Lecture 5: Psychological Approaches to Conflict

- Part I: Prejudice (Attitudes)

- Part II: Cognitive Approaches

- Part III: Social/Emotional Approaches

Non-evolutionary Theories

- Many pre-existing theories in many disciplines offer important insights about conflict and conflict resolution. These theories are not incompatible with evolutionary theory, and we can use these ideas to evaluate an integrated theory.

- In the next few lectures we will review a few of these theories.

Part I: Prejudice

Prejudice is an *attitude* (usually negative) toward members of some group, based solely on their membership in that group.
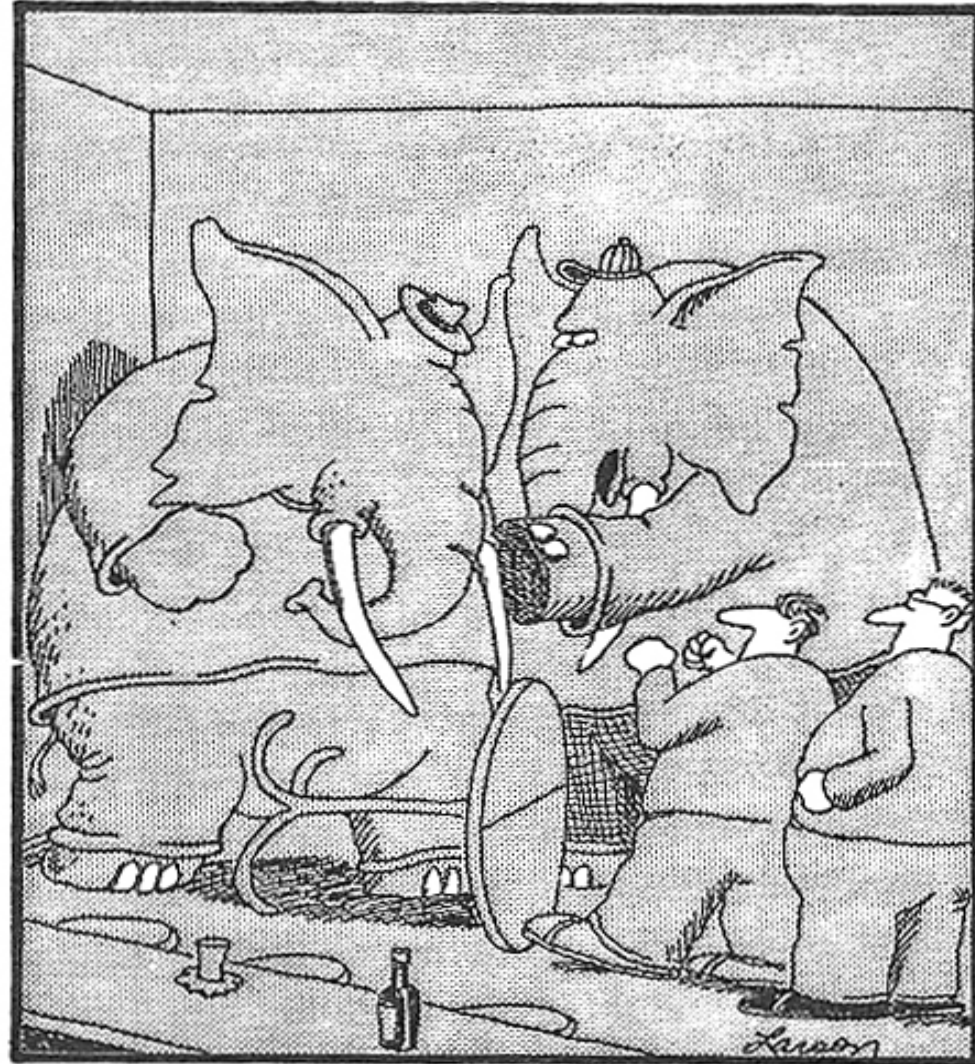
"Relax, Jerry . . . He probably didn't know you were an elephant when he told that last joke!"

|	
PREJUDICE	→ Generalized *attitude* towards members of a group
STEREOTYPE	→ Generalized *belief* about members of a group
DISCRIMINATION	→ *Behaviors* directed towards people on the basis of their group membership

- **What are the characteristics of:**
- **A typical New Yorker?**
- **A typical white female?**
- **A typical black male?**
- **A typical Muslim?**

- **Stereotype: generalized beliefs about members of a group that may or may not be accurate and might be positive *or* negative.**

- **Do you know anyone who has, because of their membership in a group, been:**
  - Denied a job or promotion?
  - Insulted or harassed?
  - Ignored or poorly served in a restaurant or business?
  - Denied an apartment or house?

- **Discrimination: negative behaviors directed at people based primarily on their group membership.**
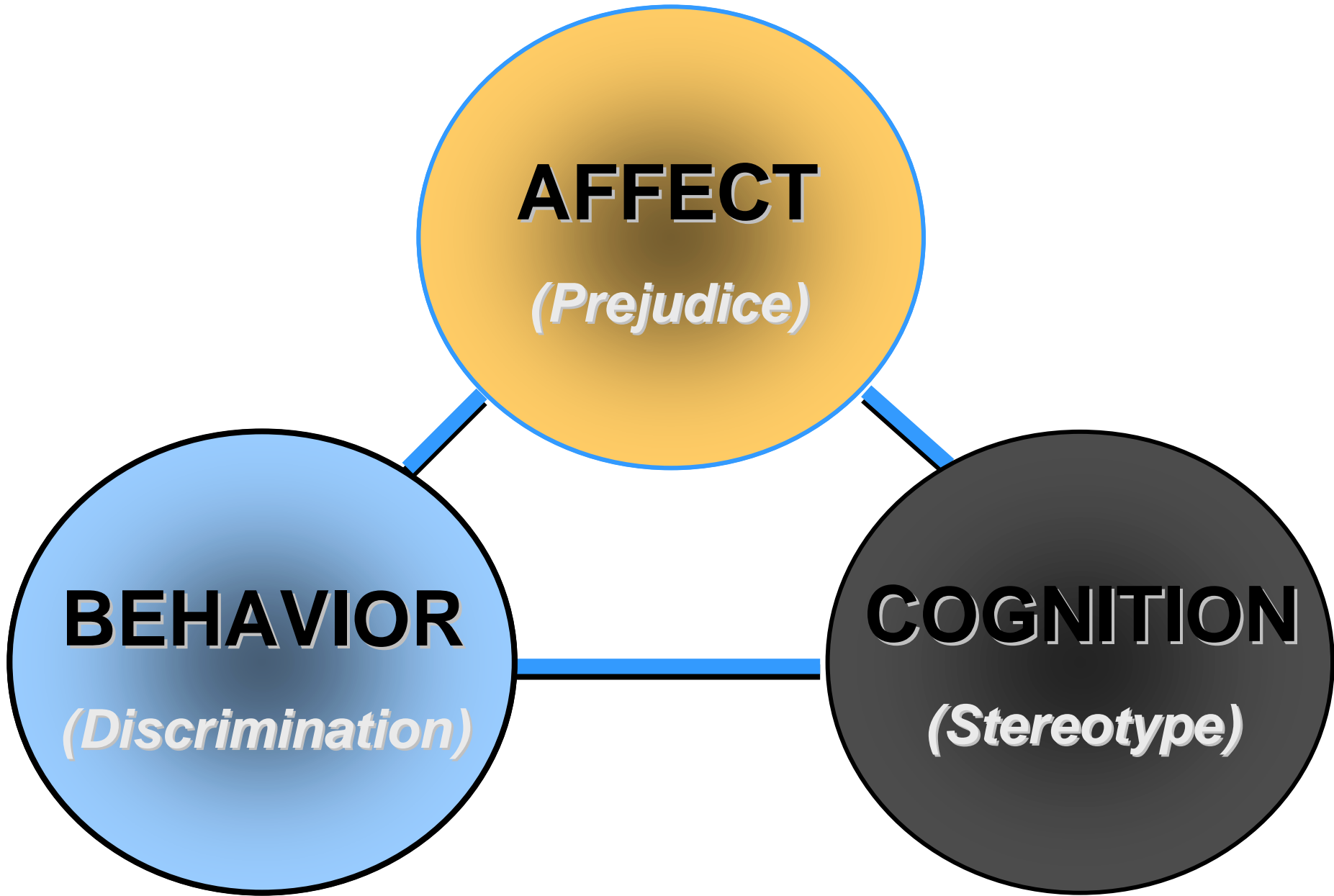
AFFECT
(Prejudice)

BEHAVIOR
(Discrimination)

COGNITION
(Stereotype)

How does Prejudice/Stereotypes lead to Conflict?

- A ***conflict*** exists whenever two or more parties in interaction with each other are pursing goals that are <u>perceived</u> to be mutually incompatible or inconsistent, in the sense that it is impossible to simultaneously satisfy the goals pursued by all parties.

How does Prejudice/Stereotypes lead to Conflict?

- Perceiving members of a different group unfavorably (negative attitude) and/or holding certain beliefs about that group (stereotypes) can lead **directly** to conflict.

- For example, these internal "beliefs" can make a person think that the difference between themselves and the other party is something incompatible that needs to be remedied. Hence, conflict can emerge.

How does Prejudice/Stereotypes lead to Conflict?

- In reality, prejudice attitudes and stereotypes interact with other forms of conflict such as competition for mates, jobs, status and resources.

- I would argue that evolutionary theory needs to be integrated with the psychological processes discussed below. For example, male competition can be exacerbated or moderated depending on the level of prejudice.

The Cultural Transmission of Prejudice

- Cultural transmission is the transfer of information (culture) from one person to the next.

- If individuals transmit prejudiced ideas, and stereotypes of other groups, group-level cultural differences can both emerge and be maintained.

- Prejudice attitudes may be slow to change due to transmission from one generation to the next.

Have prejudice attitudes changed?

The results of numerous studies (Dovidio et al., 1996; Peterson, 1997) suggest that **<u>overt</u>** attitudes have changed dramatically over the past 60 years.

Do you think homosexuals should or should not be hired for the following occupations?

Percentage Saying "Should"

100

Salespersons

Doctors

50

Clergy

Elementary School Teachers
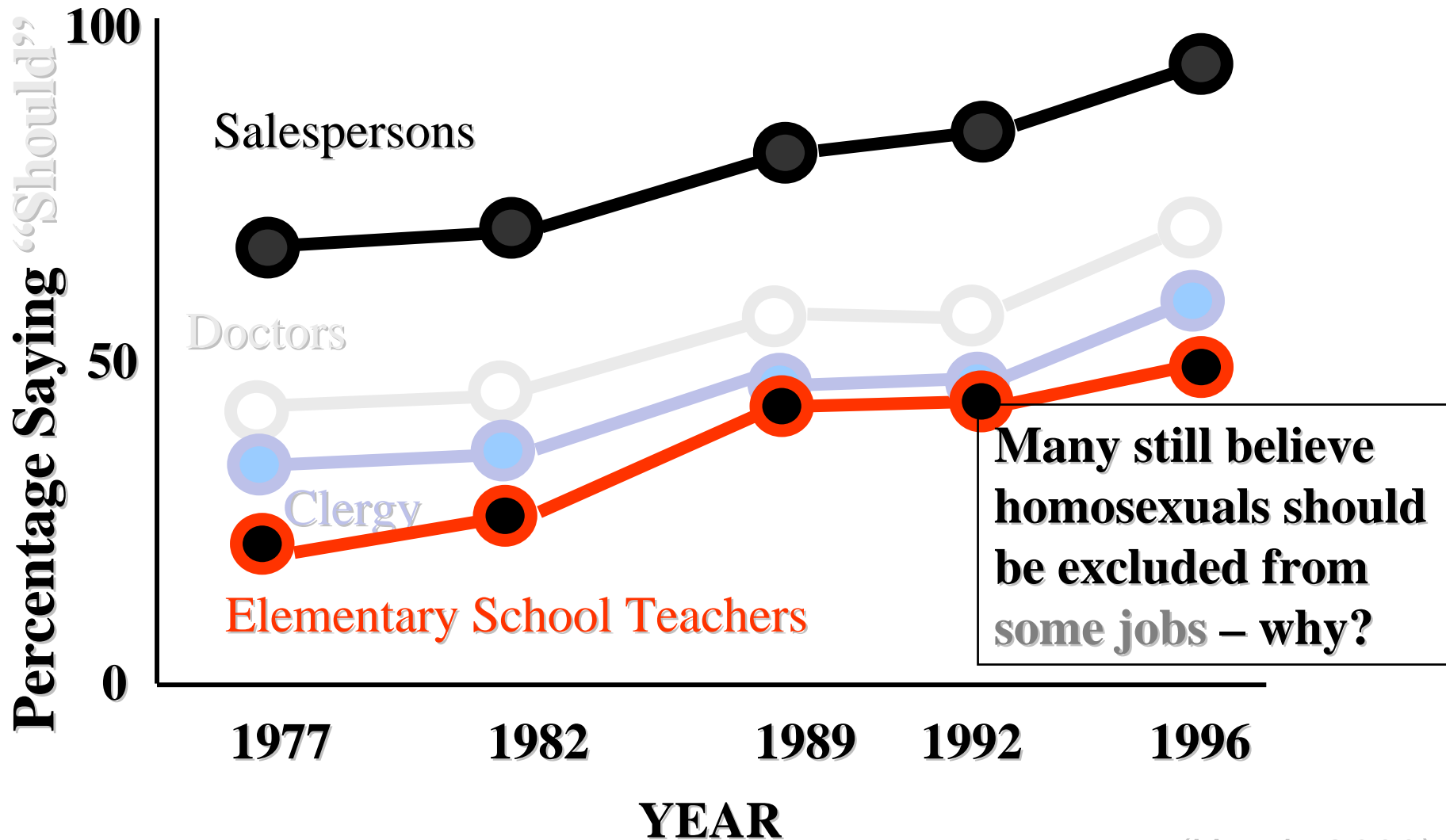
Many still believe homosexuals should be excluded from some jobs – why?

0

1977   1982   1989   1992   1996

YEAR

(Herek, 2000)

## Percentage of White Participants Who Report Being Willing to Admit Blacks into Various Relationships with Them

	1949	1968	1992
Willing to Admit Blacks to:			
Employment in my occupation	78%	98%	99%
My club as personal friends	51	97	96
My street as neighbors	41	95	95
Close kinship by marriage	0	66	74

Percentage of Adult Participants Who Agree with the Statement, "It's All Right for Blacks and Whites to Date Each Other."

	1987	1997
	48%	69%

The pattern of change in attitudes in the US

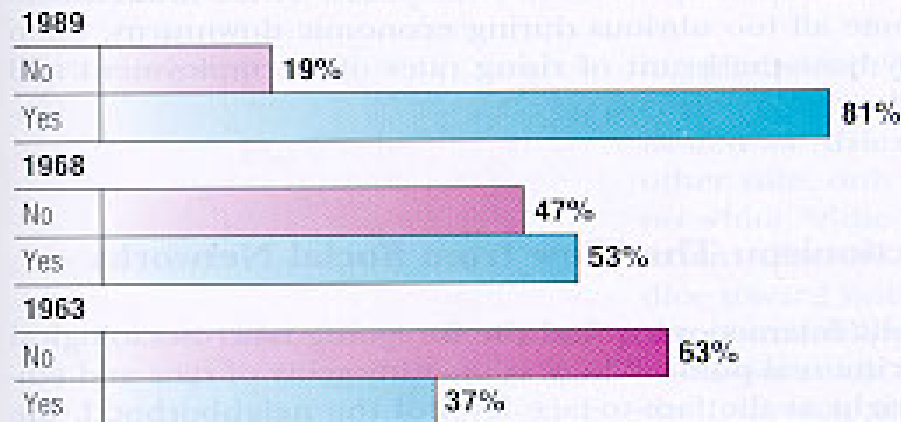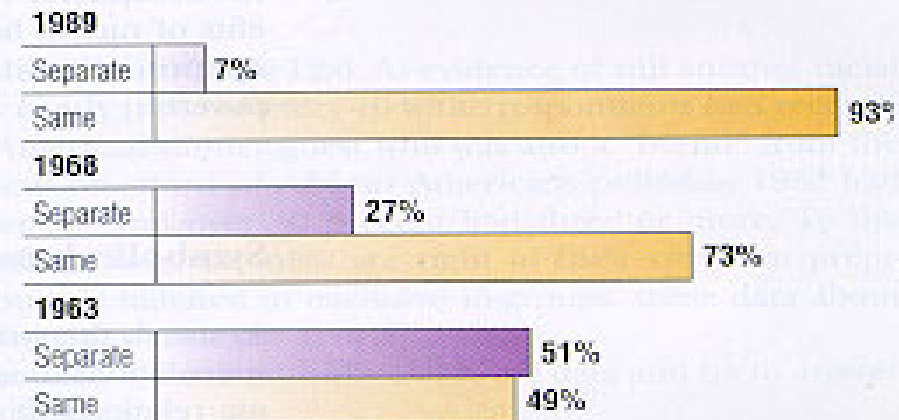**Do you think there should be laws against marriages between blacks and whites?**

1989
- No — 77%
- Yes — 23%

1968
- No — 45%
- Yes — 55%

1963
- No — 39%
- Yes — 61%
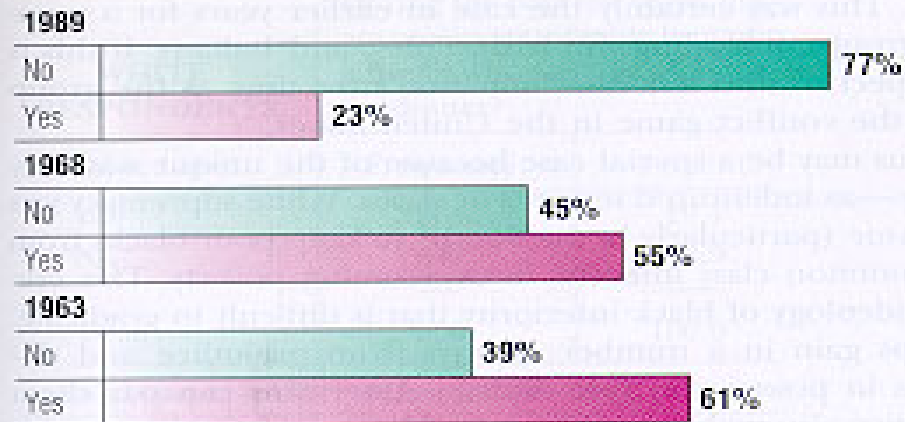
White people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and blacks should respect that right.

1989
- Disagree — 77%
- Agree — 23%

1968
- Disagree — 58%
- Agree — 42%

1963
- Disagree — 39%
- Agree — 61%
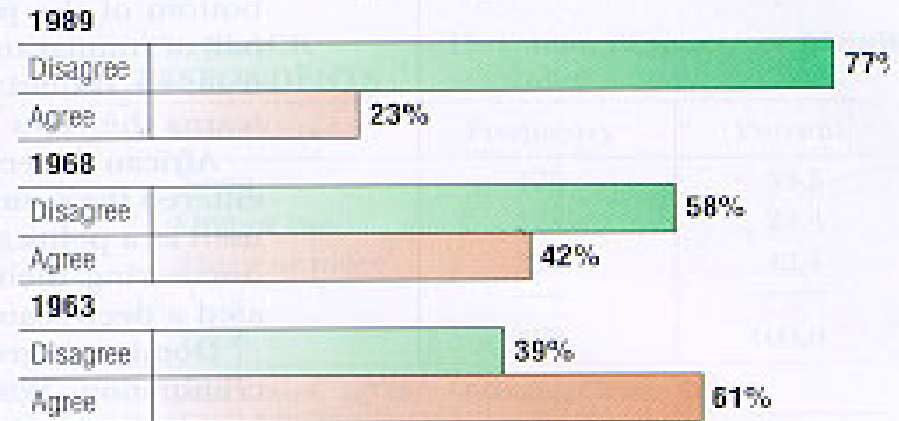
If your party nominated a black for president, would you vote for him if he were qualified for the job?

1989
- No — 19%
- Yes — 81%

1968
- No — 47%
- Yes — 53%

1963
- No — 63%
- Yes — 37%

Do you think white students and black students should go to the same schools or to separate schools?

1989
- Separate — 7%
- Same — 93%

1968
- Separate — 27%
- Same — 73%

1963
- Separate — 51%
- Same — 49%

Interpretation

- Attitudes sometimes change quite quickly.

- There has been a sharp decline of views such as "There should be laws against intermarriage," (though 10% to 20% of the white pop. still agrees with such items.)

- But most of the change was completed by 1968. There has also been a decline in support for reducing existing racial and gender inequalities.

- For example, the Civil Rights movement and the urban rebellions of the 1960's seems to have driven a good deal of change, which stopped when that did.

Can we trust self-reports?

There are strong social norms against expressing prejudice <u>overtly</u>. This may lead to *socially desirable* responding on surveys that underestimates the levels of contemporary prejudice.

- In sum, people may lie because they do not want to appear prejudiced to other people.
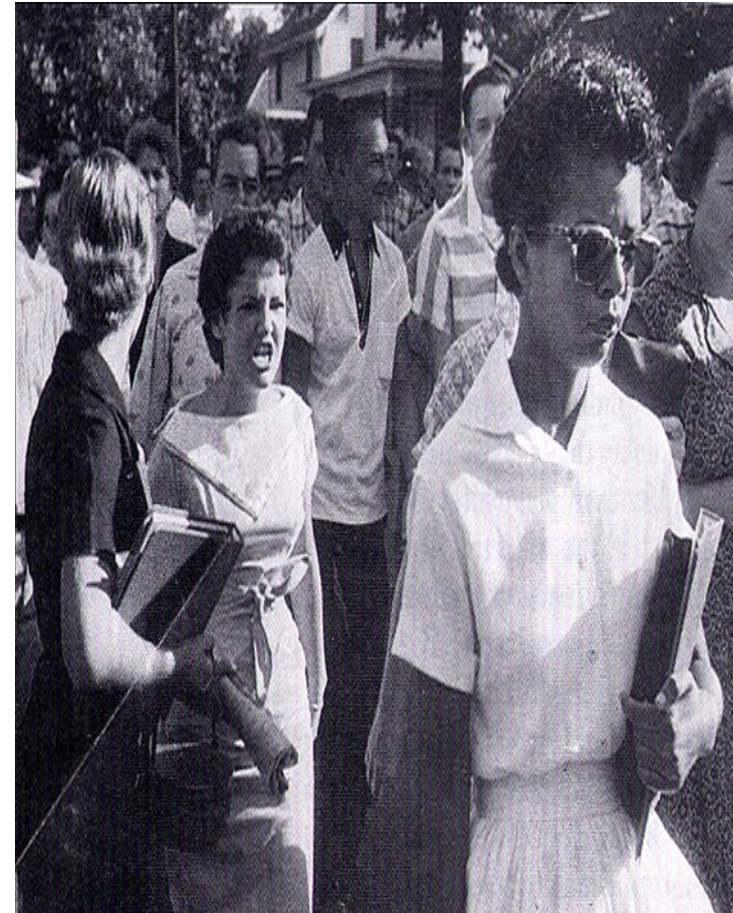
Do People Hide their True Attitudes?

Two treatment groups are formed to address this question. Both groups complete questionnaire about their attitudes concerning African Americans.

Bogus pipeline group:
- hooked up to machine via electrodes
- told machine could "read minds" through physiological arousal

Control group:
- not hooked up to machine

Bogus Pipeline

Theoretical Prediction:

- People lie on self-report questionnaires because of social desirability concerns

Operational Prediction:

- Negative attributes judged more characteristic of AA, and positive attributes less characteristic of AA under bogus pipeline condition

Negative attributes judged more characteristic of African Americans under bogus pipeline condition

Negative Attributes	Bogus Pipeline	Control
Happy-go-lucky	.93	-.13
Ignorant	.60	.20
Stupid	.13	-1.00
Physically dirty	.20	-1.33
Unreliable	.27	-.67
Lazy	.60	-.73
Aggressive	1.20	.67

Positive attributes judged less characteristic of African Americans under bogus pipeline condition

Positive Attributes	Bogus Pipeline	Control
Intelligent	.00	.47
Ambitious	.07	.33
Sensitive	.87	1.60

Bogus Pipeline

Conclusion:

People lie on self-report measures to appear unprejudiced to others.

Although people today self-report to be less prejudiced than people 20 or 50 years ago did, some of these differences may related to "social desirability".

Summary: Socialization and Attitude Change

- Regardless of the fact that some people lie on self-reports to appear "socially correct", prejudice attitudes have likely changed substantially in the U.S.

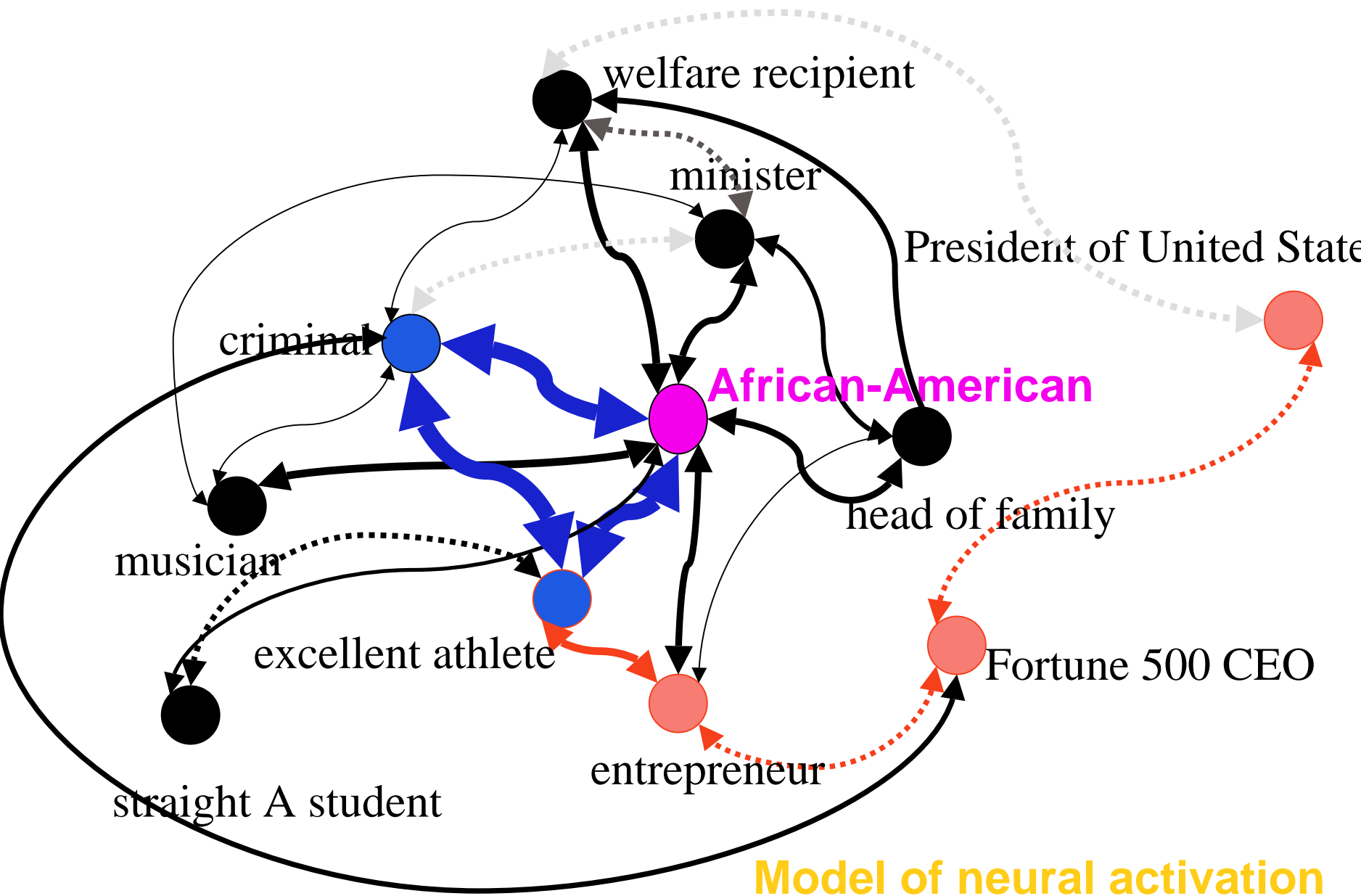- We will return to this topic later in the course when we talk about social dominance and racism.

Part II: Cognitive Sources of Prejudice

Prejudice is partially a by-product of normal thinking processes. Schema and heuristics lead to informational shortcuts, but at some cost.

Schemas about social groups—stereotypes—contains beliefs about members of an "outgroup" that may not always be true

"No, he's not busy....In fact, that whole thing is just a myth."

welfare recipient

minister

President of United States

criminal

African-American

musician

head of family

excellent athlete

Fortune 500 CEO

straight A student

entrepreneur

Model of neural activation nodes, connections & social categories

FIGURE 5.2 How Racial Stereotypes Distort Social Perceptions

After briefly viewing this picture, one participant described it to a second participant, who described it to a third, and so on. After six rounds of communication, the final report often placed the razor held by the white man into the black man's hand. This study illustrates how racial stereotypes can distort social perception. *(Adapted from Allport & Postman, 1947.)*

Categorization through Schema

•BENEFITS: Reduces the amount of information to be dealt with and reduces the complexity of the social world.

• COSTS: Leads people to underestimate the differences within groups, overestimate the differences between groups

1.) **Perceived Similarities and Differences**: Out-group homogeneity Effect and Own-race bias

2.) **Distinctiveness** (vivid cases, illusory correlations)

Out-group Homogeneity Effect

The assumption that members of an outgroup are "all the same."

When the group is our own we are more likely to see **diversity**. Out-groups (those outside our groups) are **homogenized**.

Examples:

a.) Europeans view of the Swiss b.) "Latinos" as one category c.) other sororities as less diverse

Own Race Bias

Brigham et al. (1982) had accomplices (either Black or White) enter a convenience store and make a purchase in a way sure to draw attention.

Later, the experimenters, posing as law interns, asked the clerks (either Black or White) to identify the accomplice from a photo lineup of 6 Black and 6 White individuals.
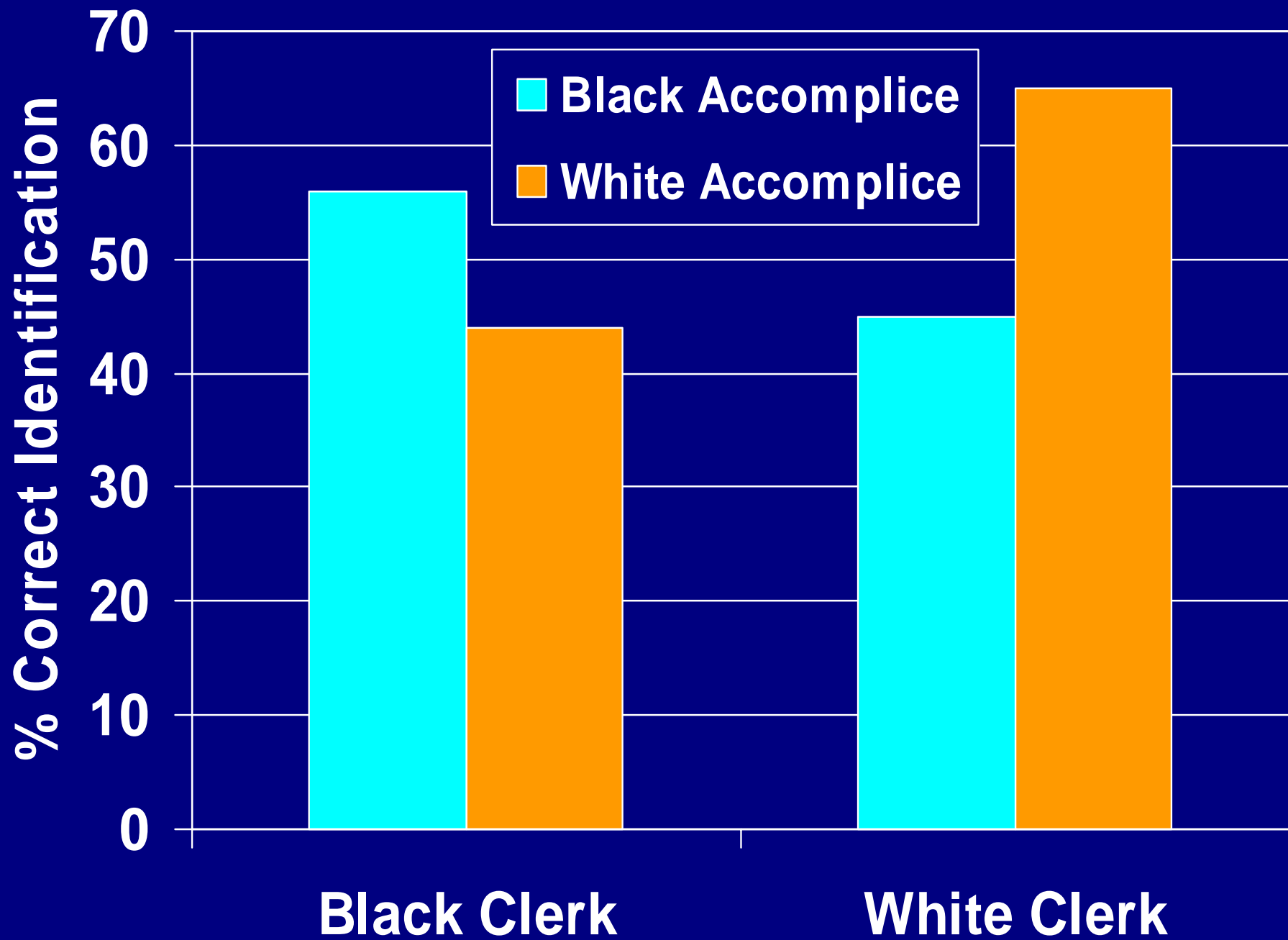
Illusory Correlations

Illusory correlation: A false impression that two variables correlate.

Occurs because negative behaviors and outgroup members are both distinct. This *shared distinctiveness* is more memorable that other combinations.

Illusory Correlation

Illusory Correlation

If Harriet tends to selectively remember only those deceptive business relationships with Jews and the honest ones with non-Jews, she is likely to develop an illusory correlation that Jews are more dishonest in their business dealing than non-Jews. This is so, even though the percentages of actual instances of business deception in the two groups is equal (5%). Can you think of any illusory correlations that people may have about a group in which you are a member?

Number of Business Relationships Harriet Has Been Exposed To in Her Life

|	Deceptive experiences	Honest experiences
Jew	5	100
Non-Jews	25	500

Characteristics of Efficient Stereotypes

- **People use stereotypes because, although sometimes inaccurate, many contain a "kernel of truth".**

- **<u>Example</u>: even though people rarely mistake the direction of actual sex differences, they often overestimate their size.**

Seeking Mental Efficiency

The Reality

The Stereotype

Females — Males

Less — More

Aggressiveness
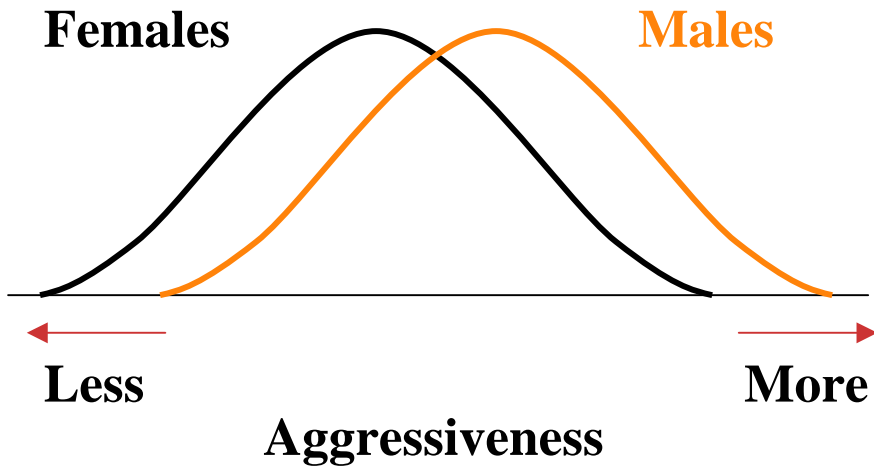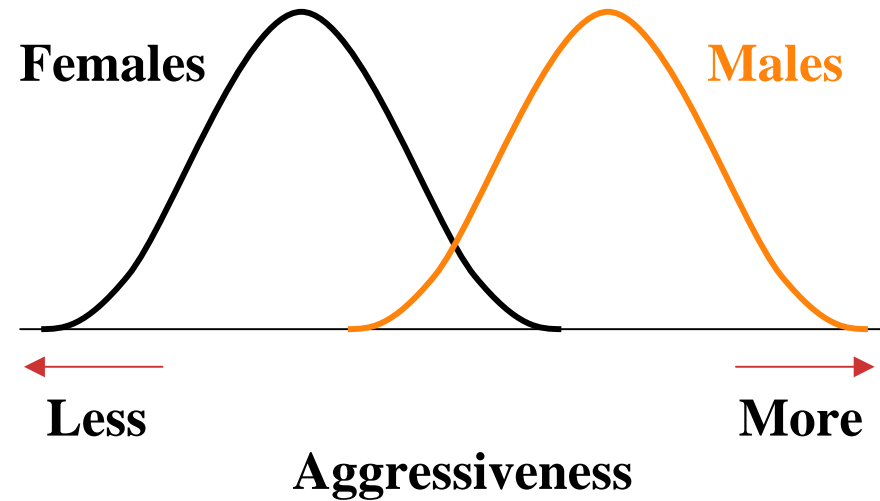
To save time and cognitive effort, we often *sharpen* distinctions between groups and *soften* differences within groups.

Automatic Stereotype Activation

- **Hearing the neutral word "bread" automatically primes most people to think of the word "butter."**

- **Thus, even non-prejudiced people have automatic associations with general racial stereotypes that can be activated without their awareness.**

Automatic Activation: An Example

- **Most people make rapid decisions about words stereotypically associated with Blacks (e.g., "musical", "athletic").**

- **They recognize these words more quickly if subliminally primed with the word "BLACK" beforehand.**

- **However, they recognize words such as "educated" more quickly if subliminally primed with the word "WHITE".**

Part III: Social/Emotional Sources of Prejudice

- The next set of theories are psychological in that they emerged in psychology departments.

- However, the theories incorporate macro-level processes (e.g., identity), and thus also of interest to many sociologists.

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social identities made stronger by *in-group* and *out-group* distinctions.

In-group: "Us"- a group of people who share a sense of belonging, a feeling of common identity

Out-group: "Them"- a group that people perceives as distinctively different from or apart from their in-group.

(SIT): Minimal Group Paradigm

- Group identification sufficient to instigate intergroup conflict

- Competition for scarce resources not necessary

Minimal Group Paradigm

- People assigned to groups
- Groups have no history, norms, or values
- Members have no contact
- **Membership based on trivial criteria**
- **Task have minimal outcomes with respect to competition for real resources.**

Goal:

Evaluate if group membership ALONE produces in-group bias

Experiment

- Tajfel (1973)
  - High school boys in England
  - Study on "visual perception"
    - Estimate "dots"
    - **<u>Random assignment</u>** Individuals told that they are either in Over- or Underestimator group.
- Divided into two 'minimal' groups (no history, no interaction) based on over or underestimators.

Choices Concerning Money

- Boys were show tables of numbers representing how much money (pennies) they could allocate to either in-group members or outgroup members.

- They could not allocate money to themselves, and they did not know the individual identity of the boy who would receive the money—only the group that they were from.

Experiment

- The results demonstrated that when the boys had the choice between maximising the profit for all and maximising the profit for their own group, they chose the latter. Even more interestingly though, the boys were found to be more concerned with creating as large a difference as possible between the amounts allocated to each group (in favor of their own group), then in gaining a greater amount for everybody, across the two groups.

Minimal Group Paradigm

Major Finding:

In-group bias occurred in absence of competition over scarce resources

Group identity was sufficient to create in-group bias

Realistic Group Conflict Theory

One of the oldest explanations argues that prejudice arises from social **competition over scarce resources**.

1.) Realistic Group Conflict Theory

Minority group seen as thwarting goal attainment
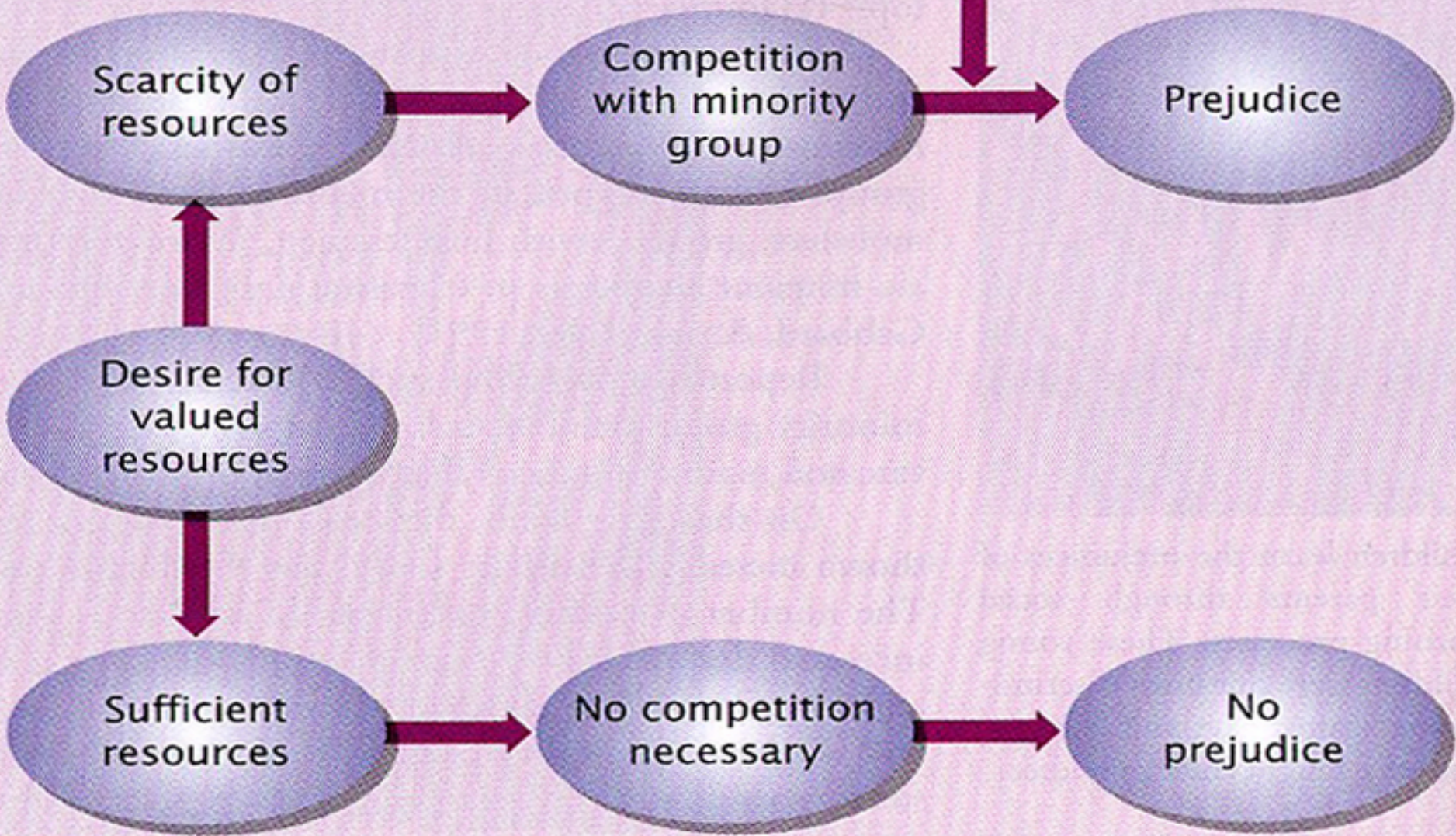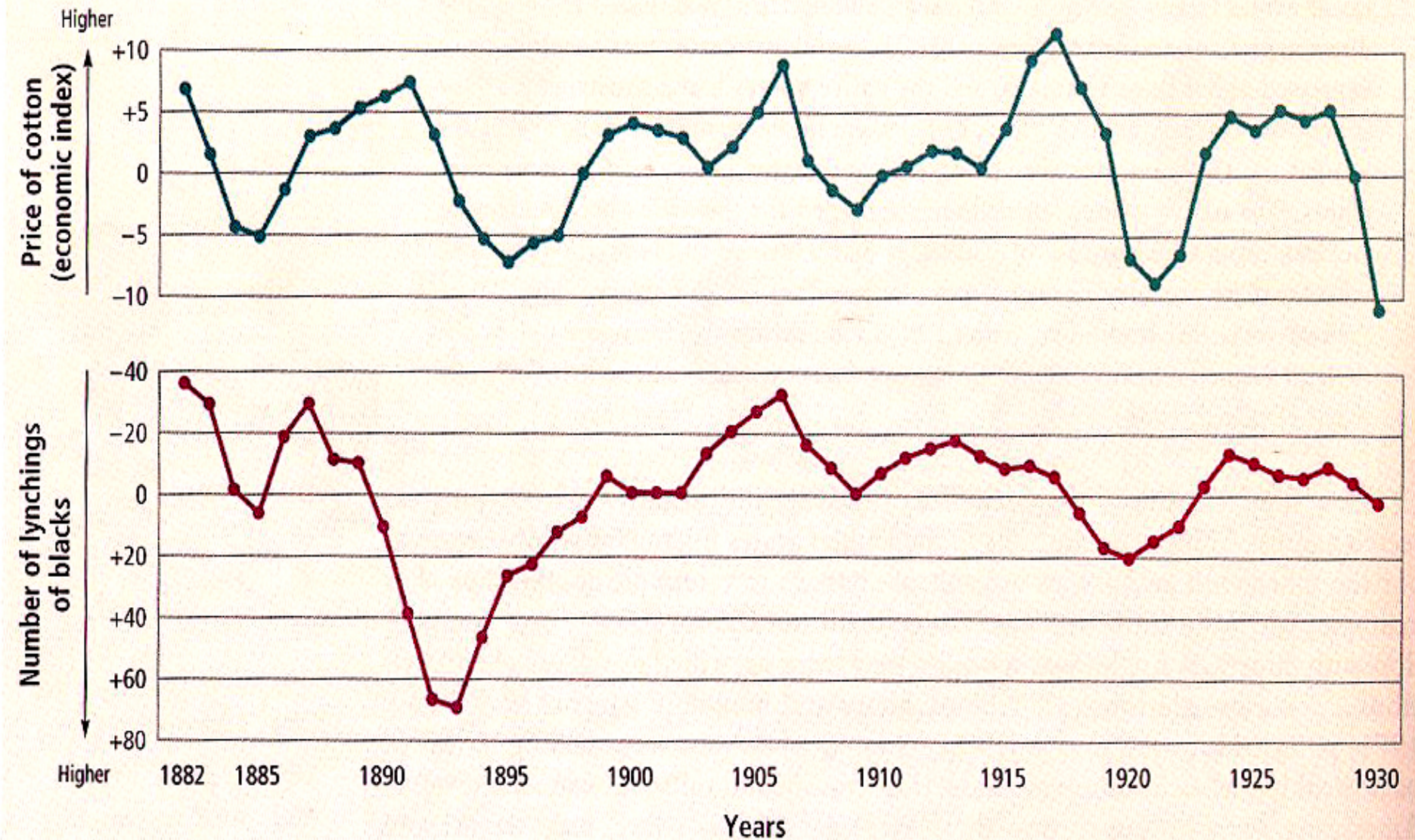
Scarcity of resources → Competition with minority group → Prejudice

Desire for valued resources

Sufficient resources → No competition necessary → No prejudice

FIGURE 13.7 Relation of total lynchings to the price of cotton. Note that the lynching scale shows greatest frequency at the bottom of the graph. (Adapted from Hovland & Sears, 1940)

Realistic Group Conflict Theory

Central Assumptions

1. People are selfish and out for own gain

2. Incompatible group interests cause intergroup conflict

3. Incompatible group interests cause social psychological processes (e.g., in-group favoritism; stereotyping)

Summary

Competition between groups for scarce resources produces inter-group conflict. Without such competition, inter-group conflict would fade.

Sherif and Colleagues: The Robbers Cave Experiments

<u>Purpose</u>: understand conflict between groups to identify how intergroup relations can be more positive.

Created three situations to foster 1.) group identity, 2.) inter-group conflict, and 3.) group harmony

Sherif and Colleagues

Participants

- 11-12 year old boys who signed up for a camp in Oklahoma

- Camp lasted 3 weeks

- Boys had similar backgrounds, no behavioral/psychological problems

- Boys were brought to camp in two separate group, and kept separate for the first few days at camp.

Stage 1: Group Formation

- Boys developed strong in-group identity
  - interacted with own group exclusively
  - activities fostered liking

- 95% of listed friends from in-group

- Each group, later to be called the *Eagles* and the *Rattlers,* conducted their own separate activities. The groups developed within-group identities.

- Upon, learning about the other group, both groups became insistent that competitive sports be organized between them.
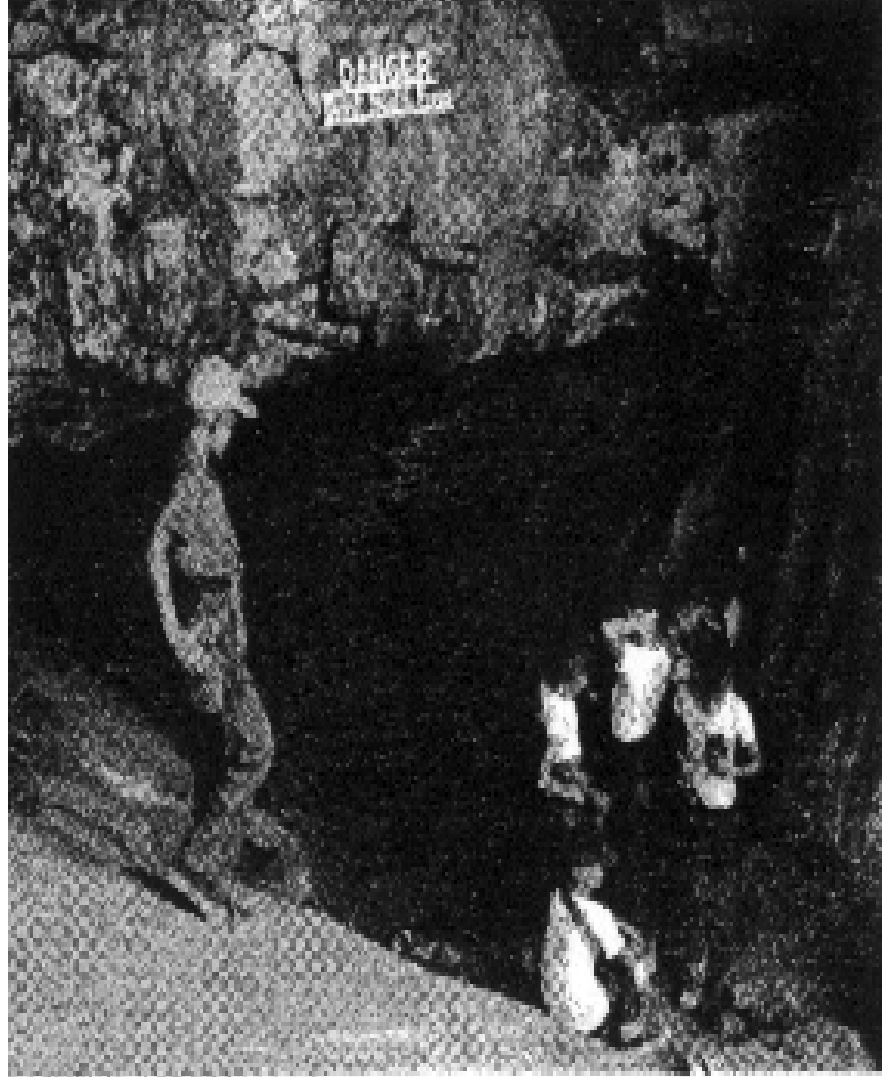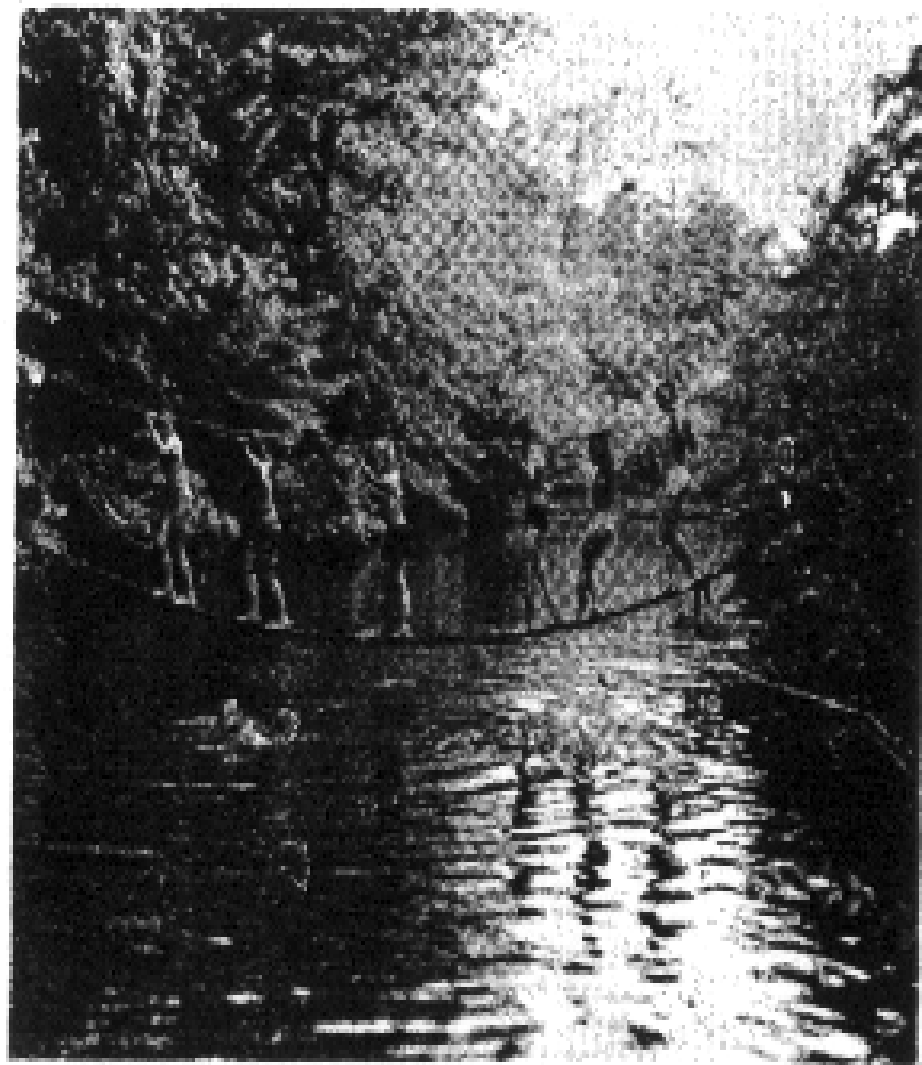
Rattlers first exploration of Robbers Cave.
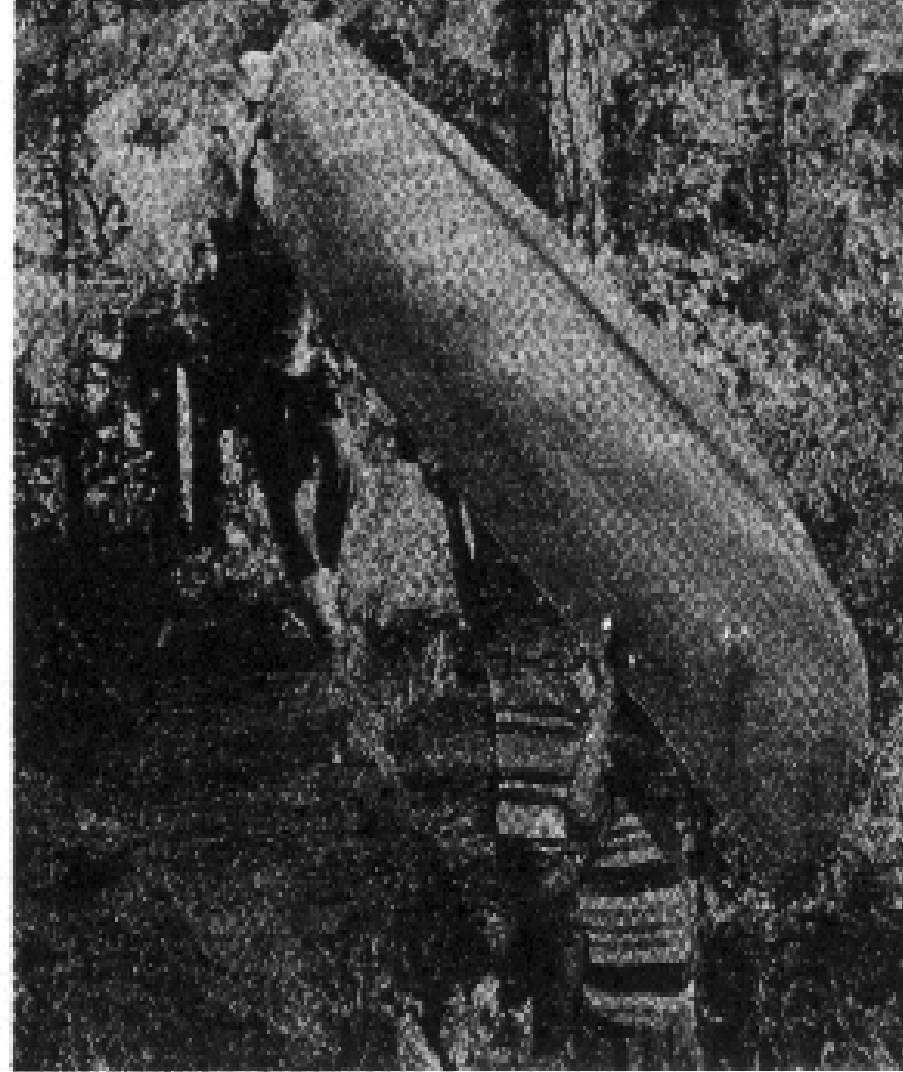
Carrying their canoe to swimming hole at their hideout.

Putting up a sign at their swimming hole labelled: "Moccasin Creek".

Eagles on their rope bridge over "Moccasin Creek".

Stage 2: Intergroup Conflict

- The two in-groups set the stage for the friction phase of inter-group relations.

- "Councilors" announced their would be a <u>Tournament of Games</u>:

  5$ prize
  - baseball
  - touch football
  - tug of war
  - treasure hunt

Eagles' strategy in 2nd Tug-of-war: Sitting down to dig in while rattlers (standing)

Rattlers adopt the Eagle strategy: B sides dig in sitting down.

Stage 2: Intergroup Conflict

The tournament led to increasing competition and animosity between the groups.

Intergroup conflict:

- name calling
- stealing flags
- fights

CONFLICT:

"You can tell those guys I did it if they say anything. I'll fight 'em!"

Ongoing conflict led to the Eagles finally stealing the Rattlers flag and burning it.

Rattlers with banner proclaiming "The Last of the Eagles".

RATTLERS AND EAGLES: INTERGROUP RELATIONS

(STAGE 2)

One of the tournament contests: Tent pitching.

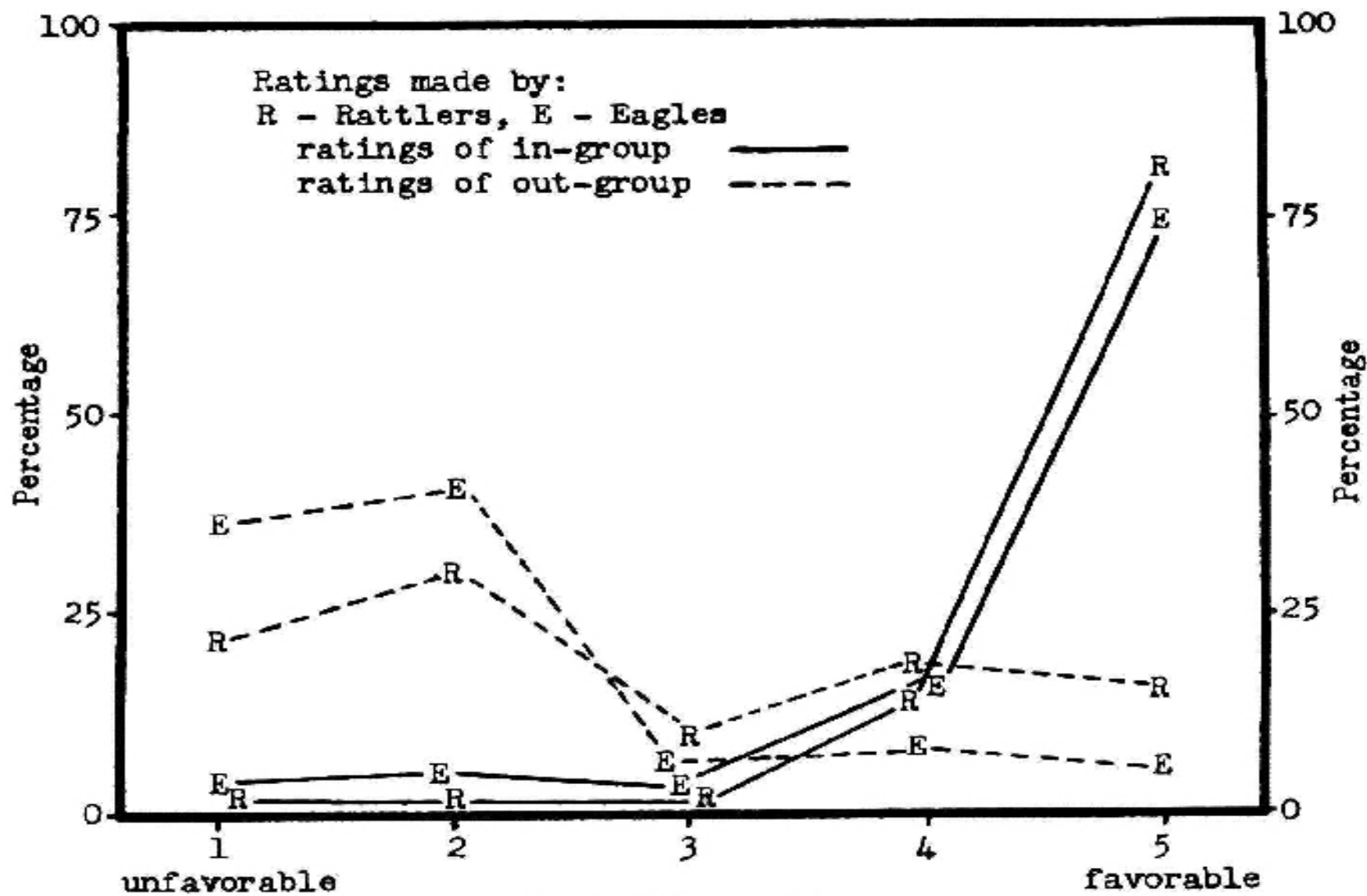Raiding Eagles entering Rattler cabin.
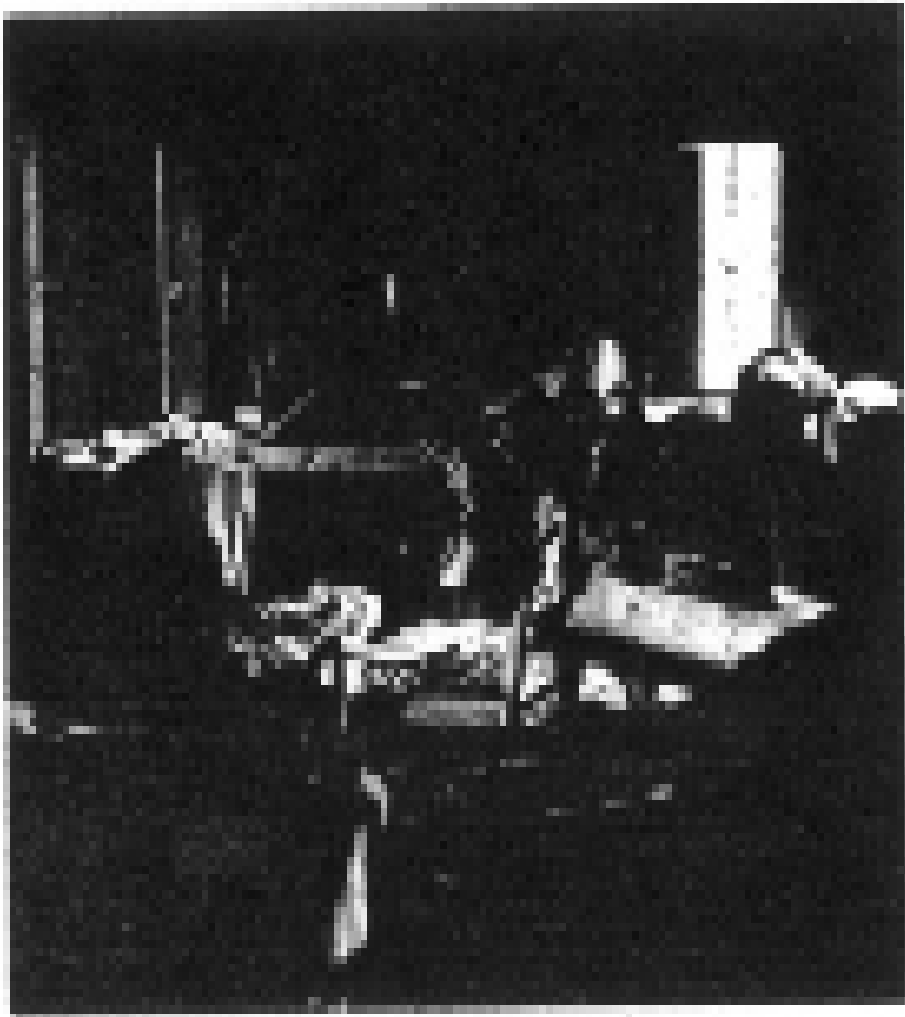
Eagles messing-up Rattler cabin during
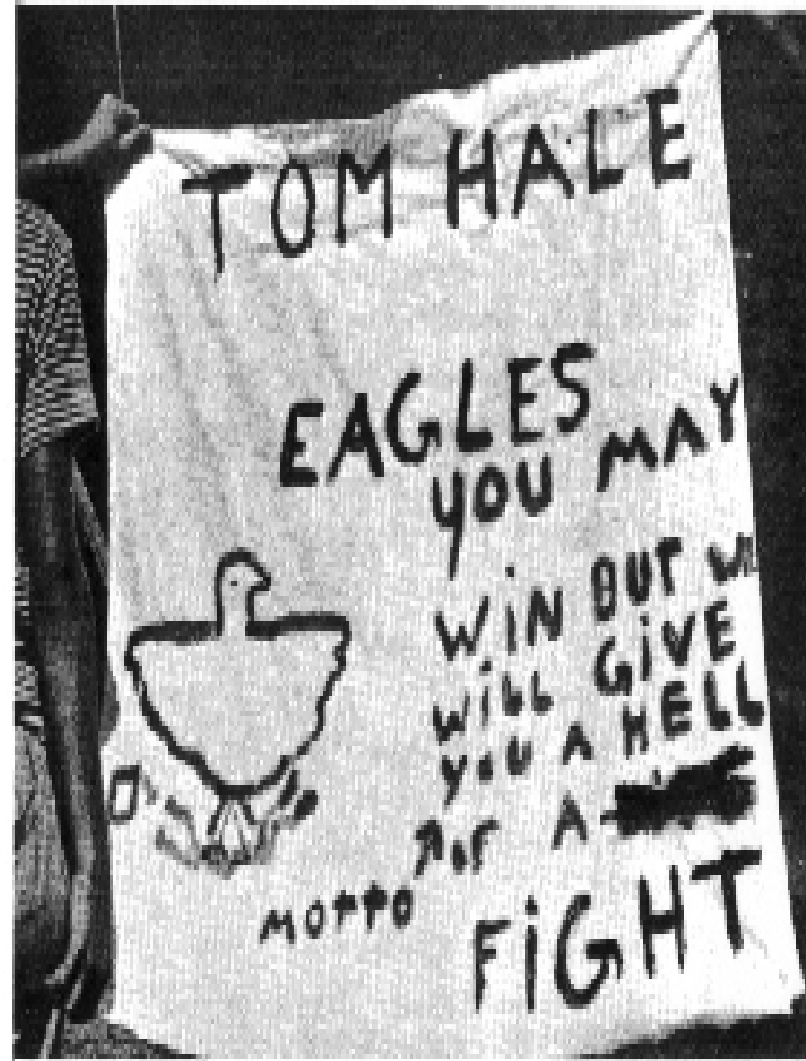
One of the Eagle banners during the tournament.

Stage 2: Intergroup Conflict

Other data illustrated how prejudice and stereotypes developed among the two groups.

1.) Boys developed stereotypes favorable towards in-groups and unfavorable towards out-groups.

End of Stage 2.
Stereotype Ratings of In-Group and Out-Group Members on Six
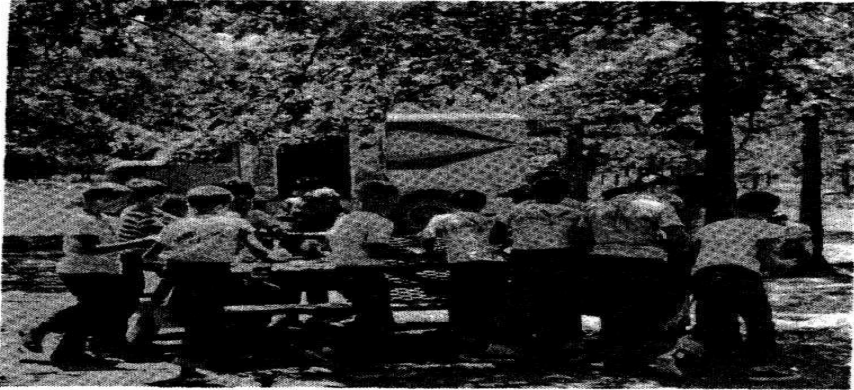Characteristics (Combined)

Stage 3: Intergroup Harmony

Experimenters tried to reduce intergroup conflict and in-group bias

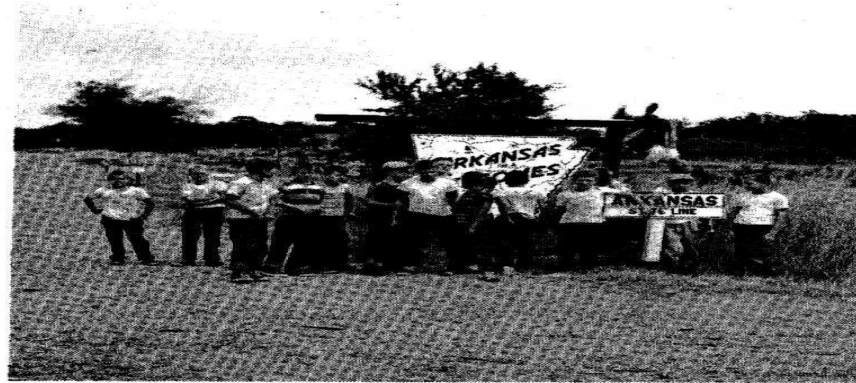Goals that could only be achieved if boys from both groups **cooperated**

- water supply malfunctioned
- bus broke down
- Joint meals and cooking

Joint meals on the overnight camp-out show intergroup mingling in preparation and se̶

Members from both groups asked to be
photographed on attaining the Arkansas