suggested that these shared attributes may provide grounds for mutual validation and approval during a period when social identities are developing. Similarity within children's peer groups may also reduce intragroup conflict and other threats to the group's cohesiveness and integrity.

Thus children choose to affiliate with peers who are like them, and within-group socialization processes can consolidate, amplify, or alter children's behavior and attitudes over time. Research on the socialization of children's attitudes and behavior within their peer group is relatively recent and largely limited to adolescents. The bulk of this research has been devoted to peer group affiliations among aggressive or delinquent adolescents. One of the strongest predictors of continuing aggression and problem behavior in adolescence is affiliation with peers who also use illegal substances or engage in other risk-taking, violent, or delinquent behaviors.

Thomas Dishion has coined the term "deviancy training" to describe the processes of reinforcement and approval within adolescent boys' affiliative networks that serve to maintain or increase such behavior and associated normative beliefs. Although less researched, similar processes have been shown to operate within affiliative networks formed on more positive attributes (such as academic achievement, in which members maintain or increase their similarity with respect to academically relevant behaviors). Some research has also shown that peer group affiliations can reduce a child's negative attitudes, such as racism, when the peer group's attitudes are more positive. Because of the heightened importance of peer group acceptance for adolescents, coupled with the salience of identity formation and general impressionability during this period, it is possible that peer group socialization effects are stronger or qualitatively different during adolescence than in adulthood. This issue has yet to be addressed, however.

An independent research literature on children's attitudes toward their own groups versus other groups has shown that, like adults, children have more positive attitudes toward their own group (ingroup favoritism) and more negative attitudes toward other groups (outgroup prejudice). The developmental picture is not yet clear, in part because of measurement limitations, but it appears that ingroup favoritism develops by age 5, whereas outgroup prejudice may be weaker until middle childhood. Also like adults, children's ingroup favoritism depends on factors such as the status of the child's group; children in low-status and/or minority groups are less positive about their own group and sometimes even favor the outgroup. This research area has been concerned primarily with explaining the childhood roots of social stereotyping and racial prejudice. It would be interesting and productive to integrate research and theory on children's peer group affiliation, acceptance, and socialization with work on the formation and maintenance of their intergroup attitudes.

Celia A. Brownell

See also Children: Stereotypes and Prejudice; Cliques; Gender and Behavior; Group Socialization; Inclusion/ Exclusion; Sociometric Choice

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CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION

Civil rights legislation is a broad term that may be applied to any laws or legal rulings designed to protect the basic human rights of individuals anywhere in the world. These rights include any of a

range of principles that ensure freedoms, liberties, and general happiness to which all humans are considered entitled from birth, such as free speech, religious freedom, participation in electoral processes, due legal processes in the court system, and so forth. The term *civil rights legislation* is most commonly used to refer to laws passed during the civil rights movement of the 1960s in the United States, but the term could be applied more broadly to describe legal action to protect human rights further back in history as well as across the globe. For example, civil rights legislation in the United States arguably began with the Constitution of 1787, and civil rights are a concern for all nations interested in ensuring rights and freedoms for its citizens. Thus, for example, the United Kingdom instituted affirmative action policies to ensure equal opportunities for Catholics and the poor, and South Africa established anti-apartheid measures to end to segregation.

In the United States, civil rights legislation is accomplished through bills passed into law, court rulings, and executive orders. The most salient examples of U.S. civil rights legislation have concerned Blacks and women, but civil rights legislation has been extended to a wide range of groups and people in society. Which groups deserve legal protection against civil rights violations and what constitutes a "civil right" remain points of controversy. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of civil rights legislation is to provide equal freedoms and liberties for those who are most threatened and who may not have the political voice for social change without such legislation. This entry presents a historical overview of civil rights legislation and related controversies, considers the impact of such laws, and describes monitoring and enforcement efforts.

Historical Background

Civil rights in the United States are enacted both by the passing of laws that promote civil rights and by the overturning of laws that threaten civil rights. These legal actions can take place in the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government at both the federal and local level. Legislative bodies can pass laws that enact greater civil rights protection or remove laws that threaten civil rights.

For example, the United States Congress passed a series of civil rights acts in 1957, 1960, and 1964 that provided further protection against discrimination for a wide range of groups, establishing protected classes such as race, sex, and nation of origin. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed literacy tests and other barriers to voting, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed discrimination in the housing market. In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act added the physically disabled to the list of protected classes.

Laws that threaten civil rights also can be deemed unconstitutional through judiciary decisions such as those handed down by the United States Supreme Court. For example, many schools in the early 20th century were racially segregated under the notion that the education system was "separate but equal"; however, the Supreme Court ruled this system unequal and unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, setting the stage for the mandatory desegregation of American schools.

The president of the United States may encourage civil rights through executive orders. For example, President Lincoln's executive order of 1862—the Emancipation Proclamation—set the stage for the abolition of slavery, and President Truman's executive order in 1948 formally desegregated the military, allowing Black and White soldiers to serve in the same units, equally.

The goal of American civil rights legislation is to ensure civil rights for all citizens and guarantee that those civil rights are applied equally across different groups of people. Much of the civil rights legislation in the United States is designed to protect classes of individuals who may be at greater risk of discrimination or harm. Currently protected groups at the federal level include those based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, age (that is, those 40 and over), disability, and veteran status. This protection is meant to prevent discriminatory treatment in such areas as employment, the housing market, voting access, and education.

Related Controversies

Controversies have emerged concerning the methods for ensuring civil rights protection, who should be protected, and what constitutes "civil rights."

One important controversy surrounds the issue of whether civil rights legislation should be approached in a "color-blind" or a "color-conscious" way. A color-blind approach puts the focus on protection of minorities through ensuring equal treatment regardless of minority or majority status, while a color-conscious approach puts the focus on preferential treatment of minorities as a means of overcoming more subtle or institutional discriminatory barriers.

Martin Luther King, Jr. famously endorsed a color-blind society where people would "not be judged by the color of their skin," but he did so in an era when blatant prejudice was far more common than it is now. Color-blind approaches today may be problematic, especially because they often involve the denial of real barriers that minorities continue to face. Striking a balance between ensuring equal treatment while helping to surmount existing barriers remains a challenge in the establishment of civil rights legislation.

Other controversies have emerged concerning which minority groups should be protected by civil rights legislation. Some groups are explicitly denied civil rights without much social outcry, such as convicted felons who are denied the right to vote in some states. However, the issue of protection can become quite controversial with respect to many groups, and civil rights legislation is often passed in the face of considerable public resistance. For example, the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Acts of the 1960s were signed into law despite considerable outspoken opposition. More recent times have seen resistance to the legal protection of certain immigrant populations or minorities based on sexual orientation. What makes a group deserving of civil rights protection is a point of ongoing, often heated, debate. For example, the passing of Proposition 8, an initiative on the November 8, 2008, California State ballot that denied same-sex couples the right to marry, continues to fuel heated conflict between liberals who opposed the proposition and many churches that supported it.

What is a "civil right" in the first place is also a point of controversy and is reflected in the language used to discuss civil rights. For example, distinctions have been made between "civil rights" and "special rights," with the term *civil rights* describing proposed legislation to protect groups that are generally seen as deserving protection, and the term *special rights* used disparagingly to refer to proposed legislation to protect groups that some people believe do not to deserve such protection. It could be argued that hate-crimes legislation, such as parts of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 that impose harsher sentencing for crimes against individuals based on their race, religion, and so on, is a kind of civil rights legislation designed to protect minorities from crimes directed against them because of their minority status. However, such laws have been criticized as unfairly endowing minorities with special rights or protections that should not differ from one group to another. Similar arguments against special rights have been made concerning various instantiations of affirmative action, as well as gay rights propositions.

Another point of controversy concerns legislation that restricts civil rights during times of particular danger or threat. For example, shortly after September 11, 2001, the Patriot Act was signed into law, lifting restrictions on electronic surveillance and monitoring on the grounds of increasing national security. While these laws are intended for the protection of the country, they are criticized for compromising the civil rights of those who do not pose a threat.

Effects of Civil Rights Legislation

Sociologists in the early 20th century doubted that civil rights legislation would affect public opinion, as exemplified by William Graham Sumner's observation that "stateways do not make folkways." This statement suggests that laws do not determine public opinion or cultural views, but that instead public opinion and cultural views determine laws.

Some would even argue that civil rights laws do not change people's attitudes toward the group being protected and may even have a negative effect for those groups. For example, such legislation may not remove prejudice, but instead may change the form of its expression from blatant forms to more subtle forms, as has been suggested by modern racism and sexism theorists. Political scientists have argued that civil rights legislation from the 1960s led to various backlashes, including the Southern shift from predominantly majority Democratic to majority Republican support. Similarly, social

dominance theorists have argued that advances in civil rights legislation for an oppressed group are often balanced through countermeasures that ensure the continuing balance of social power in favor of majority groups. Other research on "shifting standards" warns that the protection of various minorities may lead to the application of lower standards for evaluating their performance, which can also have harmful consequences.

Nevertheless, positive shifts in American attitudes toward Blacks since the passage of civil rights laws in 1960s have been documented, moving from majority endorsement of segregation and beliefs in the inferior ability of Blacks to a majority electing its first Black president in Barack Obama. Attitudes toward women also shifted toward greater equality following civil rights legislation protecting women.

Further questions remain concerning the impact of civil rights legislation on the attitudes and behaviors of the protected groups themselves. Does such legislation offer psychological relief to those it protects? Or does it introduce new psychological challenges, such as the reinforcement of the stereotype that minority groups inherently need protection? These questions are being increasingly researched and debated in the social sciences.

Monitoring Activities

Once civil rights legislation is enacted, it needs to be monitored and enforced to be effective. The passage of legislative acts, judicial rulings, and executive orders does not guarantee that civil rights will be established and upheld. Consequently, various public and private organizations have emerged in the United States to help monitor and enforce civil rights legislation. At the federal level, the 1957 Civil Rights Act established the United States Commission on Civil Rights to investigate civil rights violations, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was created in 1961 to monitor employment discrimination in the private sector.

Private organizations, too, have emerged to monitor enforcement of civil rights laws, such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Southern Poverty Law Center, legal associations committed to monitoring and prosecuting civil rights abuses within the purview of the law. At the

international level, organizations like Amnesty International monitor civil rights activities throughout the globe, including the United States, where policies such as prisoner detainment without due process and capital punishment practices have been criticized.

P. J. Henry

See also Affirmative Action; Civil Rights Movement; Desegregation; Discrimination; Diversity; Institutionalized Bias; Justice; Modern Forms of Prejudice

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CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The term *civil rights movement* refers to the activist efforts of Black Americans and their allies during a particular historical period (1955–1968) to claim certain basic civil rights previously withheld from Blacks and to end legalized segregation. These efforts were designed to overturn laws and customs of racial segregation, racialized disenfranchisement, and violence against Blacks. Thus the civil rights movement represents one of the most comprehensive and concerted efforts by U.S. citizens to bring about social changes that would both directly improve the lives of Blacks and