

Differential Social Perception and Attribution of Intergroup Violence: Testing the Lower Limits of Stereotyping of Blacks

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In a modified 4×4 factorial design with race (black-white) of the harm-doer and race (black-white) of the victim as the major factors, the phenomenon of differential social perception of intergroup violence was established. White subjects, observing a videotape of purported ongoing interaction occurring in another room, labeled an act (ambiguous shove) as more violent when it was performed by a black than when the same act was perpetrated by a white. That is, the concept of violence was more accessible when viewing a black than when viewing a white committing the same act. Causal attributions were also found to be divergent. Situation attributions were preferred when the harm-doer was white, and person (dispositional) attributions were preferred in the black-protagonist conditions. The results are discussed in terms of perceptual threshold, stereotypy, and attributional biases.

It is now generally accepted that systems of values and beliefs are important determinants of individual behavior. However, we know little "about the lower limits of these influences, about their capacity to reach toward the regions of human experience which appear as immediately given, as the incontrovertible evidence of our senses" (Tajfel, 1969, p. 322). The many studies related to the "new look" in perception have adequately demonstrated that perception is not necessarily "veridical" and that an individual's perception of a stimulus object or event is influenced by his particular needs, wishes, and expectations of the moment—we tend to perceive what we wish or expect to perceive (Merton, 1957). A classic experiment in the "new look" tradition was performed by Bruner and Goodman (1947) who found that the perceiver tended to accentuate the size of valued objects (i.e., coins) and that this tendency was especially

pronounced among subjects with a poor background. The literature concerning the relationship between motivation and perception is very extensive (Allport, 1958; Bruner, 1958; Secord & Backman, 1964). The research findings to date indicate that the social and cultural background of an individual does affect the manner in which he perceives the world around him.

Kelly (1955) has formulated a theory of personality that leads to predictions similar to those derived from theoretical formulations based on social and cultural determinants of social perception, although he emphasizes the construed replication of events and cognitive aspects of behavior rather than motivation. For Kelly, every man is a "scientist" interested in the accurate prediction and control of future events. His predictions are determined by the manner in which the individual has construed the replication of past events. Kelly's theory of personal constructs in some ways resembles Brunswick's (1956) formulation of the probabilistic use of stimulus cues.

Basic to Kelly's theory is the function of constructs (or concepts) in determining how a person construes a stimulus object. Similarly, Bruner (1957) contends that the process of perception involves other processes, such as inference, categorization, judgment, and prediction. According to Bruner, a person neces-

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sarily "knows" the world only in terms of previously formed categories or concepts. Allport (1958) emphasizes the role of categorization in the development and maintenance of stereotypes:

The human mind must think with the aid of categories [the term is equivalent here to *generalizations*]. Once formed, categories are the basis of normal pre-judgement. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends upon it.

We may say that the process of categorization has five important characteristics.

- (1) It forms large classes and clusters, for guiding our daily adjustments . . .
- (2) Categorization assimilates as much as it can to the cluster . . .
- (3) The category enables us quickly to identify a related object . . .
- (4) The category saturates all that it contains with the same ideational and emotional flavor . . .
- (5) Categories may be more or less rational. (Allport, 1958, pp. 19-21)

In order to avoid a lengthy discussion of the distinction between a category and a stereotype, we shall here accept the definition of stereotyping offered by Tajfel (1969, p. 423): "the general inclination to place a person in categories according to some easily and quickly identifiable characteristic such as age, sex, ethnic membership, nationality, or occupation, and then to attribute to him qualities believed to be typical of members of that category." The relationship between this definition of stereotyping and Allport's five characteristics of the process of categorization is obvious.

One of the stereotypes frequently applied to blacks is that they are impulsive and given to crimes and violence. If one believes that blacks are more prone to violent acts than whites, it is reasonable to assume that the concept of violence is more accessible when viewing a black than when viewing a white committing the same act (see Bruner, 1957). In other words, the threshold for labeling an act as violent is lower when viewing a black actor than when viewing a white actor. The present study attempts to test this proposition.

The perception of intergroup violence was chosen as the experimental situation because of its contemporary relevance and the high probability that it is of concern to people in their day-to-day activities. Many members of our society feel extremely threatened by

the possibility of intergroup violence, recalling the outbursts of the late sixties and the scattered recent outbursts such as in Boston, Massachusetts. However, it is not meant, by implication, that social perception is unique to race relationships. Given the increased polarization of various groups in our society along several dimensions (e.g., age, sex, politics, dress) differential social perception is probably contributing to the misunderstanding among many groups.

Asch (1948), employing written communication, performed a now classic experiment that is relevant to the hypotheses to be tested. He attributed identical statements to various persons and found that the meaning of the statement varied with the hypothetical author. A statement written by Thomas Jefferson was usually interpreted positively, but the same statement was viewed negatively when attributed to a leading Communist figure. Asch has argued that the subjects' responses did not indicate a reevaluation of the statements but actually represented a change in the object of judgment (Asch, 1940).

One purpose of the present design was to establish the phenomenon of differential social perception in regard to intergroup violence. That is, subjects are likely to label an act as more violent when it is performed by a black than when the same act is perpetrated by a white. The study also seeks to go one step beyond perceptual phenomena in the Brunswick (1956) sense by looking to what causal locus intergroup behavior becomes attributed. At a theoretical level, it concerns the process through which an individual assigns causes to the behavior he observes and the consequences of his resulting beliefs about the causality. Heider's (1958) attribution theory derives directly from Brunswick's treatment of perception. Just as the *perceiving* individual must integrate the highly variable cues given the stimulus representation in order to "infer" the relatively unchanging object that gave rise to them, the *attributing* individual must integrate the cues given in order to infer the more stable factors that gave rise to them. Kelley's (1967) conceptualization, which is derived directly from Heider, suggests the cognitive processes that might be engaged in by the

individual during this "inference." Another purpose of the experiment was to look at the individual's interpretations of the intergroup violence behavioral sequence in the context of stimulus, situation, and person attributional choices postulated by Kelley. That is, the purpose was to determine whether it was something about the stimulus that caused the individual to act in that way (violently), something about the person, or something about the situation (particular circumstances). Are the observers (subjects) willing to take the behavior more or less at "face value," as reflecting a stable disposition (person attributions), and attach insufficient weight to circumstantial determinants (situation attributions) of the behavior, as has been demonstrated in previous research (Jones & Harris, 1967) for both black and white harm-doers? If the threshold for labeling a behavior as violent is lower when the harm-doer is black, will the same perceptual incompleteness hold for "slim-evidenced" person attribution in the case of white harm-doers?

METHOD

Stimulus Materials

Four students (two white and two black) from Orange Coast College rehearsed a script, loosely constructed in order to adopt their respective patois. The content of the scripts, however, was not altered by this adaptation. The script was initially developed around two of the "dilemma of choice" items on the risk-taking questionnaire constructed by Wallach and Kogan (1962). These hypothetical decision situations offered a scenario in which an altercation between the confederates could be developed. Twelve versions (4 race-relation conditions \times 3 confederate stimulus conditions) of the script were videotaped. Thus, every possible confederate pairing by race, harm-doer, and victim variables was provided.

Overview

The major dimensions in the factorial matrix were the race (black-white) of the harm-doer and the race (black-white) of the victim. The experimental session consisted of a videotape of two males discussing a risky-shift problem (Brown, 1965, Chap. 13); however, the subject who observed the tape was led to believe that the discussion was actually taking place in another room. The subject was asked to evaluate the behavior of the "actors" six times at precise intervals, which were signaled to him by the experimenter during the tape. The major dependent measures were the subjects' final evaluations (sixth rating), which were designed to coincide with the

heated discussion and ambiguous shove near the end of the tape.

Subjects

The subjects were 104 white undergraduates at the University of California, Irvine. They were recruited by responding to signs that displayed an offer of \$1.50 for participating 30 minutes in a study called "interpersonal behavior research." Subjects participated individually and were randomly assigned to 1 of the 12 race-relation by confederate stimulus conditions.

Procedure

When the subject arrived for his appointment, he found a white experimenter tampering with the video system in the taping room. The camera was on and the subject was directed to look at himself on the screen (most subjects found this quite amusing since they had never seen themselves before on a television screen). The experimenter, becoming more serious, stated, "Before anything else, let me pay you for participating in this study." Whereupon, the subject was asked to sign a receipt (administrative detail unrelated to the study) and was paid the promised \$1.50. The experimenter continued as follows:

There are actually three people scheduled for each session. I scheduled you a few minutes ahead of the other two so I could familiarize you with the set-up. You will be observing the other two people by means of the closed circuit TV system which I have just shown you. You will be watching from another room because in the past we have found subjects felt more at ease if they weren't being directly observed.

The subject was then led down the hall to an observation booth, being made aware by the experimenter of the cord (bogus experimental prop) from the taping room to the booth. After the subject was seated in the booth, the experimenter presented the subject with the dependent measure rating forms saying,

Here are your instructions. You can read them while I'm talking to the other two subjects, but first I want to show you the rating scales and tell you a little about our research. This study is part of a project aimed at developing a new system for rating of interpersonal behavior. As you can see this new system involves quite simple categories of behavior. This is because it is intended for nonprofessional observers. Note that your ratings occur immediately after I signal you with the buzzer. I will also be able to control the closed circuit TV from my booth next door, so I will turn it off briefly in order to let you complete your ratings. You won't have a lot of time so respond quickly. Now you will do ratings of two series of interactions. The first is a practice. I will return after this first practice series to answer any

questions you might have. Please do not leave this booth in order to ask me questions. I'll return to answer them.

Independent Variables

The subject was randomly assigned to one of the following experimental conditions (tapes): black protagonist–white victim; white protagonist–black victim; black protagonist–black victim; white protagonist–white victim. All possible pairings of the confederates were made in order to avoid interpretation of effects due to confederate differences, thus making 12 conditions. When the tape was started, the subject, looking at a TV monitor through his booth window, saw the following purported (bogus) live interaction: The experimenter, seating the two confederates in the taping room (seen earlier by the subjects), gave the following instructions:

Why don't you take seats over there. Would you please open the folders and take out the top sheet? Today you will participate in a study of decision making. You will be asked to read the two situations that are included in your folders. In each case the central person in the story must make a decision between two courses of action, both of which have positive and negative aspects. Your role is to act as advisor to the central person in the story and indicate the minimum probability of success that you would demand before recommending the alternative that might have the more desirable outcome. You should read the stories individually, come to some decision on your own, and then reach a common decision between the two of you. Any questions? I will be in another room but I'll be able to observe you by means of closed circuit TV. So, if you have any problems make it known and I'll come back.

The "warm-up" risky situation discussed by the confederates on tape coincided with the practice rating of the subject. The hypothetical situation discussed concerned a man with a severe heart ailment who must seriously curtail his customary way of life unless he undergoes a delicate medical operation that could either cure him completely or prove fatal.

The subject was given two practice ratings, checked by the experimenter to ensure that the rating system was understood and used correctly. The "practice run" also established whether the manipulation was credible. Satisfied that the procedure was without difficulty, the experimenter went back to his booth, where the buzzer and controls for the videotape monitors were located, and began the second rating session. Before leaving the subject he mumbled something about having to go check on the "other subjects" (confederates).

The second rating sequence was developed around the situation involving an electrical engineer who might either stick with his present job at a modest but adequate salary or take a new job offering con-

siderably more money but no long-term security. The confederates settled into the cooperative decision-making task. (For rating purposes, two cards labeled "A" and "B" were on the table next to the harm-doer and victim, respectively.) The following excerpts from the dialogue reflect the growing tension leading up to the ambiguous shoving event:

B: Aw come on! You're saying that he should take the job when it's likely that the new business will not survive. At least he can count on his company lasting. He may never be rich but at least he will be able to support his family and he can count on retiring with some money.

A: You must be crazy! . . . a better pension plan than his present firm.

B: That's not true! All companies have something like a cost of living increase built into their pay scales.

A: Well, we don't know. You're just guessing at that. It's not in this story. The real point is whether he is willing to stay in some stagnant position or take a little risk and get ahead.

B: But you're forgetting that the company will probably fold.

A: You're just too damn conservative. With an attitude like that you'll never get ahead.

B: What do you mean by that?

The dialogue became more heated leading to B shoving A. At that point the subject was signaled to rate the interaction. This behavior-rating sequence constituted the major dependent variable. Almost immediately after the shove sequence and signal by the experimenter, the subject's monitor was turned off, and the experimenter noisily hurried down the hall to the taping room as if something was wrong, returning shortly thereafter to the subject's booth mumbling audibly about not expecting them (the confederates) to get so heated up. The experimenter then collected the six completed rating forms, and asked the subject to complete a short questionnaire before leaving.

Dependent Measure Instructions

The rating system employed as the dependent measure was a simplified version of the Interaction Process Analysis (IPA; Bales, 1970). The IPA was simplified by reducing the number of rating categories and requiring only periodic, not continuous, ratings of the interaction under consideration.

The detailed instructions written on the IPA scoring pad with which the subject was made familiar read as follows:

The observer should make one rating each time he is given a signal by the group supervisor or experimental technician. Upon hearing the signal the observer should rate the behavior which took place immediately prior to the signal. In making the rating the observer should do, *in order*, the following things: (1) decide which person (A or B) was emitting the behavior to be rated and then

circle either A or B at the top of the rating sheet; (2) decide into which of the 10 major categories the behavior falls and circle the number of that major category; (3) indicate whether the behavior was of relatively low intensity or high intensity by making a check mark on the scale to the right of the major category being used; (4) fill out the three subscales under the major category being used. As soon as all these steps have been completed, turn over the filled out rating sheet and get ready for the next rating signal. If the behavior to be rated does not fall into one of the ten categories provided, circle #11 (Uncodable) and briefly describe the behavior. *Use this category, however, only as a very last resort.* It is important to note that each rating should be done on a separate sheet and that only one person (either A or B) and only one category of behavior (one of the ten categories) are scored on each rating. Also, a rating is to be done only when the signal is given.

The 10 major categories were *dramatizes, gives information, gives opinion, gives suggestion, asks for information, asks for opinion, asks for suggestion, playing around, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior*, followed by an 8-point intensity scale. Each major category was followed by three 8-point subscales appropriately labeled as follows: provoked-unprovoked, intentional-unintentional, and consequential-trivial in the case of the aggressive behavior and violent behavior major categories; emotional-calm, enthusiastic-unenthusiastic, and show-off-modest for the dramatizes and playing around categories; tactful-tactless, intelligent-unintelligent, and autocratic-democratic for the major categories of gives information, gives opinion, and gives suggestion; inhibited-uninhibited, demanding-undemanding, and soft-loud for the major categories of asks for information, asks for opinion, and asks for suggestion.

The final questionnaire contained items relevant to the attribution process used by the subject to make his final rating. The experimenter introduced the questionnaire by stating

Pick out one sequence of behavior which left an impression on you and answer the questions on the form as they pertain to that interaction. Better yet, why don't you use the last sequence of behavior which you rated [reminding the subjects of the altercation in which B pushed A].

The experimenter gave the impression that any behavioral sequence would do but had decided on the spur of the moment that the final interaction rating would be perfect. These questions were answered on a 9-point scale and concerned (a) the extent to which the observed behavior of A or B should be attributed to situational forces, (b) the extent to which the behavior of A or B should be attributed to him personally (person), (c) the extent to which it should be attributed to the issue discussed (stimulus), and (d) other (some combination of a and/or b and/or c).

After completing the final questionnaire, the subject

was completely debriefed as to the purpose of the experiment. All of the deceptions were carefully explained and their reasons were outlined. The debriefing attested to the effectiveness of the manipulations to the extent that the subject thought he was indeed part of a triad and was privy to an ongoing interaction rather than a previously taped sequence of behavior.

Quality of the Stimulus Tapes

Forty students from University High School served as the treatment blind judges. They were exposed to the 12 stimulus tapes and asked to rate them. The following instructional rationale was offered:

It has been found that many people use the following characteristics in describing other people. Each characteristic is represented graphically by a scale which runs continuously from one labeled extreme to the other with varying degrees being indicated by numbers. Please indicate the location on the scale that you believe best described one of the subjects you have just observed by *circling the appropriate number*. Do not restrict yourself to a particular range on the scale, feel free to place your responses anywhere on the scale. You should rate the subject on *each* scale; *do not skip any*. Also you should indicate how certain you are of the accuracy of each of your ratings by circling one of the numbers on the certainty scale to the right of the scale containing the adjective. Each subject should be rated separately and two sets of scales are included for this purpose.

The 9-point bipolar scales included sensitive to others-insensitive to others, critical of others-tolerant of others, competent-incompetent, nonaggressive-aggressive, honest-dishonest, likable-not likable, competitive-cooperative, moral-immoral, individualist-conformist, hostile-affectionate, unfair-fair, unintelligent-intelligent, and liberal-conservative. Included with each scale were 4-point certainty ratings.

Analysis of the treatment-blind judges' ratings of the black confederate and white confederate for each stimulus tape revealed no between-condition differences. If qualitative biases existed, particularly at the point in the tape of the altercation, the minimum expectation would be differences in the nonaggressive-aggressive ratings. Further, no between-confederate differences were found. These findings are of considerable validation value and support the claim that the results to be reported are due to differential social perception.

RESULTS

Of the initial 104 subjects, 3 left their observation booth, and 5 misunderstood the experimental instructions and filled out the ratings incorrectly. Consequently, the analysis reported below represents the responses of 96 subjects, evenly distributed across conditions.

TABLE 1
MAJOR CATEGORY FREQUENCIES BY HARM-DOER/VICTIM RACE PAIRINGS

Major category	Harm-doer/Victim pairings											
	Black-Black		White-White		Black-White				White-Black			
	B ₁ -B ₂	B ₂ -B ₁	W ₁ -W ₂	W ₂ -W ₁	B ₁ -W ₁	B ₁ -W ₂	B ₂ -W ₁	B ₂ -W ₂	W ₁ -B ₁	W ₁ -B ₂	W ₂ -B ₁	W ₂ -B ₂
Playing around	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	2
Dramatizes	1	0	4	3	0	0	0	2	4	2	3	3
Aggressive behavior	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	3
Violent behavior	5	6	0	2	7	6	6	5	1	1	2	0

Note. B₁ = Black Confederate Number 1; B₂ = Black Confederate Number 2; W₁ = White Confederate Number 1; W₂ = White Confederate Number 2.

The necessity for two sets of confederates to control for qualitative differences in the stimulus tapes formed a rather complex design for analysis purposes. Because a confederate could not be paired with himself, four empty cells were left, yielding 12 essential comparison groups.

The results of this experiment were partitioned in several different ways. Table 1 presents the subject's major category choice for all harm-doer/victim stimulus combinations for the sixth rating session, in which the provocation occurred. These data offer the most cogent evidence of the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation. That is, the stimulus event for the sixth rating session generated differential labels for the stimulus event, and these labels were distributed across appropriate major categories (i.e., playing around, dramatizes, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior).

These gross frequency data of Table 1 are of considerable summary importance. Examining the frequencies for the black-protagonist/white-victim conditions, 75% of the subjects chose the violent behavior major category, $\chi^2(1) = 26.67$, $p < .01$, whereas when the protagonist was white and the victim was black, the behavior was labeled violent by 17%, $\chi^2(1) = 1.61$, ns , of the subjects. Only 6% of the subjects perceived the behavior to be appropriately described by major categories of playing around or dramatizing when the perpetrator was black and victim white, compared with 42% in the white-harm-doer/black-victim conditions. Further analysis of the major category choice shows that white-protagonist/white-victim conditions are dras-

tically different from the black-protagonist/black-victim condition. The within-group (black-black) stimulus condition was labeled by 69%, $\chi^2(1) = 8.05$, $p < .01$, of the subjects as violent compared with 13%, $\chi^2(1) = .49$, ns , in the white-white conditions. This analysis from Table 1 suggests that the subject's perceptual threshold for labeling a behavior as violent descended along the following stimulus-condition continuum: black-white > black-black > white-black > white-white (protagonist-victim).

The scores of combined intensity ratings of major categories and subscales served as the dependent measure for the Race of Harm-doer \times Race of Victim analysis of variance. As expected, there were substantial effects due to race of harm-doer, $F(3, 80) = 28.23$, $p < .01$, race of victim, $F(3, 80) = 7.05$, $p < .01$, and a significant interaction, $F(9, 80) = 14.13$, $p < .01$. Individual comparisons performed on the data showed that subjects rated the stimulus behavior as more severe when perpetrated by a black against a white than subjects in the white harm-doer and black victim conditions ($p < .01$). In fact, subjects indicated that the black-protagonist/black-victim behavior was more virulent than the white-harm-doer/white-victim conditions ($p < .01$). In all conditions where the white confederate is the harm-doer, the intensity of the same act performed by blacks became diluted descriptively to that of a little "horseplay."

Attributional Behavior

Analyses of variance performed on the subject's attributions to causes for the "provocation" behavior, which occurred in the sixth

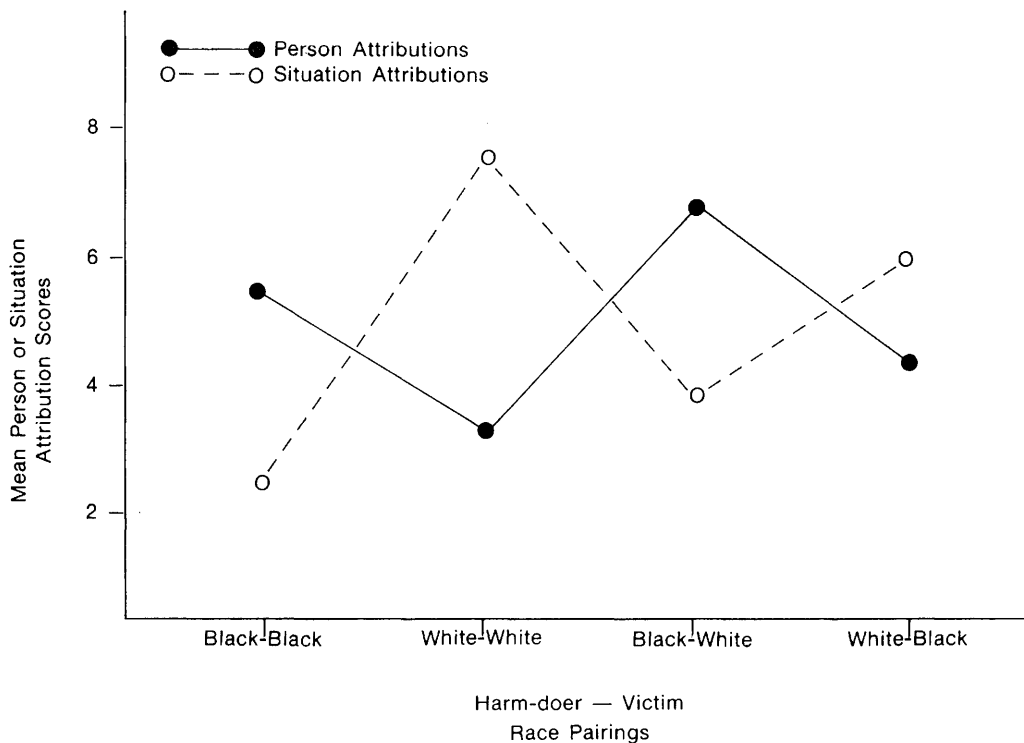


FIGURE 1. Means for the measures of attribution to person and situation.

rating session, revealed that the race of harm-doer versus race of victim independent variables had marked effects on causal attributions.

The dependent variable, something about the situation caused the behavior (of the protagonist), yielded main effects of race of harm-doer, $F(3, 18) = 15.13$, $p < .01$, and race of victim, $F(3, 80) = 4.57$, $p < .01$, and a significant interaction, $F(9, 80) = 12.72$, $p < .01$.

Comparisons between the mean data, using the studentized range statistic, showed that the subjects in the white-harm-doer/black-victim conditions and white-harm-doer/white-victim conditions differed significantly from the other conditions. The preference for the situation attribution causal mode was not evident in attributions to stimulus.

Figure 1 shows that in the conditions where the harm-doer was black, there was a dramatic reversal in the attributional behavior from the white harm-doer conditions. Person attributions were the causal locus, demonstrated by significant main effects of race of harm-doer,

$F(3, 80) = 8.89$, $p < .01$, and race of victim, $F(3, 80) = 11.72$, $p < .01$. The significant interaction, $F(9, 80) = 6.39$, $p < .01$, shows the confluence of race of harm-doer and victim in determining attributional behavior.

DISCUSSION

The findings are disquieting, though they confirm intuitions and social indicators. White university subjects perceived the "somewhat ambiguous," certainly less than blatant shove as violent (and labeled it thusly) for all conditions in which the black was the harm-doer, to a greater extent when the victim is white, but also when the victim was another black. Aggressive behavior, dramatizing, playing around, and so on (any category but violent behavior) were the labels applied when the harm-doer was white, even if the victim was a black or another white. Support was found for the hypothesis that the threshold for labeling an act as violent is lower when viewing a black committing the same act. The data statistically described in several different ways

converge on the following perceptual threshold order (harm-doer listed first): black-white > black-black > white-black > white-white.

If this finding is so readily available for college subjects, its generalizability to other subject populations can be expected to be even more dramatic. One may be tempted to ask, in the real world where violence is a fact of life, have blacks been the victims of mislabeling or errors, in cases where there was a "reasonable doubt" (i.e., low perceptual threshold acts)? In court testimonies, this could have grave consequences.

In the present experiment the race of the harm-doer and the race of the victim were systematically varied, but all other aspects of the situation were constants. Subsequent experiments using the same basic paradigm need to explore the importance of other factors. The most obvious such factor is the *nature of the harm* inflicted. The harmful act in the present experiment is just one shove or push. This is a moderate degree of physical harm. It would be of interest to focus on the effects of (a) different *types* of harm and (b) varying *degrees* of harm. An example of the former type of research is suggested by the following question: Does the differential perception of violence as a function of race of the protagonists apply only to physical harm, or is the same effect produced when the harmful act is verbal (i.e., character assassination)? The second type of research would involve systematically varying the degree of harm inflicted as, for example, in contrasting a single shove or push with two or three punches which cause the victim to fall to the floor. As the act becomes more extreme, it also becomes more definite and there is less possibility that attitudes and values can shape its perception and evaluation. However, there is some evidence that as the extent of harm increases, the need to somehow explain the harm also increases (Berscheid & Walster, 1969). This may lead to a heightened differential perception of violence as a function of race of the harm-doer. What this discussion intends is to point out the power of the experimental paradigm (bottling of prejudice or stereotyping in the laboratory).

The results of the attribution data are even

more disquieting. In accord with current literature (Jones & Nisbett, 1971) it was expected that the observer subjects would tend to attribute the violent behavior in all harm-doer conditions to stable personal dispositions of the actor. When the harm-doer was black, dispositional attributions were indeed made. However, when the harm-doer was white, observer subjects preferred to see the act as under external constraints. How can this be explained? Jones and Nisbett (1971) suggest that the illusion that our reactions are perceptions is sustained in part by the apparent consensus accompanying most of our reactions, a consensus that may rest as much on transmitted cultural norms as on the compelling features of objective "reality." This comment needs no amplification.

It would appear that the black man is imbued (stereotyped, categorized, etc.) with such salient personality properties (e.g., given to violence) that these traits tend to engulf the field rather than be confined to their proper position, the interpretation of which requires additional data about the situation. Dispositions then are treated as causal and are "packaged." Cronbach (1955) and Mischel (1968) recently spoke of these packages as an *implicit personality theory*, an intuition about how traits interact. These theories are thought to be relatively consistent across different stimulus persons as well as different observers. Why, however, does the observer subject go out of his way to attribute away from stable dispositions in the white harm-doer conditions? These are the data that contradict and are inexplicable. However we approach this puzzle, it remains an unpromising commentary.

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- The Effects of Helping a Less Competent Member of a Cooperating Interracial Group on the Development of Interpersonal Attraction. Fletcher A. Blanchard and Stuart W. Cook (I.B.S. Building #5, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80302).
- A Test of the Bargaining Theory of Coalition Formation in Four-Person Groups. H. Andrew Michener (Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706), John A. Fleishman, and Jerry J. Vaske.
- Sharing Reinforcement Contingencies with a Model: A Social-Learning Analysis of Similarity Effects in Imitation Research. Kay Bussey and David G. Perry (Department of Psychology, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia 4067).
- Variables Related to Women's Somatic Preferences of the Male and Female Body. Sally Bell Beck (Department of Psychology, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208), Christine Ward-Hull, and Paul M. McLearn.
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- Effect of Incentives and Education on Resource Conservation Decisions in a Simulated Commons Dilemma. Paul C. Stern (Elmira College, Box 21, Elmira, New York 14901).