy, West, Ramirez, & Karafantis, 2006). With age, greater exposure to the intolerant meaning of the PWE was expected. One example of exposure to the intolerant meaning of PWE is hearing others argue that disadvantaged groups and their members are to blame for their disadvantage for not working hard enough. Indeed, college students who were led to think about past instances of others using PWE in support of such arguments were less egalitarian (reported less support for social equality and donated less money to a homeless shelter) compared to students in a control condition (Levy et al., 2006). Although with experience, all adults may have greater exposure to the prejudice-justifying meaning of PWE than do children, the justifying meaning should be most relevant to advantaged U.S. group members in that it justifies their advantaged place in society. Indeed, consistent with this notion, European American adults endorsed the justifying meaning of PWE more than African American adults. Thus, this work shows that context along with person factors (age, race, psychological needs) help shape people’s use of lay theories to support prejudice or tolerance.

Developmental Intergroup Theory

Developmental intergroup theory (DIT; Bigler & Liben, 2006) is a recently developed and integrated approach to ethnic attitude development that combines social identity theory, cognitive-
developmental theory, and other empirical findings. According to DIT, intergroup biases develop if a social dimension acquires psychological salience. Four factors contribute to a dimension’s psychological salience: perceptual salience of groups, unequal group size, explicit labeling of group membership, and implicit segregation. These four factors characterize society’s treatment of race and ethnicity, and thus children are presumed to be likely to view race and ethnicity as an important dimension along which individuals vary. Given the psychological salience of race, the development of racial biases is facilitated by several additional factors, such as essentialist thinking about race and ethnicity (see Hirschfeld, 1995). Additionally, according to DIT, exogenous factors (e.g., stereotypic environmental models) and endogenous factors (e.g., self-esteem, cognitive development) contribute to the maintenance of prejudice and stereotyping. Much developmental research supports DIT, demonstrating, for example, that labeling and other environmental markers of group membership increase the salience of groups to children and lead to the formation of intergroup biases (e.g., Patterson & Bigler, 2006).

**Summary**

Several theoretical accounts of the development of children’s prejudice have integrated social and cognitive-developmental approaches to explain both developmental and individual differences in levels of prejudice among children. Developmental and social mechanisms include: children’s self-identification in a racial group (SIDT; Nesdale, 1999; common ingroup identity model, Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; DIT, Bigler & Liben, 2006), the developmental shift in children’s interpersonal focus from self to group to others (SIDT; Nesdale, 1999), intragroup reasoning (DSGD; Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, et al., 2003), moral and social reasoning (SDM; Killen et al., 2002), and children’s lay theories (social-developmental perspective; Levy et al., 2006). Further integration is needed, however, to establish a cohesive explanation of the multifaceted nature of children’s attitudes, reasoning, and behaviors related to race and ethnicity.

**Evolutionary Approach**

According to an evolutionary perspective, prejudice and discrimination are nearly inevitable and difficult to change. Fishbein (1996), for example, suggested that the roots of prejudice began in hunter-gatherer tribes and continue universally today because of their success in that period of human evolution. One such proposed evolutionary mechanism relies on a history of related tribe members showing greater preference for each other than for tribe members to whom they were not related, therefore helping and protecting them, which would then maximize the percentage of one’s genes that were transmitted to successive generations. Fishbein offers this as evidence that humans are currently predisposed to show favoritism toward individuals who are most genetically similar to themselves. Another such mechanism that may set the stage for prejudice is the human reliance on authority figures to transmit information to their young. This process encourages children to accept unquestioningly what they are told by authority figures, including information about outgroup members. The final mechanism that Fishbein proposes is the hostility that humans have developed to protect their children, females, and resources from outsiders. Fishbein argues that the development of prejudice is closely linked to the development of a group identity around ages 3 or 4.

Another evolutionary perspective suggests that children’s thinking about social groups is organized according to inherent theories about humans, which guide the way they gather and interpret information about social groups (Hirschfeld, 1995, 2001). These inherent theories help children attend to important group information and ignore unimportant information. According to this perspective, because the concept of race resonates quite well with children’s preexisting cognitive structures for differentiating social groups (i.e., race is visually salient), race becomes a powerful organizing factor for humans.

Despite interest in evolutionary theories of racial prejudice, these approaches have generally been criticized for suggesting that prejudice is natural and thus should be condoned. Still, it
seems that certain aspects of evolutionary thought overlap with other approaches to prejudice. For instance, similar to the evolutionary mechanism that favors categorization according to similarities to oneself, the aforementioned cognitive theories propose that such categorization helps individuals simplify the wealth of social information that they encounter. Also, there are obvious similarities between sociocultural and evolutionary explanations that suggest that prejudice grows out of limited resources and social forces. Further, the evolutionary emphasis on accepting information from authority figures complements social learning theory, which suggests that children learn prejudiced views from their parents and other important people in their lives. Evolutionary approaches may be best suited to explaining the history of mechanisms currently facilitating prejudice (e.g., the methods humans use to categorize groups of people), whereas approaches focusing directly on the current mechanisms, such as the social learning theory or cognitive-developmental models, are best suited to understanding the more immediate and hence more relevant (i.e., for the reduction of biases) causes of prejudice.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Prejudice is not exclusively a problem that concerns adult populations. Children exhibit racial and ethnic prejudice from a young age. Prejudice is to some degree inevitable because of people’s limited cognitive resources and social forces (e.g., hierarchical society, limited environmental resources). Yet, this is an exciting and promising time in the field. It is clear that prejudice is multifaceted and is more likely to be understood by combining elements from different approaches. Further, even from this selective review, it is clear that experiments testing causal mechanisms have revealed many innovative intervention strategies. It seems that in the near future, interventions, like theories, will be increasingly multifaceted, drawing on elements from multiple perspectives.

There are some limitations of the research and some gaps that need to be filled. Much research has focused on Whites or on White–Black relations, and thus the findings are likely limited to those populations. The work that has examined multiple person variables (age, race, gender) makes it clear that a “one size fits all” theory is not sufficient. Another gap in most theoretical work on racial attitudes is the development of prejudice through adolescence. Few empirical investigations have applied the theoretical accounts presented here to research with adolescents. One exception to this is research on social identity theories, which has often focused on adolescent samples. Nonetheless, many aspects of the development of racial prejudice during adolescence, such as the emergence of politically relevant lay theories about race or the link between racial identity and intergroup prejudice, have yet to be examined.

Another issue in future research is the need to study students at schools with overt racial problems. Not surprisingly, many of the schools that are most willing to participate in studies are the schools that are already implementing prejudice-reducing strategies and, relative to other schools, have fewer race problems (e.g., Gimmesstad & de Chiara, 1983). This limits the conclusions that can be drawn from studies and fails to accomplish the goal of this work—to understand the roots of prejudice and ways to reduce prejudice. Researchers have lamented the difficulty of securing participation from schools, an obstacle made even more threatening as the recent emphasis on standardized testing in the United States has reduced the time available for nonacademic school-based activities. A key to success in the design and implementation of effective research is a strong partnership among researchers, educators, and parents.

In conclusion, decades of research have provided diverse and informative theoretical approaches to studying the development and reduction of racial prejudice in children. With the increasing diversity of youth in the United States and abroad, it is particularly timely and important to continue making progress toward understanding and reducing racial and ethnic prejudice among children.
REFERENCES


