What is the Problem? Prejudice as an Attitude-in-Context

Alice H. Eagly

Northwestern University

Amanda B. Diekman

Miami University

Alice Eagly
Northwestern University
Department of Psychology
2029 Sheridan Road
Evanston IL 60208
(847) 467-5026
Fax (253) 681-8041
Email: eagly@northwestern.edu

Amanda Diekman
Miami University
Department of Psychology
Oxford OH 45056
513-529-8014
Fax 513-529-2420
Email diekmaa@muohio.edu

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The study of prejudice owes a great debt to Gordon Allport, who insightfully outlined the field's major issues in 1954. Although Allport's definition of prejudice (Chapter 1, What is the Problem?) as "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization" (1954/1979, p. 9) drew attention to troubling social problems, it did not account for the complexities of the prejudices that social scientists have since contemplated. The particular complexity that we analyze first in this chapter is that many groups that experience discrimination are not the targets of generalized negative attitudes—the "antipathy" of Allport's definition. Our second focus is accuracy—the "faulty generalization" of Allport's definition; we propose a dialectical principle whereby the stereotypes that underlie prejudice may typically be accurate at the group level but inaccurate in relation to individuals in the role-incongruent contexts that elicit prejudiced actions. Finally, we will show that prejudices are not necessarily inflexible but depend fundamentally on social context and slowly yield to changes in groups' positioning in the social structure.

Our expanded treatment of prejudice rests upon the simple idea of role incongruity—that prejudice often results from the mismatch between beliefs about the attributes typically possessed by members of a social group (that is, their stereotype) and beliefs about the attributes that facilitate success in valued social roles. In this analysis, a member of a group whose stereotypical attributes are thought to facilitate performance in a role is ordinarily preferred over a member of a group whose stereotypical attributes are thought to impede performance, even in the absence of objective differences between the two individuals. Such incongruity between stereotypical characteristics and social roles does not necessarily lead to a generalized hostile attitude toward the mismatched individual but to a decline in evaluation relative to a matched individual in the context of the particular role.

Allport's Views on "The Nature of Prejudice"

Allport defined the target of prejudice as a social group in general – for example, Jews, African Americans, Latinos, Japanese, and poor people. His emphasis on negativity was in part a byproduct of the extreme prejudices, such as those that produced the Holocaust and lynchings, to which he paid the most attention. Allport's (1954/1979) discussion focused on ethnic and religious prejudice, primarily racism and anti-Semitism. Antipathy toward a group as a whole (and its individual members) thus formed the core of Allport's definition of prejudice. In contrast, he ignored (with one brief exception, pp. 33-34) a prejudice that targets about half the population, namely sexism, whose nature poses a critical challenge to defining prejudice as an antipathy.

Allport further included inaccurate perception as one of the defining elements of both prejudice and stereotypes. Although he acknowledged that a "kernel of truth" may exist (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 190), prejudice in Allport's treatment is based on a "faulty and inflexible generalization" (p. 9). To elaborate this point, he described an anthropologist who studied a tribe of Native Americans but did not allow his children to mingle with the children of the tribe. Because this restriction was based on the anthropologist's accurate perception that many people in the tribal village suffered from tuberculosis, he concluded that the anthropologist was not prejudiced but acted upon "rational and realistic grounds" (p. 4).

Although antipathy became an enduring (if problematic) fixture of definitions of prejudice subsequent to Allport's book, many theorists dropped the requirement that the beliefs about target groups are necessarily inaccurate, paralleling the removal of inaccuracy from most definitions of stereotype (see Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). The resulting minimalist definition of prejudice as an overall negative attitude toward a group then became widely accepted in social psychology (e.g., Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993). Removal of the accuracy criterion from the definition of

prejudice opened the way to a more sophisticated analysis of accuracy and inaccuracy in stereotyping and prejudice (Judd & Park, this volume).

Developments Since Allport: Evidence of Prejudice in the Absence of Negativity

Late 20th century research made clear that some prejudices are not marked by negative attitudes. Empirical work not only documented subtle, "modern" prejudices toward many racial and ethnic minorities, but also revealed positive attitudes toward women, who are better liked even if less respected than men. These prejudices are ambivalent, not uniformly hostile.

Research on subtle, modern prejudices began with recognition of a change over time in the attitudes that many Whites held toward Blacks in the United States. Representative national surveys documented a dramatic change from endorsement of racial segregation, discrimination, and the innate inferiority of Blacks to rejection of these practices and ideas (see Sears, this volume). However, Whites nonetheless often endorse beliefs denying that Blacks' social and economic problems can be ascribed to external factors such as job discrimination and ascribe them, implicitly or explicitly, to internal factors such as lack of motivation. Although such ideas have unfavorable implications for disadvantaged groups, they do not necessarily imply a generalized antipathy. This decrease in overall negativity also has appeared in research on various ethnic and national stereotypes held by students in the United States (Madon et al., 2001) and Europe (Meertens & Pettigrew, 1997).

Challenges to Allport's antipathy definition of prejudice also emerged from work on intergroup relations. Brewer (1999) argued that out-groups do not typically elicit strong negative evaluation but merely fail to elicit positive evaluation. In her view, much intergroup discrimination arises not from hostility toward out-group members, but from identification with one's in-group, which fosters preferential treatment of in-group members (Mummendey, et al., 1992; see also chapters by Brown & Zagefka and by Gaertner & Dovidio in this volume).

Jackman (this volume) goes further, arguing that paternalism, which disguises dominance with an overlay of affection toward subordinates, is the preferred mode by which dominants maintain their advantages and undermine subordinates' resistance.

The clearest challenge to the traditional analysis of prejudice derives from research on sexism, a topic that Allport neglected. Sexism researchers have since documented that women elicit predominantly positive sentiments but are often targets of prejudice. Initial explanations for sex discrimination rested upon the belief that attitudes toward women were negative (see Rudman, this volume), but empirical examination of evaluations of women and men as social groups showed positive attitudes toward women (see review by Eagly & Mladinic, 1994), deriving especially from the communal qualities that people associate with women (e.g., warm, friendly, sensitive). The evaluative edge of women over men appears on standard attitude measures, such as evaluative thermometer ratings or semantic differential ratings of women as a social group, and has been dubbed the *women-are-wonderful effect* (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). These findings are compatible with Glick and Fiske's (1996) demonstrations that people often hold benevolently sexist beliefs that describe women favorably in the implicit context of the traditional female roles that are inherent in patriarchal arrangements. Even though Allport acknowledged that dictionary definitions recognize positive as well as negative prejudice (p. 6), he disallowed positive sentiments as relevant to his understanding of prejudice and confined his analysis to prejudice as antipathy.

Evidence from nonobvious methodologies dispels concerns that respondents' positive evaluations of women are contaminated by social desirability or political correctness. Implicit attitudinal measures, such as the Implicit Association Test, assess the strength of association between concepts and positive or negative evaluation without participant awareness (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Research using this method has also obtained more positive

evaluation of women than men (Rudman, this volume). Another nonobvious method of assessing gender prejudice involves disguising the purpose of participants' evaluations. In the Goldberg Paradigm (1968), participants evaluate a product–such as an article or a résumé–ascribed to a person who is identified by a male or female first name. Participants are unaware that the purpose is to detect gender prejudice because they receive only one set of materials in the typical between-subjects design. In a meta-analysis of 123 such studies, only a very slight bias against women was detected when the findings were summarized across evaluations of many types of materials (Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989), and this bias disappears when potential confounding factors (such as associations with specific male and female names; Kasof, 1993) are considered. Although these studies do show systematic biases under certain, specified condition, which we discuss later, the Goldberg Paradigm has *not* demonstrated any *overall* tendency to devalue women or their work And, as we have already indicated, other paradigms often reveal a bias in favor of women. Thus, the lack of evidence for overall negative evaluations of women as a social group does not appear to be an artifact of respondents' efforts to appear unprejudiced.

The weakness of contemporary evidence that prejudice toward ethnic minorities or women is predominantly negative does not indicate that prejudice has disappeared. For example, economists continue to document a wage gap between women and men that is in part discriminatory (e.g., Lips, 2003), and psychologists provide evidence that women, more frequently than men, are targets of sexual harassment in the workplace (e.g., Fitzgerald, 1993). Daily diary studies reveal that women report being the targets of sexist incidents much more than men do (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). Likewise, African American students report frequent experiences of discriminatory behavior (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003). Prejudicial phenomena thus appear to be alive and well, despite the lack of evidence that attitudes toward these groups conform to textbook definitions of prejudice.

A New Framework: Prejudice at the Intersection of Stereotypes and Social Roles

The best way to understand the nature of prejudice is to take both the structure of the social environment and the psychological structure of the individual into account. This does not constitute a complete departure from Allport's (1954/1979) views because he allowed for sociocultural conditions as moderators of prejudice. For example, in Chapter 14 he considered "sociocultural laws of prejudice" (pp. 211-213), such as how rapid social change fosters prejudice. Despite these insights, Allport did not appreciate the fundamental sense in which prejudice relies on discordance between the qualities ascribed to a group and the qualities believed to be essential for carrying out available social roles.

Our framework thus retains Allport's emphasis on feelings and beliefs about a social group but also emphasizes the social structural position of targeted groups. We argue that the potential for prejudice exists when social perceivers hold a stereotype about a social group that is inconsistent with the attributes that are believed to be required for success in certain classes of social roles. We reject Allport's (1954/1979) prescription that a stereotype must generally be an "exaggerated belief associated with a category" (p. 191). Regardless of the accuracy of the consensual beliefs held about a social group, prejudice consists of a lowering of the evaluation of members of the stereotyped group as occupants or potential occupants of an incongruent role, compared with the evaluation of members of groups for whom the role is congruent. This evaluative decline can occur regardless of whether or not the targeted *individual* fits the stereotype.

In the face of role incongruity, perceivers may suspect that a group member does not possess the attributes required for success in the role, regardless of his or her actual insufficiency. Even if the group stereotype is accurate on the whole, these beliefs are often misapplied to an individual group member. This result constitutes prejudice in the form of a less

favorable attitude-in-context toward persons who are stereotypically mismatched with the requirements of a role, compared with attitudes toward those who are matched. This approach incorporates Allport's view (1954/1979) that prejudice occurs when people are placed at some disadvantage that is not warranted by their individual actions or qualifications—"thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant" (p. 6). However, in contrast to Allport's understanding, this prejudicially lowered evaluation refers not to the overall attitude toward the group, but to attitudes toward individual group members in role-incongruent contexts. This attitude can be expressed through downward shifts in all three of the modes in which attitudes are generally expressed (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), specifically (a) beliefs, (b) emotions, and (c) discriminatory behaviors.

Incongruities between group members' stereotypic attributes and the requirements of roles are obviously important for workplace evaluations. Heilman's (1983) *lack-of-fit model* suggests that perceived inconsistencies between workplace roles and the attributes ascribed to an individual decrease performance expectations. In Heilman's approach, gender stereotypes affect perceptions of individuals' attributes, producing perceived lack of fit. Eagly and Karau (2002) argue that female leaders often suffer from incongruity between their leadership role and gender role, creating prejudice against them.

The unfavorable attitudinal shift that follows from role incongruity will not necessarily produce a negative attitude-in-context. If a role has high status, the attitude toward the group members as role occupants probably would not be negative but merely less positive than the corresponding attitude toward members of the groups who have historically occupied the role. For example, consider the role incongruity that an African American physician or dentist might encounter, perhaps being thought to have less technical competence than his or her European American counterpart. Attitudes toward such a medical practitioner are unlikely to be negative

because such roles have considerable prestige. Rather, African American physicians and dentists might be evaluated favorably, but less favorably than their European American counterparts. Discriminatory behavior (e.g., reluctance to become a patient of an African American) is a likely outcome. It is this lowering of the evaluation of members of the target group because of their group membership that constitutes role incongruity prejudice.

This decline in evaluation can take place toward members of groups whose overall stereotypes are predominantly negative, positive, or ambivalent. Positive stereotypical attributes–for example, the niceness ascribed to women–become a liability in some social roles. When a generally positive attribute such as niceness is mismatched to role requirements, perceivers suspect that this attribute would foster behavior inappropriate to the role. For example, a female prosecuting attorney may be devalued because her presumed niceness jeopardizes her success as a litigator. Similarly, positive qualities commonly ascribed to men, such as independence and assertiveness, can block their access to caretaking roles requiring interpersonally sensitive and nurturant qualities (see also Jackman, this volume; Rudman, this volume).

Even unfavorably evaluated qualities, such as extremely dominant behavior, can be positively evaluated if they are considered within a specific role context in which they are useful, such as engaging in competitive activity (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2004a). As these examples show, personal qualities that are positive in the abstract can take on less positive or even negative connotations in the context of incongruent roles, and qualities that are negative in the abstract can take on less negative or even positive connotations.

Prejudice as Contextual

Consistent with this analysis, variations in role requirements frame prejudices. Allport (1954/1979) recognized the contextual quality of prejudice with examples of the "curious patterns" (p. 55) of discrimination such as allowing "a Negro to work in my kitchen but not a

Jew" whereas "a Jew but not a Negro may sit in my parlor" (p. 55). However, he did not provide

an abstract analysis of this contextualism or recognize its generality. This generality has become

fully apparent in contemporary research. For example, in a meta-analysis of Goldberg Paradigm

experiments, more substantial bias was present when women were evaluated in a masculine or

neutral domain rather than a feminine domain (Swim et al., 1989). Similarly, a meta-analysis of

Goldberg Paradigm studies of leadership behavior showed that women are more devalued,

compared with equivalent men, when occupying male-dominated roles that are presumably

incongruent for women (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Organizational research has

confirmed that women who enter male-dominated work settings often receive hostile reactions

(e.g., Collinson, Knights, & Collinson, 1990), which can include sexual harassment (Fitzgerald,

1993). Also, gay men are particularly at risk for prejudiced reactions in roles to which they are

stereotypically mismatched—for example, military service (Segal, Gade, & Johnson, 1993). Gay

men's relatively effeminate image is incongruent with the tough, masculine role that military

organizations construct for soldiers (Goldstein, 2001).

Because prejudice exists at the intersection of group stereotypes and the requirements of

social roles, it is fundamentally responsive to social context (Blair, 2002). Prejudice is

nonrandom, however, because it is predictable from the perceived requirements of social roles.

Even though perceivers possess overall, abstract evaluations of social groups, evaluations of

target group members in particular situations are emergent attitudes that depend upon the

perceived congruity versus incongruity of the attributes attached to the individual's group and to

the role in question. This approach is consistent with the attitudes-as-constructions position often

advocated by attitude researchers (e.g., Schwarz, 2000; Wilson & Hodges, 1992).

Depending on role context, members of advantaged groups (e.g., men, Whites,

heterosexuals) can also be targets of prejudice when their stereotypical attributes are mismatched

to role requirements. The most extensive meta-analysis of the subset of Goldberg studies

presenting job résumés or applications for evaluation showed precisely this effect: Women were

preferred over equivalent men for jobs rated as female sex-typed, and men over equivalent

women for jobs rated as male sex-typed (Davison & Burke, 2000). Stereotypical mismatch to the

requirements of social roles can diminish evaluations of members of advantaged groups.

However, dominant group members are unlikely to pursue roles that offer lesser rewards and

status. Therefore, few men attempt to enter female-dominated roles and few Whites attempt to

enter minority-dominated roles.

Prejudice as Varying in Degree

The intensity of prejudicial reactions depends on the alignment between stereotypes and

role requirements. Because both stereotypes of groups and qualities required by social roles

typically encompass a set of attributes, stereotype-role inconsistency can range from nonexistent

to mild, moderate, and extreme. For example, the physician role is only moderately inconsistent

with the female gender role because it requires not only scientific competence but also

communal qualities of sensitivity and nurturance (e.g., Fennema, Meyer, & Owen, 1990).

Therefore, women match the physician role on communal qualities but are mismatched on many

other qualities, resulting in more moderate prejudice against female physicians than female

soldiers or firefighters, jobs that entail a more extreme mismatch.

Moderate mismatches may produce subtle prejudice that channels group members into

certain role subtypes. Among U.S. physicians, 47% of women but only 30% of men specialize in

primary care, a speciality that requires communal traits (American Medical Association, 2000).

The subset of physician roles that emphasize matched qualities lessen the potential for

discrimination because they reduce the role incongruity (More & Greer, 2000). In effect, pre-

emptive discrimination may occur because group members are channeled toward roles that

appear to be congruous with their group's stereotypical traits. This channeling is unlikely to be recognized as prejudicial because people regard themselves as helping others to seek out roles for which they are most suited.

Prejudice Made Apparent by Socioeconomic Change

When social, political, or economic circumstances change, group members may attempt to gain access to roles they have not previously occupied. For example, the decline of birth rates in industrialized countries (United Nations, 2001) and the mechanization and commercialization of domestic labor has changed the status of women. Similarly, African Americans' status changed when they migrated from the rural South to the urban North in the United States (Lemann, 1991). As large numbers of group members attempt to move into nontraditional roles, prejudice becomes a recognized social issue. Group members are thought to fit their traditional niches—that is, to have special qualities that enable them to do the work their group has always done. For example, 44% of survey respondents in the United States believed that it would be "worse for society" if most family providers were women and most of their spouses stayed home to raise children (Roper Center, 2000), presumably because of widely held beliefs that women are better suited to childrearing than men are.

The comfortable perceived fit between people's characteristics and their existing social roles becomes problematic when group members seek to change their roles; they are marked by their old roles, both in how they are perceived but also to some extent in terms of their actual characteristics due to socialization processes that have fit them to their typical roles. It is in this sense that stereotypes gain accuracy (e.g., Hall & Carter, 1999) and thereby possess considerable power to justify the existing social system (Jost & Hamilton, this volume) As Allport (1954/1979, p. 191) emphasized, stereotypes "justify (rationalize) our conduct" in relation to social groups. When group members try to move into different roles, they are thought to be

relatively unqualified. These newcomers encounter barriers preventing their entry into nontraditional roles and devaluation of their work in the new context, as demonstrated for women entering male-dominated leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The role-incongruity view of prejudice has a decidedly rational flavor: It is reasonable to think that groups of people who have long fulfilled certain roles and therefore been shaped by them (in terms of socialization and social learning) would tend to be less than prepared for roles with quite different demands. The unfairness derives from social perceivers' weighting of group membership and thus not fully crediting the individual qualifications that individual group members possess for the new roles. This unfairness arises from assimilating individuals to stereotypes, a common psychological process. Nonetheless, irrationality comes to the fore as this basically rational process becomes coopted by motivations. As Allport (1954/1979, Chapters 21-24) argued, persons with personality deficiencies arising from anxiety, guilt, frustration, and similar states may especially seize on arguments that characterize members of out-groups as inadequate and unqualified, weighing group membership especially heavily. Similarly, motivations to defend the privileges of one's own group may fuel especially stringent attention to role newcomers' possible lack of qualifications (Jackman, this volume). However, stereotypes are not invented from whole cloth to defend people from personal inadequacies or protect their own groups' privileges. Instead, the processes of role incongruity provide the basic material that then enables motivated reasoning in defense of oneself or one's group.

Prejudice becomes an acknowledged social problem when a substantial number of group members aspire to incongruent social roles. Both incongruity and entrenched defense of privilege lead attitudes toward the pathbreakers to be more negative than attitudes toward group members who remain in their accustomed roles, as illustrated by the less positive stereotype of feminists compared with housewives (e.g., Haddock & Zanna, 1994) and by national polls showing

unfavorable impressions of feminists (Huddy, Neely, & Lafay, 2000). In short, group members who try to move up in a social hierarchy into new roles become targets of prejudice. In contrast, group members who continue to accept their group's traditional roles, such as women in the domestic role and African Americans in service roles, may be generally appreciated, albeit with an approval that is tinged with paternalism (Jackman, this volume; Rudman, this volume).

This insight that prejudice becomes a social problem in context of group members' attempts to change their social roles is consistent with the specific content of instruments designed to assess modern prejudices. Typical items assess resistance to change. Consider the Modern Racism Scale item, "Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights" (McConahay et al., 1981, p. 568). Similarly, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), is built around the principle of resistance to change in women's roles. This instrument's negative dimension (*hostile sexism*) assesses unfavorable reactions to women in nontraditional roles, and its positive dimension (*benevolent sexism*) assesses favorable reactions to women in traditional roles.

Has Allport Been Supported? Prejudice as a Social Problem

The role incongruity analysis of prejudice encompasses Allport's emphasis on negative attitudes toward groups by acknowledging that the overall evaluative content of a group's stereotype can restrict the social roles for which group members are thought to be qualified. Social roles that offer prestige, status, income, love, and other outcomes will require many positive attributes; consequently, group stereotypes that are especially negative overall hinder access to a wide range of desirable roles because role-relevant positive attributes are absent from the stereotype.

Furthermore, the role incongruity framework is consistent with Allport's insight that in times of social stability, prejudice is latent in the beliefs and feelings toward social groups in that

it is unlikely to become an acknowledged social issue if most group members remain in traditional roles (see Allport's Chapter 14). Yet, our approach explains Allport's (1954/1979) insight that "heterogeneity and the urge toward upward mobility thus make for ferment in society and are likely to bring ethnic prejudice in their wake" (p. 224): Group members are perceived to be adapted to their accustomed social roles and therefore seem unqualified for new roles with different demands. The prejudice against these potential role occupants, however, goes unrecognized unless agitation for roles is at least moderately widespread. Therefore, in popular and social scientific discourse, "gender prejudice" is understood to refer to prejudice against women, many of whom have been striving to attain new roles. Similarly, as Blacks attempt to obtain roles that have been dominated by Whites, "racial prejudice" has come to refer to prejudice against Blacks. In this vein, Allport's focus on racism and omission of sexism ironically illustrate his point that prejudices, though they exist before they are "problematized," become recognized as prejudices only when social movements challenge the status quo. The Civil Rights movement was beginning to present this challenge when Allport was writing his book, whereas the feminist movement became culturally salient only later.

Although Allport recognized the role of social change in prejudice, his general definition of prejudice was tailored to understanding prejudicial reactions to generally devalued groups, whose members suffer from wide-ranging stereotype-role incongruity and have generally reduced access to rewarding roles. However, many, if not most, of the important phenomena of everyday prejudice lie outside of the boundaries of this framing of prejudice. Thus, Allport's definition of prejudice as generalized antipathy has proved to be too restrictive when a fuller range of prejudices is considered.

Future Directions: Accuracy and Change of Stereotypes

Although Allport viewed stereotype accuracy as a central issue, social scientists

subsequently placed less emphasis on it (though see Judd & Park, this volume). Stereotype

accuracy warrants reconsideration, in part because social change that has the potential to improve

the status of a social group raises questions about the accuracy of the stereotypes that have

characterized them. Members of groups seeking social change commonly attack their group's

stereotype because new roles require nonstereotypical characteristics. For example, the role of

business executive is thought to require male-stereotypical attributes, such as being action-

oriented, decisive, and competitive (e.g., Martell, Parker, Emrich, & Crawford, 1998). Thus,

stereotypes that portray women as deficient compared with men in these qualities restrict

women's opportunities; the content of such stereotypes is inconsistent with women's aspirations

for social and political equality. Therefore, eradicating these ideas became a major focus of the

feminist movement. Because activists rail against the stereotypes that have characterized their

groups on the basis of their traditional social position, theorists such as Allport have

overaccommodated by defining stereotypes as necessarily inaccurate.

The inaccuracy of stereotypes should be understood in the context of the group's

changing status. Group members who are in the forefront of desiring access to new roles are

ordinarily somewhat atypical of their group. They often have the characteristics needed for these

desired roles, but their competence is not acknowledged. In these contexts, Allport's focus on

stereotype inaccuracy makes sense. Social perceivers may be skeptical, for example, that a

woman is brave or strong enough to be a soldier or that a Mexican American is ambitious or

savvy enough to become a Fortune 500 Chief Executive Officer.

When a group's status is rising, considerable tension can derive from group members'

efforts to alter their characteristics as they prepare for and occupy new roles. For example, as

Blacks move into roles dominated by Whites, they are sometimes accused of having changed to

be like Whites and are labeled pejoratively by terms such as "Oreo" (e.g., Willie, 1975).

Similarly, in relation to women's entry into managerial roles, debates center on whether managerial women should accommodate to the masculine mode of managing or maintain a more feminine style that some argue is more effective (see Eagly & Karau, 2002).

This misapplication of stereotypes to group members who do not conform to their traditional stereotype has caused social scientists to regard prejudice as involving a rigid, inflexible belief system (e.g., Allport, 1954/1979). However, mounting evidence suggests that beliefs about groups can be quite malleable across different contexts. For example, different components of stereotypes and attitudes are activated when target group members are viewed in different contexts (e.g., African American individuals on a street corner versus in a church; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 2001).

The role incongruity perspective suggests that even apparently inflexible stereotypes eventually change to the extent that change occurs in the roles that group members typically occupy. As new roles become common, the qualities associated with them will be perceived as characteristic of group members. Work on *dynamic stereotypes* (Diekman & Eagly, 2000) has documented that people perceive women as increasing in masculine characteristics from the past to the present; these new beliefs correspond to women's shift into traditionally male-dominated roles. In addition, perceivers project women to continue to assume masculine characteristics in the future. Moreover, perceivers anticipate that the evaluation of women's male-stereotypical attributes will become more positive over time (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2004b). To the extent that newly occupied roles require different characteristics, those characteristics are expected to be valued in the new role occupants. Such beliefs about a group's future change can ease their transition into roles that were previously thought to be incongruous. A promising direction for future research is the systematic study of how stereotypes actually change over time and how this relates to change in groups' social position.

In conclusion, it is insufficient to view prejudice solely as a rigid, generalized negative attitude toward a group. Much everyday prejudice consists of the relative devaluation in specific role contexts of members of a particular group compared to equivalent members of other groups. In this analysis, prejudice remains attitudinal, as in Allport's definition, and therefore can be expressed in beliefs, affects, and behaviors. However, the devaluation—that is, the downward attitudinal shift—does not necessarily produce a negative attitude, nor is the overall context-free attitude toward the target group necessarily negative. The key eliciting condition for prejudice is the potential or actual entry of group members into social roles to which they are stereotypically mismatched. Given this mismatch, even those individuals who actually have the qualities demanded by the new social roles tend to be perceived as deficient in these qualities because they are stereotypically prejudged.

Social forces operate in concert with these psychological processes to perpetuate prejudice. When social hierarchies are stable, with groups occupying their accustomed social roles, the stereotypes that reflect these roles and the structural barriers that shore up these stereotypes crush most all aspirations for roles that are atypical of one's group (see Jackman, this volume). Without noticeable aspirations on the part of members of disadvantaged groups, prejudice is not generally acknowledged as a social problem. However, as subgroups from disadvantaged groups attempt to move upward into more advantaged roles and have at least a modicum of success, prejudice not only becomes more visible but also becomes acknowledged and debated. Prejudice against group members who enter nontraditional roles dissipates only after large numbers of newcomers prove their success in the new roles and thereby change the stereotype through which they are perceived. Nonetheless, consistent with Allport's views about the inflexibility of stereotypes, social perceivers do not readily relinquish their stereotypes in response to disconfirming information.

Despite this emphasis on inflexibility, Allport (1954/1979) also acknowledged groups' mobility and indeed argued that a social system itself can contribute to social change: "Our very gusto for change may bring it about, if anything can. A social system does not necessarily retard change; sometimes it encourages it" (p. 507). As a society becomes acclimated to new economic, political, social, and technological realities, new qualities are cultivated and valued in its citizens. As we have argued, new realities lead individuals to seek out new roles—often roles for which members of their group are thought to be unsuited. Group members who succeed in their new roles contribute to the redefinition of their group stereotype and a reduction of prejudice.

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