



Prejudice and Allport's Scale

Gordon Allport

People who are aware of, and ashamed of, their prejudices are well on the road to eliminating them. Gordon Allport

Gordon Allport, a psychologist, created **Allport's Scale** in 1954. It's a measure of the manifestation of **prejudice** in a society. The scale contains 5 stages of prejudice, ranked by the increasing harm they produce.

STAGE 1: ANTILOCUTION

Antilocution ("speaking against") means making **jokes** about another group, but also the expression of **hateful** opinions. In the former case it's also called **derogatory speech**, and in the latter case it's called **hate speech**. Both cases can be examples of **prejudice**, prejudice in the sense of an opinion reflecting negative stereotypes and negative images based on preconceived judgments rather than facts.

Antilocution is often believed to be harmless ("sticks and stones will break your bones but names will never hurt you"), but it can harm the **self-esteem** of the people of the targeted group, and it can clear the way for more harmful forms of prejudice. The line between violent words and violent acts is often very thin. The **self-image** of a group can be hurt, which can sometimes become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

STAGE 2: AVOIDANCE

People in a group are actively **avoided** by members of another group. Harm is done through isolation and by preparing the way for more harmful acts.

Xenophobia, or the fear of foreigners or strangers or of that which is foreign or strange, results in **exclusion**. This exclusion can take various forms:

STAGE 3: DISCRIMINATION

A group is **discriminated against** by denying them **equal access** to opportunities, goods and services. Discrimination is intended to harm a group by preventing it from achieving goals, getting education or jobs, etc.

STAGE 3B (ADDED LATER): SUBTLE AGGRESSION

This is an assumption of hierarchy, particularly hierarchy of power, an assumption that somebody has less knowledge because of their age, gender or race or other characteristics and that these people can be excluded in some way.

STAGE 4: PHYSICAL ATTACK

This has become known as **hate crime**. Groups are the victim of vandalism, the burning of property or violent attacks on someone's physical integrity such as lynchings, pogroms etc.

STAGE 5: EXTERMINATION

The extermination of a group through **genocide, ethnic cleansing** etc, World War 2, Rwanda, Bosnia