



Prejudice and traits of victimization among the Crow Indians : an experiment in behavior modification
by Helen Margaret Bybee Parks

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE in Elementary Education

Montana State University

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Abstract:

Minority group members are different from majority group members because they have erected more personality defenses in reaction to the assaults of prejudice and discrimination. These defenses, here called traits of victimization, often interfere with smooth interaction between the groups. The purpose of this study is to smooth interaction by reducing the traits of withdrawal, obsessive concern, and prejudice toward out-groups among Crow Indians.

The students were asked to view a series of televised lectures concerning prejudice. Their reactions (traits of victimization) were tested in situations which could elicit these traits. The results were analyzed in terms of simple percentages and Spearman's Coefficient of Rank-Order Correlation.

High withdrawal scores were unaffected; while low withdrawal scores increased significantly. The number of high scores on prejudice toward out-groups increased significantly. The same holds true for obsessive concern.

It was concluded that prejudice was exacerbated by discussion, if only momentarily. While designed to smooth interaction between groups, it appeared that presentation of the lectures increased friction.

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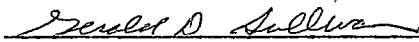
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	v
ABSTRACT	vii
<i>(Due to binding error placed after p.1</i>	
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. TRAITS DUE TO VICTIMIZATION AND THE CROW INDIAN.	9
III. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES	11
Major Hypothesis	11
Minor Hypothesis	11
IV. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	20
Interpretation of Data	29
V. CONCLUSIONS	58
APPENDIX A	62
APPENDIX B	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY	99

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Change in Withdrawal Scores Over Time	20
2. Ratio of Change	21
3. Difference in Amount of Change Between Control and Experimental Groups in Withdrawal.	21
4. Change in Prejudice Scores Over Time.	26
5. Ratio of Change	27
6. Difference in Amount of Change Between Control and Experimental Groups in Prejudice	27
7. Changes in Obsessive Concern Scores Over Time	32
8. Ratio of Change	33
9. Difference in Amount of Change Between Control and Experimental Groups in Obsessive Concern	33
10. Comparison of Test Forms According to Variables of Withdrawal, Prejudice, and Obsessive Concern	36
11. Relationship of Intropunitive to Extropunitive Traits . . .	39
12. Withdrawal Selection by Indians According to Sex.	41
13. Withdrawal Selection Over Total Time Period	42
14. Withdrawal Selection by Total Indian Population	45
15. Withdrawal Selection Over Total Time Period	46
16. Prejudice Selection by Indians According to Sex	49
17. Prejudice Selection Over Total Time Period.	50
18. Prejudice Selection by Total Indian Population.	51
19. Prejudice Selection Over Total Time Period.	52
20. Obsessive Concern Selection by Indians According to Sex . .	53

Table	Page
21. Obsessive Concern Selection Over Total Time Period.	54
22. Obsessive Concern Selection by Total Indian Population. . .	55
23. Obsessive Concern Selection Over Total Time Period.	56

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

These harsh but noble words were written by a black American facing a prejudiced society.

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
Oh kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!¹

His words reflect the frustration, despair, and pride he feels in dealing with his oppressors. Yet there is another reflection here, the reflection of the poet's own prejudice. This is but one of the complexities that makes dealing with prejudice for others. Some are purified by the fires of prejudice, others are burned and scarred. This then is the aim of the study, the elimination or modification of these reactions to prejudice.

Clarity of vision demands we see the world of the poem for what it is--a different world. The black world and the white world are not

¹Claude McKay, "If We Must Die," Harlem Shadows, Twayne Publishers, 1922.

ABSTRACT

Minority group members are different from majority group members because they have erected more personality defenses in reaction to the assaults of prejudice and discrimination. These defenses, here called traits of victimization, often interfere with smooth interaction between the groups. The purpose of this study is to smooth interaction by reducing the traits of withdrawal, obsessive concern, and prejudice toward out-groups among Crow Indians.

The students were asked to view a series of televised lectures concerning prejudice. Their reactions (traits of victimization) were tested in situations which could elicit these traits. The results were analyzed in terms of simple percentages and Spearman's Coefficient of Rank-Order Correlation.

High withdrawal cores were unaffected; while low withdrawal scores increased significantly. The number of high scores on prejudice toward out-groups increased significantly. The same holds true for obsessive concern.

It was concluded that prejudice was exacerbated by discussion, if only momentarily. While designed to smooth interaction between groups, it appeared that presentation of the lectures increased friction.

the same; this difference is not because of skin color but because of different experience and different perception. Perhaps the point can be made more clearly. If the black were accepted as absolutely equal tomorrow, he would not be a white man with a black skin. The poem shows this.

Although most of our examples in this discussion concern blacks, it should be made clear that we are talking about minorities in general, and that later we will relate this discussion to our particular experimental group, the Crow Indian.

The unbiased have long pleaded for an end to racial discrimination, saying that surface differences are irrelevant, that under the skin everyone is alike. Most of us agree that surface differences are irrelevant; and most of us agree that the basic motivations and need of humans, as separated from cultural needs and motivations, are alike. But somehow, as the poem shows us, we have a strange contradiction: Because all humans are fundamentally alike, minority group members will differ from majority group members.

The reasoning behind this argument is that a partial amount of the human personality is made up of experiences; that the minority group member's experiences in interpersonal relations is different from the majority group member's; that the human reacts defensively to protect himself from attack; and that the minority group member is the victim of a peculiar form of attack much more often than the majority group

member. Therefore, Minority Man is different from Majority Man because he has erected more personality defenses, having been subjected to more ego attack than the majority group member. Different does not mean better or worse; it means different. A concrete example will make this clearer.

With regard to the comparative intelligence of Negroes and whites (in the United States), there are consistent differences in scores on intelligence tests in favor of the whites, but the differences are not large; they are much smaller than the differences within each group, so that there is a great deal of overlap between the groups; differences diminish in size when socio-economic position or educational opportunity is equated; and they may reflect a bias in the testing instruments themselves. It is probably fair to summarize the matter by saying that most specialists in the subject believe that inherent or genetic differences in intelligence between races have not been established.²

The Negro, as far as we can tell, has the same potential as the white as far as intelligence is concerned; but he has not been allowed to develop this potential because of lower quality schools, unqualified teachers, lack of incentive due to discriminatory hiring practices. Yet the example clearly shows there is a difference between whites and blacks, and to ignore the difference is to ignore the opportunity to eliminate the difference.

²Bernard Berelson and Jary A. Steiner, Human Behavior (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), p. 495.

The same argument holds true for the personality of Minority Man or "marginal man".³ He has the same potential for a well-adjusted personality, but his personality is different from Majority Man's because of different cultural experiences and because of the prejudice and discrimination he has had to face most of his life. He has been assaulted economically, socially, and sometimes physically. He is regarded as inferior by great numbers of people in the majority group and also by people of other minority groups. It is surprising that he develops defenses against these assaults, defenses which make him different from Majority Man who has not faced these assaults? For example, one man becomes more tolerant, being constantly on guard against hurting others as he has been hurt; while another man walks about with his race constituting a "chip-on-his-shoulder".

...With some individuals the characteristic inner conflict is a minor problem; in such cases one cannot speak of a "personality type". It is only in those instances where the conflict is intense and of considerable duration that the personality is oriented around the conflict. The individual seems almost to be "obsessed" with his problem; his moods are re-shaped.⁴

These personality traits that the marginal man develops in reaction to prejudice are outlined in Gordon Allport's book The Nature of Prejudice. Allport calls these defenses "traits due to

³Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1961).

⁴Ibid., p. 139.

victimization."⁵ Here is a short description of each of the traits Allport catalogues.

Obsessive concern is a constant anxiety that insults and humiliation are about to occur (the chip-on-the-shoulder attitude).

Denial of membership means a person will not admit that he is a member of a minority group. This, of course, occurs usually when there is the possibility of hiding his membership.

Withdrawal and passivity are self explanatory--avoidance of contact, lack of reaction to insult, a kind of removal from the situation.

Clowning is a response in which a person makes himself the object of ridicule to protect himself. "Negro children sometimes learn to behave like silly beggars because in this way they receive good-natured (if patronizing) attention and a few pennies."⁶

Strengthening of in-group ties is a special cohesiveness between members of the minority group caused by outside pressures and by their own natural desire for normal social outlets.

Slyness and cunning are two of the least desirable defense mechanisms. They are based upon a double standard. "One is expected

⁵Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958), p. 144.

⁶Ibid., p. 144

to deal more fairly with one's own kind than with out-groups."⁷ An example of this would be an Indian's buying a car from someone off the reservation on credit, then driving the car only on the reservation and refusing to pay for it. The seller has no recourse.

Self-hate is perhaps the saddest trait a minority group member may acquire. He assumes the majority group's judgment of him is correct.

Agression against own group is where Minority Man may look down upon members of his own group as being inferior because of darker skin color, poorer English, etc.

Prejudice toward out-groups is exactly what it says--members of one minority group look down upon members of another minority group, regarding them as inferior and as objects of disgust.

Sympathy, mentioned before, is great tolerance for others and an understanding of others' problems.

Militancy is the most natural reaction to prejudice--fighting back.

Enhanced striving is the result of Minority Man's regarding prejudice and minority group status as barriers to be overcome by working harder. This is in tune with the American ideal supposedly set down in the Horatio Alger stories.

Symbolic status striving is the antithesis of enhanced striving.

⁷Ibid., p. 146

The symbols of status may be material acquisitions, sexual prowess or flowery language.

Neuroticism, the final trait Allport discusses, is not a trait at all; it is a summary of what extreme ego defense can lead to.

Clearly, some of these traits will apply to one minority group member rather than another, and some will apply to most minority group members. Each situation should be carefully examined before drawing a conclusion about a piece of behavior.

Traits due to victimization may add static to the already complex pattern of human communications. Any communications model shows how many difficulties exist between speaker and listener. These include the psychological make-up of each communicator, his use of language, the differing interpretations put upon each word, and the emotional coloring attached to the subject for each communicator. If traits of victimization are added, the problem is still more complex. It should be obvious why the elimination of even one of the difficulties will help understanding.

The aim of this study then is to eliminate or reduce the unpleasant traits of victimization. The underlying premise is that if Minority Man's view of prejudice is broadened, thus making it more impersonal, and if he understands what disagreeable reactions these traits elicit from others, he will modify his behavior.

Admittedly, this places the greater share of the burden of

interaction upon Minority Man's shoulders, but the plain fact is that Minority Man will always interact more frequently with Majority Man than vice versa since the terms minority and majority reflect numerical values.

The current primary emphasis in the United States seems to be upon changing the majority's attitudes. However, Minority Man, too, has a responsibility to eliminate prejudice. He knows that he can no longer accept that which is handed him, no matter how well intended; he must instead demand his equality and dignity. These cannot be given him. These he must get for himself. In this sense, the minority man must also squarely face the problems he causes in the interaction process. At the same time the majority man must overcome his ignorance and prejudice. The two faces of responsibility are clearly shown in this quote:

...The tendency to "rationalize" is evident with some. The person of weaker character finds his race or nationality a convenient scapegoat; failure through personal defect is attributed to the discrimination of race prejudice. Correct diagnosis, however, is difficult, since prejudice is frequent enough to make the individual's plaint a fair one.⁸

⁸Stonequist, op. cit., pg. 152.

CHAPTER II

TRAITS DUE TO VICTIMIZATION AND THE CROW INDIAN

The Crow Indians were selected as subjects in this study because of a program Montana State University had on the Crow reservation. This program was intended to help the elementary school children overcome certain educational deficiencies. This study was designed to be used with seventh and eighth graders because these children are among the most likely of all the Crow children to drop out of school.⁹ At this critical age children need all the help they can get. The Crows were also selected because they are a relatively small group of people with which to work; their standard of living is not too different from many rural majority men, unlike most Indian tribes; they were not adverse to participating; and their tribal and family structures are strong ones which eliminated unnecessary complications.

The Crow Indian has all of the problems common to other minorities, but he is unique. He has had to deal with prejudice and discrimination, but he is different in his land-holding capacity, his geographic separateness (the reservation), his protection by the federal government with its mirror-image federal intervention, and his cultural heritage. The Crow is unique and typical at the same time.

⁹John F. Bryde, S. J., "New Approach to Indian Education," (Paper from Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge, S.D.), p. 1.

Three of Allport's traits of victimization were selected for the study. The rest were eliminated for numerous reasons. Denial of membership was obviously impossible in a small town like Lodge Grass where everyone knows everyone else. Clowning is simply not a Crow reaction to prejudice. Strengthening in-group ties might be hard to deal with because of the reservation's geographical separateness and because of the economic inducements to remain on the reservation. Agression against one's own group would be difficult to separate from clan and family rivalry. Sympathy and enhanced striving are desirable traits not to be minimized. Slyness and cunning are part of adult cynicism and would appear less frequently among seventh and eighth graders. Self-hate is less frequent among Crow Indians than among other groups because they are proud of their heritage and have managed to retain it while succeeding in rural Twentieth Century life. Militancy is infrequent on the part of the Crows. Symbolic status striving is difficult to separate from simple class and cultural differences in values. Neuroticism would not only require extensive testing but has also been found to be linked to class rather than to race.¹⁰ Thus, obsessive concern, withdrawal and prejudice toward out-groups were selected because they were deemed to be the strongest and most frequently occurring of the traits. The choice was based upon personal observation of Crow behavior.

¹⁰John L. Honigmann, *Personality in Culture* (Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1967), p. 357.

CHAPTER III

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Using the three traits of victimization already discussed, a major and minor hypotheses were tested experimentally.

Major Hypothesis

This hypothesis stated that seventh and eighth grade Crow children would show less withdrawal, less obsessive concern and less prejudice toward out-groups after they had viewed a series of televised lectures on the traits of victimization and on the general topic of prejudice.

Minor Hypothesis

Hypothesis number one stated that a study would show a smaller amount of traits of victimization reaction if he were accompanied (implying support) by two friends than if he were reacting alone, and still less reaction if he were looking on as an uninvolved observer. Thus, the tests would show the strongest reaction score by a single individual, a lesser reaction score if the individual were accompanied by two friends and the smallest reaction score if he were an uninvolved observer.

The second hypothesis stated there was a strong negative relationship between withdrawal tendencies and obsessive concern, a strong negative relationship between withdrawal tendencies and prejudice

toward out-groups, and a strong positive relationship between tendencies toward obsessive concern and prejudice toward out-groups. This hypothesis was strongly implied throughout Allport's book, already cited, in which he stated that obsessive concern and prejudice toward out-groups were part of basically extropunitive personalities and withdrawal was characteristic of basically intropunitive individuals.¹¹

In the first instance the victim blames the outer causes of his handicap; in the second he tends, if not actually to blame himself, at least to take the responsibility upon himself for adjusting to the situation...Every personality is, in fact, a pattern. A single victim of prejudice may display several traits frequently blending some on the extropunitive side with some on the intropunitive.¹²

The names of the entire seventh and eighth grade student body were listed. Every other boy and every other girl was selected for the experimental group. The remainder went into the control group. No attempt was made to make the number of Indian and white children equal in each group. The selection was purely random. The control group did nothing but take the same tests at the same times as the experimental group.

The experimental group watched video taped lectures, each one hour in length, for three days. These lectures were presented by a

¹¹Allport, op. cit., p. 157.

¹²Ibid., p. 156.

Crow Indian who was attending Montana State University. The lecturer was male and all of the students were told he was a Crow.¹³

The day preceding the lectures was devoted to testing both the experimental and the control groups. Another test was given the day after the completion of the lectures to both groups and a third test was given three weeks later to both groups. The final test was designed to check sleeper effects.

Because some of the children had reading difficulties, the questions were read aloud to both groups, care being taken to make each question and answer read like every other question and answer. This appeared to be the only solution under the circumstances even though the procedure is far from ideal.

Each test form consisted of twelve questions with four answers to each question. Each question asked the student to place himself, or himself and two friends, or another person in a situation and to pick whichever of the four answers would come closest to the way he would react to that situation. The four answers were designed to show either obsessive concern, withdrawal, prejudice toward out-groups or neutral, non-scoring behavior.

The girls were given a different form of the test than were the boys. It was, however, different in only one respect. In those

¹³p. H. Tannenbaum, "Initial Attitude Toward Source and Concept as Factors in Attitude Change Through Communication," Public Opinion Quarterly, 1956, Vol. 20, pgs. 413-425.

questions where gender might make a great change in the situation, bringing in interracial dating, etc., which was not originally intended, the situation was equalized by changing the gender. For example, one question asked the student to pretend he was going to a school dance. A Negro student asks to go with him and be introduced around to the other students. The boy's form said it was a Negro boy and the girl's form said it was a Negro girl.

Each time the student took the test he had a different form. The questions and answers were exactly the same except on one form the student was supposed to be accompanied by two friends, on another he is an uninvolved observer seeing someone else react, and in the third situation he is acting alone. One of the questions used on the test was:

1. Pretend you are alone in a drugstore waiting for service.

The clerk is bent down behind the counter putting boxes on a shelf and has not seen you come in. Meanwhile, a blonde woman, in a big hurry, comes in. The clerk looks up and sees you both at the same time. Which of the following are you most likely to do? Choose only one answer.

- A. You wait quietly in the background until the clerk notices you.
- B. You know the clerk will wait on the white woman first so you push past her and tell him you were here first.
- C. Whites always stick together so you wait until the

blond is waited on before you move up to the counter.

- D. Since the woman is in such a hurry, you tell the clerk to wait on her first.

Form II would be exactly the same except it would say, "Pretend you and two friends..." and Form III would say, "Pretend John, an American Indian boy, is..."

The experimental and the control groups were each divided into three groups so that each testing period one third of the experimental group and one third of the control group got Form I, and one third of each got Form II and one third of each got Form III. The testing schedule for both the control and the experimental groups looked like this:

	First Test Period	Second Test Period	Third Test Period
Group 1 (E & C)	Form I	Form II	Form III
Group 2 (E & C)	Form II	Form III	Form I
Group 3 (E & C)	Form III	Form I	Form II

14

This procedure was designed to give a certain amount of internal consistency to the test results. If a single form had been given to all the students at the same time and another form at a later test period, the results could be explained as having been a product of either the

¹⁴Dr. Dave Skaar, Department of Zoology and Entomology, Montana State University.

test form or the lectures. Although this test schedule, too, raises problems, they were deemed less troublesome than those mentioned.

The data collected contained the reactions of both Indians and whites since the grades are integrated. The results were examined for each group as a whole, for the Indian group, and for the Indian boys as compared to the Indian girls.

There were twenty-nine in the experimental group and thirty-one in the control group. Although the groups were even to start with, these were the students who completed all three tests. Of the experimental group, nineteen were Indian (nine boys and ten girls), and of the control group twenty-four were Indian (fourteen boys and ten girls).

Before the data are examined, it would be wise to examine the content of the lectures. They will be summarized in order here and the complete text will be found in the Appendix. The first portion of the summary deals, as in the lectures, with prejudice in general; the latter portion deals with the traits of victimization in particular. The reference text was Allport's Nature of Prejudice cited earlier.

Although one usually thinks of prejudice in terms of race, it is usually practiced, as in the past, in terms of religion, nationalism, regionalism (Southerners heap score upon those damned Yankees, for example), political beliefs, sex, class, jobs (in the United States this would be in terms of race, sex and education), and caste. This lecture was intended to desensitize the word prejudice which was used frequently

during the lecture and to broaden the scope of the children's view of the problem to include all of the manifestations of the phenomenon of prejudice.

Prejudice is a normal or usual phenomenon. It is consistent with the human practice of pre-judgment. This means we make up our minds about something before we have to deal with it; it means we make up our minds without really having enough information; and it means we make up our minds without having examined the subject. When carried too far the results are prejudice. Here stereotypes were discussed. Also, the point was made that prejudice can be favorable as well as unfavorable as far as a subject is concerned. In other words, the person will be able to leap to a favorable conclusion without having examined the evidence just like he can leap to a conclusion which isn't favorable without examining the evidence.

People tend to associate with others like themselves because they find it easier to deal with others like themselves, and they are more comfortable when they are in familiar situations. However, if two groups do not go to the trouble to be friendly with each other, they will gradually be unable to talk to each other comfortably, and when problems come up, they will be unable to talk them over and solve them. When two groups do not talk to each other very much, they begin to think the other group is very different from themselves. They begin to misunderstand each other. They begin to be suspicious of each other.

Things which are familiar to use are all wrapped up in our minds with the word "good". After awhile, we may begin to think the things we do are not just good but right. Then we may begin to think that the way we do things is the only way to do things.

In every society on earth the child is regarded as a member of his parents' groups. In the American society a child can escape from some of his parents' groups but not all. These membership groups are called in-groups. The groups which do not belong to a particular in-group are called out-groups. A person can be a member of a lot of in-groups and a lot of out-groups at the same time.

Next, a discussion followed about reference groups, some of which we don't belong to but want to belong to very badly, and some of which we already belong to. People in the out-group act as if they already belonged to this reference group.

Prejudice can take various forms. Some prejudice is only talk, some is discrimination, and some is physical violence.

After a person has met prejudice for any length of time, he will begin to try to protect himself from the hurt he feels. A personality will find defenses compatible with his personality. Some people will appear to be little affected by prejudice; some are tolerant; some will develop a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant personality traits; and some will develop ugly traits to defend themselves because they have been so hurt by prejudice. This latter group almost seems to go through life

seeking prejudice. These ways of reacting are what Gordon Allport calls the traits of victimization.

All of the preceding lecture summary is pared down considerably from the forty-one pages of script geared to seventh and eighth graders. The essence of the lectures, however, is still there.

Because of the small sampling, even though all the seventh and eighth graders at Lodge Grass participated, the simplest and most meaningful form of analysis was deemed to be simple percentage differences between groups, test forms, test periods and sexes. To find the correlations between the three test variables, Spearman's Coefficient of Rank-Order Correlation was used. The formula for this process is:

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 (\text{total } D_i^2)}{M (N^2 - 1)}$$

with N being the number of students.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The change in withdrawal scores over time, ratio of change and difference in amount of change between control and experimental groups in withdrawal are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1

Experiment in Modification of Withdrawal
Change in Withdrawal Scores Over Time

Experimental			
	(E) Time 1	(E) Time 2	(E) Time 3
HIGH	11 (38%)	6 (21%)	12 (41%)
AVERAGE	12 (41%)	16 (55%)	7 (24%)
LOW	6 (21%)	7 (24%)	10 (35%)
Totals	29	29	29
Control			
	(C) Time 1	(C) Time 2	(C) Time 3
HIGH	10 (32%)	5 (16%)	11 (35%)
AVERAGE	15 (49%)	22 (71%)	13 (42%)
LOW	6 (19%)	4 (13%)	7 (23%)
Totals	31	31	31

