

CHAPTER 2

Origin and Maintenance of Stereotypes and Prejudice

In the introduction, we discussed the various ways researchers have defined the concepts “stereotype” and “prejudice.” In this chapter, we explore in greater detail the nature of stereotyping and prejudice, and in particular, we focus on how each begins and what factors facilitate their maintenance in our culture, in our memories, and in our daily social interactions. Questions about the origin and maintenance of stereotyping and prejudice have generated perhaps the most empirical and theoretical work among researchers, and there is a clear reason for this disproportionate focus on the origin issue (and the length of this chapter)—that is, if we can understand how stereotypes and prejudice originate and are maintained, we will be in a much better position to discover effective ways to reduce or even try to eliminate their often harmful effects. This is a specifically applied focus, in the tradition of some of the best research in social psychology. Indeed, the individual who most social psychologists regard as the “father of modern social psychology”—Kurt Lewin (1951)—suggested that social science, and psychology in particular, ought to have a strong applied focus with the aim of addressing social problems and informing social policy and legislation toward the goal of improving the welfare of humanity. We now turn to an in-depth examination of the fruits of this research over the last 100 years, to begin to understand the origin of stereotyping and prejudice.

THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL CATEGORIES

Categorization

As you will recall from our discussion of the history of research on stereotyping in Chapter 1, the way researchers and indeed society regarded stereotypes has changed dramatically over the decades. Specifically, stereotyping was once thought to be a sign of the moral deficiency of the stereotyper, or even as an indicator of repressed unconscious hostility or a “fragile ego” (Allport, 1954). However, developments in cognitive psychology in the

1950s and 1960s led to some changes in our understanding of how the mind perceives and processes information. In short, cognitive psychologists found that the human mind seems to almost automatically classify or categorize similar objects in the environment (Gardner, 1985). This tendency is pervasive and is present early in life (Ramsey, Langlois, Hoss, Rubenstein, & Griffin, 2004). Indeed, infants as young as 3 months can categorize sounds (Ferry, Hespos, & Waxman, 2010) and determine the gender of a speaker (Levy & Haaf, 1994). By age 6, girls are less likely to think that someone who is “really, really smart” is a girl (Bian, Leslie, & Cimpian, 2017). At about the same age, White children show automatic prejudice against Black individuals on par with adults (Baron & Banaji, 2006). Such evidence of very early categorization and internalization of stereotypes led researchers to change their conceptualization of the nature of stereotyping. Stereotypes were no longer regarded as the product of “lazy” thinking by the uneducated or those with “moral deficiencies.” Instead, most researchers have taken Allport’s lead and now regard prejudice and stereotypes as at least partly a natural consequence of cognition (Nelson, 2016). Let us turn now to a more in-depth consideration of the reasons we categorize people and the influence of categorization on person perception.

Why We Categorize

At this point you may be wondering, “Why do we categorize at all? Why can’t we just treat people as individuals?” The reason is that humans have a limited-capacity cognitive system that cannot simultaneously process *all* of the available information in our social environment. Because we have a need to understand and even anticipate the behavior of others, humans have developed ways around our limited cognitive system. One of the best ways is categorization. We categorize people (and objects, ideas, etc.) on the basis of shared features, or even shared time and space (Gillespie, Shropshire & Johnson, 2023). Based on Aristotle’s principle of association, we assume that things that are similar on the basis of one feature (or occur together) will likely have other notable similarities on a number of dimensions (Lundin, 1979). In other words, we are motivated to understand people, and categorizing them can serve this goal when we can’t get to know them as individuals.

Consider the category of “blonde-haired people.” In the United States, there are a number of assumptions about blonde-haired people, and these assumptions suggest that one’s hair color leads to some similarity in behavior, personality, or attitudes among the category members—that is, once we know that someone is blonde, we believe we can infer other information about them—for example, that “Blondes have more fun.” This assumes that people with this similar feature are either (1) fun people; (2) tend to attract fun people; or (3) are more likely to be involved in fun activities, or any combination of the three. But, why would we categorize people on the basis of their hair color? It doesn’t seem to be a useful way of categorizing people. We might just as well categorize people on the basis of the length of their right thumbnail. The basis for categorizing people can be informative (e.g., according to their support of a particular political candidate, we would assume these category members share other attitudes on social and political issues) or can be uninformative (as in the case of categorizing people according to their thumbnails). As we see throughout this text, far from being geared toward perfect rationality and accuracy, human cognition is often geared toward “good enough” (i.e., “satisficing”; Kahneman, 2011; Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982). We may want to get

to know someone, but may lack the time or opportunity, leaving us with a relatively limited impression based largely on their social identities. Or perhaps we're disinterested in getting to know them, or even motivated *not* to get to know them. In the social perception process, there are many factors that influence the way we perceive and evaluate other people.

Although it's likely that we categorize most people we perceive most of the time, this isn't always the case (Bargh, 1989). Specifically, upon perceiving more abstract category labels (e.g., Hispanic, woman, accountant), stereotypes for that category are often automatically activated. Yet when seeing a member of one of these groups, we do not always think of all of the stereotypes for the groups (racial, gender, age, and so on) to which the person belongs (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, Thorn, & Castelli, 1997). Macrae and his colleagues suggest that the way the person categorizes an individual depends on the perceiver's motives, cognitions, and affect. For example, if you're buying ice cream at 2:00 A.M. and someone happens to be standing in the way of the ice cream cooler, you may see the individual only as an obstruction, not a person of a race, gender, and so on. Nevertheless, psychologists generally agree that categorizing people is more often the rule than the exception. We turn now to a discussion of how categorization influences our perception of social information.

Types of Categorization

When we perceive an individual, we tend to automatically classify that person along a few categories: race, gender, and age (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). These are the major ways we first categorize someone partly because these are the most immediate and obvious features of an individual, and because these categories yield information about useful distinctions in social behavior between those in different groups. These categories—often referred to as “primitive” or “privileged” categories—have been accorded special status by researchers because they have strong influences on how the perceiver interprets other information about the perceived individual (Fiske, Lin, & Neuberg, 1999; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). This process occurs so quickly that with repeated use, the categorization of an individual can become virtually automatic and nonconscious (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Gilbert, 1989). Primitive categories are used so often in perceiving people that they are central points around which stereotypes develop. Some research has suggested that merely being exposed to the face of a White or Black person (Banaji & Greenwald, 1994; Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995), or words associated with a gender group (e.g., “nurse,” “mechanic,” “Black,” “White”; Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Dovidio, Evans, & Tyler, 1986), for example, can instantaneously (i.e., within milliseconds) evoke the associated cognitions, beliefs, and feelings one has for that group. This research implies that any attempts to ignore social categories and be “colorblind,” however well intended, are likely futile.

Why do race, gender, and age attract such attention and have such an influence on impressions? Although speculative, evolutionary psychology provides some possible reasons (Cosmides, Tooby, & Kurzban, 2003). Throughout human history, survival and reproduction were paramount concerns, and disease, starvation, and violence posed persistent threats. To the extent that early humans evolved the capacity to tell—from some distance—whether an approaching human posed a threat, they would have had more time to respond to it. Regarding age, a young child would be unlikely to pose a serious

threat, but an adult might. Regarding gender, men have, throughout history, been the primary originators of violence. Regarding race, things get a little more complicated. Given the relatively late development of what we refer to today as race, it is unlikely that early humans had any conceptualization of it. However, they did have concepts of family and tribe, and anyone who “looked different” was more likely to be foe than friend; any evolved predisposition to identify such a person would have survival benefits, not only to avoid (or have the upper hand) in conflict but also to avoid contagious disease to which one’s group may lack immunity (Neuberg & Schaller, 2016). Thus, although it cannot be said that “racism is part of human nature,” a suspicion of those who appear different from one’s own groups likely is. This may partly explain why infants as young as 3 months old, who have little to no experience with social groups beyond their own caregivers, prefer to gaze at faces of their own race (Liu et al., 2015).

Of course, most of us have more stereotypes than those based solely on race, gender, and age, so there is more to the story than what evolutionary theory has to offer. Moreover, people also often develop stereotypes at the intersection of these primitive categories. For example, your stereotype of young men is probably different from your stereotype of older men, just as your stereotype of White women is probably different from that of Black women. Only relatively recently have researchers begun studying the development of intersectional stereotypes, which incorporate more than one basis of categorization, often regarding lower-status and marginalized identities (Crenshaw, 2017; Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015). Some work suggests that one basic category (e.g., race) can influence how people process information about another category (e.g., gender). For example, starting at around age 5, seeing that someone is Black makes people less likely to categorize them as a woman (e.g., in a speeded categorization task, both children and adults are quicker to identify a Black individual as a man than as a woman, and are more likely to miscategorize a Black woman as a Black man; Lei, Leshin, & Rhodes, 2020). From this work it appears that racial stereotypes influence gender perception. Other work suggests that stereotypes of basic categories alone (based only on race, gender, and age) are often sufficient to explain the different stereotypes people have and how they treat people based on these intersecting identities (Hester, Payne, Brown-Iannuzzi, & Gray, 2020).

How Children Learn Social Categories

Developmental psychologists have illuminated the active role children take in learning about their social worlds (Killen & Smetana, 2015). According to Bigler and Liben (2007), children’s social categories develop in three stages, each of which involves active attention and learning. First, children readily notice obvious physical differences between people, including skin tone, body shape and size, and group size (i.e., rare groups tend to stand out). Whether or not they hear about it from parents or teachers, they notice that nearly all of their teachers are women, and nearly all of the U.S. presidents are White men. As we’ve described, there may be an evolved, genetic basis for people to attend to the primitive categories of race, gender, and age. Probably not coincidentally, children’s sensory systems are remarkably adept at detecting a person’s race, gender, and approximate age, starting as early as 3 months (e.g., Levy & Haaf, 1994).

Second, as a part of natural category learning, children begin to group individuals according to these characteristics—that is, they start developing social categories.

Third, after noticing differences between people and lumping them into social categories, children start to attend to any differences they observe between them (or learn what others tell them about the categories), and hence start to develop stereotypes and prejudices. Later in the chapter we discuss in more detail the roles of parents, peers, media, and other socialization processes in the development of prejudice. The point we wish to emphasize for now is that starting at a very young age, children attend to and reason about difference between social groups whether or not the adults in their lives ever broach these topics.

One interesting theory suggests that children develop social categories when society emphasizes group differences, numeric differences between groups, and presents the importance of group membership. As such, society has greater control over the activation of these prejudices than previously believed (Bigler & Liben, 2006, 2007). Children notice when adults make distinctions between groups (e.g., when a teacher separates students by gender or academic performance). When adults make *functional* use of social categories, often so will children. For example, in one study teachers separated their elementary school students into two groups, with one group donning yellow shirts and the other group donning blue shirts (Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997). In some conditions of the study, that's all teachers did: They essentially ignored the shirt colors and conducted class as usual. In other conditions, teachers made functional use of the categories: The yellow group might work on some assignment while the blue group worked on another. Only when teachers made this functional distinction did children start to categorize their classmates as "yellow shirts" and "blue shirts."

There's an additional "essential" thing that children readily learn about the nature of social categories. Very young children often have amusing ideas about how people become members of primitive social categories: They may believe that a careful application of paint or dye could change their race, or that playing with certain toys might change their gender (Slaby & Frey, 1975). Eventually, they begin to develop *category constancy*, which is the idea that people are generally stuck with their race and gender. Such essentialist thinking can develop based on subtle differences in the ways adults around them speak about social groups. For example, in one study, 4-year-old children who were read books that discussed individuals from a fictitious group in generic terms (e.g., "Zarpies are scared of ladybugs") were more likely to develop essentialist notions of the group compared to children who were read a book with more specific language (e.g., "This Zarpie is scared of ladybugs"; Rhodes, Leslie, & Tworek, 2012). Once they develop category constancy, children generally start to think that there is something deep and meaningful about many of the social categories they've learned, that there is some inner "essence" to being a boy or a girl, or a Black or a White person (Pauker, Ambady, & Apfelbaum, 2010).

The notion of racial group constancy develops around age 6, and after it does, the acquisition of prejudices and stereotypes about race accelerate (Rutland, Cameron, Bennett, & Ferrell, 2005). Troublingly, when younger children observe differences between groups (e.g., different class performance between Black and White students), their default attributional tendency is to explain those differences in terms of essential difference between the groups (e.g., that "Black kids are just naturally not as good at school"), and not in terms of how those groups are treated (Hussak & Cimpian, 2015). In fact, both children and adults tend to err on the side of explaining people's outcomes in

terms of their inner traits instead of their social contexts, a judgmental bias that social psychologists call the fundamental attribution error (Ross, 2018).

Interestingly, this process of making meaningful distinctions based on race does not happen similarly for minority groups and majority groups. White majority-group children in the United States, for example, tend to learn about the social category “Black” before “White.” In a sense, their Whiteness is “invisible.” This is less true for minority-group children, who tend to learn about both majority and minority social categories as they develop (Pauker et al., 2010). Later we discuss the implications of majority and minority status for the development of prejudices. However, there is one critical distinction that all children (and adults) make, with vast implications for prejudice, and that is between who is “us” and who is “them.”

FROM SOCIAL CATEGORIES TO INGROUP FAVORITISM

Ingroups and Outgroups

People tend to form groups for a variety of reasons and motivations, to satisfy a variety of purposes, and these groups are formed on the basis of a virtually limitless array of membership criteria. One of the most basic ways we partition people in our social environment is into **ingroups** (groups to which we believe we belong) and **outgroups** (groups to which we believe we do not belong; Allport, 1954). One’s ingroups can be quite numerous. For example, ingroups for Todd would include males; males in California; professors; psychology professors; male professors; 56-year-olds; people of Norwegian descent; people who grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and so on. How you partition people in these groups depends on your current motives, fears, goals, and expectations (Allport, 1954). When at work, the most salient ingroup for Todd (and Michael) may be fellow professors. When at a concert, the most salient ingroup may be fellow concert attendees. This has implications for information processing about a given individual in a particular environment. At the concert, we may be most cognizant of being a member of the group “concert audience,” and the concert environment provides certain expectations for how we perceive the behavior of ingroup concert-goers. For example, at the concert, jumping up and down is seen as normative behavior. As such, an individual performing this behavior likely wouldn’t grab attention, and thus would not be very memorable. However, at the workplace, seeing a colleague jump up and down would be very unusual, it would capture attention, and we would remember that incident (and that strange professor!). Indeed, research by Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor, 1981; Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978) demonstrated the effect of one’s salient groups on perception and memory for social information. These researchers found that when participants were exposed to a discussion group of Black and White individuals, participants were more accurate at recalling the race of the person who made a particular comment, but were less accurate at specifying the particular individual who said the statement. Thus, when ingroups and outgroups are salient, it appears that people tend to perceive and remember information in terms of social categories, and not in terms of individuals (Crawford, Sherman, & Hamilton, 2002).

Dividing people into groups to which we either belong or do not belong has a number of implications for how we think about a given individual. Individuals who are part

of an outgroup are perceived to share similar characteristics, motives, and other features. However, when it comes to our own ingroups, we like to think that our groups comprise unique individuals who happen to share one (or two) common features (e.g., one's occupation). Thus, we think that the outgroup members are "all alike," while our ingroup members are all different and nuanced. The tendency to think in these terms has been referred to as **outgroup homogeneity** (Hamilton, 1976; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992). Perceiving outgroups as all alike, and our ingroups as diverse, helps us satisfy two major goals. First, we greatly simplify our social environment by categorizing others in that way. Second, we enhance our self-concept by thinking that we do not belong to a homogeneous, cookie-cutter type of group by attributing great individuality to our ingroup members (Hamilton & Trolie, 1986).

In addition to outgroup homogeneity, individuals tend to ascribe a host of positive attributes to ingroup members (Hamilton & Trolie, 1986), a tendency referred to as **ingroup bias** (or ingroup favoritism; Buttellmann & Bohm, 2014). One question among researchers historically has been whether ingroup favoritism necessarily leads to outgroup negativity. The reasoning used to be that thinking favorably about one's group meant, in part, that one was motivated to distinguish one's group favorably *relative to other groups*, and this provided the basis for not merely outgroup homogeneity but also outgroup derogation (Devine, 1995). In other words, in favoring our ingroups, we also tend to put down or attribute negative characteristics to outgroups. However, research has shown that the assumption that we necessarily derogate outgroups based on ingroup favoritism is not always supported (Brewer, 1979, 1999; Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, & Tyler, 1990; Quattrone & Jones, 1980)—that is, contrary to what used to be a prevailing assumption in the prejudice literature, later research indicates that just because we may favor our ingroups, it does *not* mean that we also *must* inevitably dislike outgroups. One factor that may mediate the need or motivation to derogate an outgroup is whether one's ingroup is in the majority or minority. Data from Moscatelli, Hewstone, and Rubini (2017) indicated that while majority members engaged in ingroup favoritism, they didn't show outgroup derogation. However, minority-group members engaged in both ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation (an interesting dynamic we return to later in the chapter). What else might lead to outgroup derogation stemming from ingroup favoritism? One study suggests that those who are more religious may be more likely to engage in outgroup derogation (Johnson, Rowatt, & LeBouff, 2012). This is consistent with other research that shows that the more orthodox one is in one's religion, the less tolerant the person is of others who are different (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of religion).

In another study, researchers examined the facilitative/inhibitory impact of trait descriptors of one's ingroups versus outgroups (Perdue et al., 1990, experiment 3). Participants' reaction times to positive person descriptors (e.g., "friendly") were faster when preceded by a prime word that denoted one's ingroup (i.e., words like "us," "we," and "our"). Their reaction times were slower to negative person descriptors when preceded by those ingroup primes. These findings indicate that ingroup words automatically activate primarily positive concepts, as evidenced by facilitated categorization to later positive traits while inhibiting categorization to later negative traits. When participants were presented with outgroup prime words (i.e., "they" "them"), their reaction times to negative person descriptors was not facilitated. So, thinking about outgroups does not necessarily lead one to be prone to readily process and accept negative information about

that outgroup (Brewer, 2017). On the other hand, it should be noted that the more an outgroup is seen as homogeneous, the greater the likelihood for perceivers to use group or stereotype labels to process information about the outgroup (and its members). This thinking can then lead to outgroup derogation and discrimination (Miller & Brewer, 1986).

Exposure to members of a stereotyped outgroup can lead to either a more homogeneous (and more stereotypical) or heterogeneous (and more positive) view of the outgroup, depending on the valence of the exposure (i.e., negative or positive). Specifically, when the outgroup member does something bad, or has negative characteristics, one's stereotypes of the outgroup will be reinforced, and the interaction reduces the likelihood that the perceiver will wish to interact further with the group, and the perceiver's evaluation of the group becomes more negative (Rosenfield, Greenberg, Folger, & Borys, 1982). In one study, Henderson-King (1994) examined how White men would react to a White or Black couple having an argument or a neutral conversation. Henderson-King specifically wanted to find out how this reaction would affect their interaction with a subsequent White or Black confederate who asked him for directions. Results indicated that, after watching the Black couple argue, participants interacted with the Black confederate for a shorter period of time (showing avoidance behaviors). Similarly, Henderson-King and Nisbett (1996) found that when White participants were exposed to a Black individual being rude to the experimenter, they were more likely to negatively stereotype Black Americans and avoid further contact with a Black individual. Interestingly, even hearing about a Black American committing a crime can lead White individuals to reinforce their stereotypes of Black Americans and to perceive them as more homogeneous (Henderson-King, 1999). In contrast, positive encounters with members of a negatively stereotyped group tend to lead perceivers to (1) show more sympathetic beliefs about the group (Bodenhausen, Schwarz, Bless, & Wänke, 1995; Hayward, Tropp, Hornsey, & Barlow, 2017), (2) be open to further interactions with the outgroup (Rosenfield et al., 1982), and (3) be less affected by negative intergroup interactions in the present (Paolini et al., 2014). Such "good contact" between groups can lead to durable prejudice reduction, which we address in Chapter 12.

Research has revealed an even more fundamental element of ingroup versus outgroup categorization: The dimension on which people are viewed as ingroup or outgroup members does not need to be a meaningful one (e.g., racial, political) in order for ingroup and outgroup biases to occur (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). In a classic series of experiments, Tajfel and his colleagues asked people to estimate how many dots were on a page. He then assigned people to groups ostensibly based on their ability to correctly estimate the number of dots (or to come as close as possible to the correct number). Unknown to the participants, their scores on the task were not recorded, and they were arbitrarily assigned to their group. They were then asked to allocate resources given to them to either a fellow group member (e.g., an "overestimator"), or a member of the other group (e.g., an "underestimator"). Results showed that participants tended to allocate more resources to their ingroup members in a manner consistent with ingroup favoritism. These results have been taken to imply that even groups that have no meaningful basis for their membership, termed **minimal groups**, would exhibit the same ingroup favoritism found in more meaningful ingroups (i.e., groups based on race or gender; Brewer, 1979; Otten, 2016).

Minimal groups are called “minimal” because they have none of the usual features of group structure: a coherent group structure, interaction, a set of norms for the group members, interactions with other groups, and so on (Brown, 1995). Researchers have found that even when people are arbitrarily, but not explicitly, assigned to a group (e.g., when the experimenter flips a coin to determine group membership), they display ingroup favoritism and outgroup homogeneity (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Rabbie & Horwitz, 1969). These data are interesting in that they suggest that the basis for ingroup favoritism may be neither a perceived dispositional similarity nor mere arbitrary categorization, but the common fate of one’s group members that seems to be the catalyst for ingroup favoritism and outgroup homogeneity (Rothbart & Lewis, 1994). Specifically, being grouped together with others tends to make salient the generalized norm of preference for group members over others, and this seems to be a plausible, parsimonious explanation for the pervasive ingroup favoritism found among virtually any group (Horwitz & Rabbie, 1989)—preferring our ingroups is so ingrained that we do it even when the groups are relatively meaningless.

Ingroup favoritism and outgroup negativity tends to be initiated and perpetuated by our motivation to see our groups as special, and better than other groups. Two experiments reported by Sherman, Klein, Laskey, and Wyer (1998) suggest that we rather implicitly (i.e., without our conscious awareness) remember positive information about our ingroups and negative information about outgroups. We tend to explain away or otherwise conveniently forget negative information about our ingroups and positive information about outgroups. Again, this tendency is so pervasive and well learned that it becomes automatic early in life, and perpetually influences the way we remember ingroup and outgroup relevant information. Some research suggests that after initial minimal group categorization, one’s self-esteem becomes linked to the group. It is this association between the self and the group (Gawronski, Bodenhausen, & Becker, 2007) that strengthens our identification with the group (Roth & Steffens, 2014).

Research by Boldry and Kashy (1999) indicates that outgroup homogeneity tends to be strong, but that ingroup favoritism may not be as universal as we thought. Their data suggest that group status moderates the tendency to engage in ingroup favoritism, such that high-status groups showed ingroup favoritism only on one (of several) dimension, and low-status groups sometimes show *outgroup favoritism*. Early evidence for outgroup favoritism comes from Clark and Clark’s doll studies (Clark, 1963; Clark & Clark, 1947), where Black children often preferred to play with White dolls (in Chapter 7 we discuss these studies and the phenomenon of outgroup favoritism in greater detail). Among low-status children, sometimes no preference for one’s ingroup is observed (e.g., Setoh et al., 2019), and occasionally outgroup favoritism is observed (e.g., Newheiser, Dunham, Merrill, Hoosain, & Olson, 2014). These data are more interesting because they were collected not from artificially created groups (e.g., minimal groups) in the laboratory but from naturally existing groups. However, and despite these observations that low-status groups sometimes fail to show ingroup favoritism, there is evidence that such individuals from low-status groups creatively compare themselves to high-status groups to retain a positive ingroup evaluation. For example, they may choose non-status-related traits to create ingroup-favoring comparisons with the high-status group (e.g., “They may have more power and status, but we’re more kind and creative.”; Boldry & Gaertner, 2006). These and other findings suggest that ingroup favoritism is still generally the rule.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPES

Social Learning

Once we establish social categories, we learn about them. Through direct or observational learning of the rewards and norms that one's society (and one's parents, or other significant others) offers for believing and behaving in certain ways, children begin to acquire attitudes and beliefs about the world. In the search for clues as to the origin of stereotypes and prejudice, much research has focused on the role that parents and other influential adults play (Clark, 1963; Katz, 1983; Pettigrew, 1958; Pirchio, et al., 2018; Rosenfield & Stephan, 1981). In preferential looking tasks (where infants are shown pairs of images and eye-tracking devices determine what the infants prefer to look at), newborns—whose eyesight is poor—do not show an own-race preference. However, by 3 months they do (Kelly et al., 2005), and this tendency has been shown across cultures (Kelly et al., 2007). By age 2, children prefer to play with toys associated with their own gender (Todd, Barry, & Thommessen, 2017). By age 5, they show distinct recognition of, and preferences for, some groups over others (including race and gender preferences; Goodman, 1952). Allport (1954) suggested, and later research confirmed (Miklikowska, 2016), that there is a link between the prejudiced attitudes of the parent, and the development of such attitudes in their children, although we see later that the link is complicated. Allport supported the idea that children of parents who were authoritarian (i.e., parents who expected obedience, deference, and who punished harshly) were more likely to develop prejudiced attitudes. Allport also argued that it is important to distinguish between active *teaching* and passive *development* of stereotyped attitudes and prejudice. Some parents explicitly teach their children rather directly about their attitudes and values, and specifically communicate their stereotypes and prejudices to the child. Other children develop prejudiced attitudes as a result of observation of the stereotyped attitudes and behaviors of their parents. In these instances, Allport suggests, "prejudice was not *taught* by the parent, but was *caught* by the child from an infected atmosphere" (p. 300). In a moment, we return to the influence of authoritarian parents and the taught versus caught distinction.

Childhood Intergroup Contact

Some interesting research by Wood and Sonleitner (1996) suggests that childhood interracial contact is a good predictor of adult stereotyping and prejudice. The authors had White adults indicate whether, when they were growing up, they (1) lived in a neighborhood in which Black individuals also lived, (2) belonged to any clubs or churches in which Black individuals were also members, and (3) ever attended a school where Black students also attended. They found that people who had more interracial contact were significantly less prejudiced than those who were rather isolated from Black individuals when they were children. While these results are interesting, they raise important questions. At what age does interracial contact start to matter? And does the nature of the contact matter? Does casual and fleeting contact have any impact on prejudice reduction, or must that contact be close and personal? There's also the concern of memory biases: Did adults misremember their past experiences based on their current attitudes?

Some researchers have addressed a few of these questions. For example, Bar-Haim, Ziv, Lamy, and Hodes (2006) examined the same- and other-race looking preferences

of 3-month-olds as a function of their social environments. Whether Black or White, infants in homogeneous environments (where most of the people they encountered were of their own race) preferred to look at same-race photos. However, infants in more heterogeneous racial environments did not show a preference for one race or another in their looking behavior. Other work suggests that childhood contact with outgroups appears to have a positive impact, at least for majority-group children. In one study, White children ages 7–10 who attended racially heterogeneous schools showed less racial prejudice than White children who attended mostly White schools (McGlothlin & Killen, 2010). However, among minority children, contact does not necessarily lead to reduced prejudice (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). This could be for a number of reasons. Minority children tend to have greater exposure to outgroups than majority-group children do. The nature of that contact could be different as well. For example, minority children may be exposed to a more diverse set of majority-group individuals. And, as we see next, majority and minority families differ in how they discuss race.

Transmission of Values in Families

We've seen that prejudice is not necessarily inborn, but neither is it the case that race is irrelevant to a child's perception of the world until they're much older. We have discussed research that racial attitudes gradually develop in the first years of life (Bigler & Liben, 2007; Clark, 1963). Indeed, research repeatedly has shown that most 3- and 4-year-olds show an awareness of racial cues, and even show a preference for one race over others (Katz, 1983; Dunham, Chen, & Banaji, 2013). As children get older, their attitudes about racial groups become more coherent and complex. Indeed, there is little difference between the racial attitudes of sixth graders and those of high school students or even adults (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Clark, 1963). So, children clearly *learn* prejudiced attitudes and stereotypes about others. But where do they learn these attitudes?

Parents are an early source of information about the world, and children are influenced by this information. Recall that Allport (1954) suggested that children develop stereotypes and prejudice either directly "taught" to them by their parents (or other family members) or these attitudes are "caught" in a family environment that promotes such negative outgroup attitudes. Indeed, research supports this assertion. Overt instruction in prejudiced attitudes, as in the case with highly prejudiced individuals (e.g., White supremacists), certainly has a strong impact on the intergroup attitude development of young children (Blee, 2002), leading a child to espouse with the same fervor and conviction the negative beliefs and feelings toward the outgroups as those voiced by the parents.

On the other hand, meta-analyses reveal that the simple correlation between parental prejudice and child prejudice is only moderate at best (Degner & Dalege, 2013). Some studies show very little correspondence between parental prejudice and child prejudice, at least among majority-group members (Aboud & Doyle, 1996). Why might this be? Primarily it is because majority-group parents rarely, if ever, discuss matters of prejudice with their children. In fact, they often actively discourage it, to the point where White children tend to avoid broaching the topic of race by the time they are 10 or 11 (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). In one study, for example, White parents were randomly assigned to have conversations about different topics (including race and racism) with their White children (Vittrup & Holden, 2011). When

instructed to talk about race, only 10% of White parents complied! So perhaps it's not surprising that, when prodded, White parents and their children are remarkably bad at guessing each other's racial attitudes (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012).

However, parents still impact their children's prejudices, and they can do so without even talking about it (i.e., prejudice is caught rather than taught). And remember, children are motivated to learn about and make sense of the world—they pick up on things. Jokes, overt and subtle intergroup behavior, derogatory labels (or slang words), and even subtle nonverbal cues used by parents in reference to other groups can influence the attitudes the child develops about those groups (Katz, 1983; Rohan & Zanna, 1996). In one study, for example, preschoolers showed a preference for groups they had earlier observed being treated with more positive nonverbal behavior and avoided group members whom they'd observed treated more negatively (Skinner, Olson, & Meltzoff, 2020). So, it seems that when a child sees a respected adult frown at, avoid, or exclude members of certain groups, they not only notice, they also come to dislike that group themselves.

Under what conditions, then, do parents' influence their children's prejudices? One simple and intuitive finding is that children's prejudices are similar to their parents' prejudices when the children identify more with the parents (Sinclair, Dunn, & Lowery, 2005). Rohan and Zanna (1996) also discovered that an important factor is whether the parents exhibited those harsh parenting styles discussed earlier (i.e., right-wing authoritarian [RWA]), but not as simply as Allport (1954) earlier predicted (see Chapter 4; Altemeyer, 1996; Fraley, Griffin, Belsky, & Roisman, 2012). In this research, adult children of low-RWA parents were similar in attitudes to their parents. The relationship between the intergroup attitudes of high-RWA parents and those of their children was a bit more complex, depending on whether the child saw the parent as responsive (e.g., encouraging discussions, explaining the reasons behind requests). Those who viewed their high-RWA parents as responsive were much more attitudinally similar to their parents, compared to those who viewed their parents as unresponsive. While more research is needed to clarify these findings, it appears that children adopt attitudes and values similar to their parents, except when they perceive their parents as both demanding (a major feature of high-RWA adults) and unresponsive—that is, the lack of attention and consideration of the unresponsive high-RWA parent seems to make the child much less willing to adopt similar attitudes and values (perhaps because there is little incentive for doing so).

In sum, it seems likely that a child's prejudices will most derive from the child's parents when the (1) child is identified with their parents, (2) parents are clear in communicating their prejudices, and (3) parents are responsive to that child. However, children still encode nonverbal cues directed at outgroups that can also lead to prejudice (Skinner et al., 2020). Parents with more extreme attitudes tend to communicate more about their prejudices to their children, leading to a stronger child–parent prejudice correspondence (Blee, 2002). Finally, it is also important to acknowledge that parents choose the neighborhoods in which they raise their children; the social events they attend; and hence, the kinds of intergroup contact their children have—all of these can impact intergroup attitudes.

Influence of Stereotypes on Cognition in Children

Stereotypes have a strong influence on a child's perception of their ingroups and outgroups (Aboud, 1988). Corenblum, Annis, and Young (1996) and Aboud (2003) found

that majority children held more positive attitudes toward their own group, and more negative attitudes toward outgroups. Interestingly, minority-group members also held more positive views of the majority group than even their own ingroup (see also Setoh et al., 2019). When asked to explain successful performances of majority-group members, both majority-group children and minority-group children made positive, internal, and optimistic attributions. However, both groups explained successful performances of minority-group members as due to luck. Majority- and minority-group members tend to remember more positive and fewer negative behaviors about the majority group, and more negative and fewer positive behaviors about the minority group (Corenblum, 2003). McKown and Weinstein (2003) found that between ages 6 and 10, majority children move from being virtually oblivious to others' stereotypes about their own ingroup, to being able to infer others' stereotypes. These researchers also found that children from stigmatized groups are aware of stereotypes about their group from a very young age, and they tend to show stereotype threat effects (see Chapter 7) on stereotype-relevant tasks such that anxiety about confirming stereotypes about their group impedes their performance. Stereotypes also influence overall cognitive performance in children in much the same way that they do in adults. Ambady, Shih, Kim, and Pittinsky (2001) found that activation of negative stereotypes of children's own ingroups impeded, but positive stereotypes facilitated, performance on a math test in young children (kindergarten–grade 2) and older children (grades 6–8).

STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE IN THE MEDIA

Before continuing, please take a moment to reflect on the innocent days of your youth, before you became jaded and suspicious of information on the internet. Earlier we discussed how a first major influence, parents, plays a role in the development of stereotyped beliefs and negative outgroup affect. As children internalize the values of their parents, they are also paying attention to the overt and covert messages about intergroup relations they receive from social media, movies, television, and video games. When we consume media, rarely do we scrutinize its veracity; mostly we just want to be entertained. We tend to use the media as a tool to help us decide the pervasiveness and acceptability of our beliefs and attitudes. If one routinely sees stereotypes portrayed in the media, then that individual may come to believe that these attitudes represent the "normal" or mainstream view of society. Stereotypes are portrayed in all types of media. As one example, try to count all the times you saw a show in which a man is shown cleaning the house. Although we suspect the situation has improved (it's hard to find data on this question), you may have difficulty thinking of examples. That is just one way in which media portray (and seem to endorse) sexist gender roles (see Chapter 8 for a more extensive discussion of sexism in the media).

Another example of the intergroup beliefs that people can form from the media is the portrayal of crime in the United States. Specifically, a common belief among many Americans is that African Americans (more than other racial groups) are more likely to engage in criminal activity. One reason this belief exists is that African Americans are disproportionately represented in the news and other media as the perpetrators of crime, and White individuals are more likely to be portrayed as the victims of such crimes (Gaur, 2020; Ruscher, 2001). But, if the media merely report the news, and it

happens to be the case that African Americans are more often identified as the perpetrator of the crime, then shouldn't it be reasonable to assume that African Americans are indeed more likely to engage in criminal activity?

To answer that question, we need to be clear on the assumptions upon which the question rests. It assumes that the media are objective reporters of news and are not selectively leaving out some news stories or are otherwise biased in their portrayal of the news (specifically, crime reports). In other words, if the media were mere unbiased conduits of the actual statistical frequency of the crimes committed by all racial groups, then if one saw a disproportionate number of one group as the perpetrators' crime, it would be entirely reasonable to suggest that that group (for whatever reasons) was more likely to engage in criminal activity.

However, several studies suggest that the media is often less than objective in reporting the incidence of crimes committed by African Americans relative to other racial groups (Dixon & Williams, 2015; see van Dijk, 1991, for a review). In an analysis of the portrayal of persons of color and White individuals in three local television newscasts, Romer, Jamieson, and deCoteau (1998) found that, over 14 weeks of newscasts, persons of color were much more likely to be presented as perpetrators of crimes, and White individuals were more likely to be shown as the victims of those crimes. Romer et al. also found that the frequency of crimes by persons of color, which were reported on the newscasts, were about 20% higher than what would be predicted based on actual statistics compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A study by Media Matters for America (2015) found that in New York City, African Americans were arrested in 54% of murders, 55% of thefts, and 49% of assaults. However, when the four major TV station news reported about murders, 74% were African American. The TV stations reported that 84% of theft suspects were African Americans. Seventy three percent of the assault suspects were reported to be African American. Certainly, this indicates that there is some bias, and that the actual frequency with which African Americans commit crimes is far lower than is portrayed in the media. Indeed, using FBI crime statistics, Beck (2021) reports that 59% of single-offender violent crimes are committed by White individuals (compared to 22% for Black individuals). Such biased portrayals of African Americans in the media can indeed lead to the formation of an artificial (or "illusory"; see section on illusory correlations later in this chapter) correlation between African Americans and criminal behavior, and this of course tends to lead to the formation and maintenance of negative stereotypes about African Americans. A study by Dixon and Maddux (2005) found that heavy news viewers (compared to those who only occasionally watch the news) were more uncomfortable being exposed to a dark-skinned perpetrator of a crime, and they were more likely to remember the perpetrator if he was a dark-skinned Black male. The heavy news viewers also had more favorable views of the victim when the perpetrator was Black. Unfortunately, it is easy to see how the very real bias in the media can perpetuate stereotypes of racial groups.

The way groups are portrayed in the media can influence prejudices and stereotypes in subtle and insidious ways, and, importantly, those portrayals need not be consciously considered to have impact. A compelling example is found in work by Sarah Lamer and her colleagues (e.g., Lamer & Weisbuch, 2019). Through content analyses of various media (e.g., internet news sites, magazines), they noticed a pattern in the way men and women were portrayed: Men tended to appear higher on the page. In follow-up studies, they showed naïve participants these depictions, and found that when people repeatedly

viewed men appearing higher up on webpages than women, they were more likely to believe stereotypes that men were more powerful and dominant. Other work shows that in television, White actors are more likely to exhibit nonverbal negativity to Black relative to White coactors, and that exposure to this bias increases viewers' racial prejudice, despite the fact that they did not even consciously notice it (Weisbuch, Pauker, & Ambady, 2009). Thus, much evidence points to negative depictions of certain groups in the media affecting the development of prejudice.

Stereotype Accuracy

You may have thought, based on some of the statistics cited above, "Well, Black individuals are still more likely to commit violent crimes based on their proportion of the population." You wouldn't be wrong. It is also true that men tend to have greater upper-body strength than women, and women are more likely to enter into caring professions, like teaching and nursing. On one hand, some researchers have argued that stereotypes are always inaccurate because they are overgeneralizations: One can believe that men are taller than women on average, which is true, but there is considerable overlap between the genders in terms of height (Stangor, 1995). Hence, assuming any random man is taller than any random woman is more likely than not to be correct but it always risks oversimplification and hence, inaccuracy. A more accurate approach would be to avoid stereotyping and seek information about the individual (e.g., actually measure the person's height). In fact, a multicultural orientation (which we discuss in greater detail in Chapter 12) implores us to recognize actual differences between groups, because ignoring the importance of group membership (as a *colorblind* orientation entails) can exacerbate discrimination. In short, stereotypes *can* be accurate, and differences between groups *can* be important to acknowledge.

As you might imagine, there is considerable controversy about research on stereotype accuracy (e.g., Jussim et al., 2016). There is risk that such research might be used to justify discrimination (which in fact, does happen: Young men pay more for car insurance than do young women). When there appears to be some truth to a stereotype, we would encourage you to dig deeper and ask "Why?" questions. For example, in Chapter 6 we discuss the common stereotype among modern racists that Black people are lazy; this belief provides an explanation for relatively high unemployment among Black individuals. Another explanation is employment discrimination and lack of access to education and employment opportunities. Similarly, when we discuss sexism in Chapter 8, we examine the commonly held stereotype that women are more nurturing than men; there may be some truth to the stereotype, but why? When you run across a stereotype that might have a "kernel of truth," it is good practice to remember that stereotypes are nearly always overgeneralizations, examine evidence regarding whether the stereotype is accurate, and perhaps most importantly, consider *why* the stereotype might be accurate.

Implicit Theories

We all have our own ideas of what personality characteristics seem to "go together" in people, and we also have our own ideas about the nature of personality. Researchers refer

to these beliefs as **implicit theories**, because these beliefs and heuristics guide one's processing of social information, and help us to evaluate (and sometimes stereotype) others (Jones, 1982). Once we have categorized someone as having a certain characteristic, we are more likely to assume that that person has a whole host of related characteristics, the specifics of which are determined by the content of one's implicit theory of personality (Jones, 1982; Scheffer & Manke, 2018; Schneider, 1973). Moreover, people form their own beliefs about the nature of personality. Specifically, research indicates that some people, termed "*entity* theorists," believe that one's personality traits are fixed and cannot be changed, while others, termed "*incremental* theorists," believe that one's personality traits are flexible and can be modified (Levy, Plaks, & Dweck, 1999). Entity theorists tend to believe that because traits are fixed, they are stable indicators of behavior. They also believe that behavior is consistent. As a result, they should also be more likely to infer a host of related target personality characteristics based on an isolated behavior by the target. On the other hand, incremental theorists should be less likely to make such an inference, because they are more cognizant of the belief that behavior (and personality) is less predictable based on just one sample of behavior. In five experiments, Levy, Stroessner, and Dweck (1998) found that, compared to incremental theorists, entity theorists did indeed tend to use stereotypes more often in their judgments of outgroups, they formed more extreme judgments about the outgroup, and tended to attribute stereotyped characteristics to inborn qualities within the outgroup individual. Thus, one's implicit theories about the content and nature of personality can have a profound effect on one's subsequent beliefs (i.e., stereotypes) about other groups.

The Efficiency of Stereotypes

Ever since Lippmann (1922) coined the term "stereotype," researchers have noted the utility of stereotypes for simplifying the way we think about our complex social environment (Allport, 1954; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Jones, 1997; Taylor, 1981). Stereotypes enable the perceiver to quickly arrive at an evaluation of a target individual on the basis of very little information (i.e., race, gender, age) about the target. This is useful because we can then devote more energy to other demanding cognitive tasks. But why would we be willing to make inaccurate assessments of others, in order to move on to other types of thinking? One could argue that to succeed in life, it is important, perhaps most important, that one make more accurate assessments of others in one's social world. That is indeed a compelling, logical argument, but it is largely impractical, and here is the reason: Humans have a strong need to have a predictable, somewhat-ordered world (Maslow, 1970). To think carefully about every person one encounters, reads, or thinks about, in an effort to form an accurate evaluation of the person would require an enormous expenditure of cognitive energy (to say nothing of time!). While a careful social perceiver would be much more likely to be accurate in their assessments of others, they would get little else accomplished that day. Instead, we tend to reserve our considered cognitive efforts for those instances where we are motivated to be accurate in our assessment of a select other person (e.g., a prospective employee, a prospective mate, a teammate). For the rest of the population, we play the odds that the stereotypes we use will yield at least *some* accurate information about the target individual, or (and here's an important point) at least give us *the feeling that we know a lot about the target person*.

Instead of assuming that our instant impressions of others (largely based on some stereotypes) were fact, we would do well to consider recasting our stereotyped impressions as “hunches to be verified” (Newcomb, 1959, p. 214). With this in mind, Newcomb suggests that people would be more likely to have the advantages of efficiency and accuracy in their evaluations of others.

So, stereotypes are an integral part of cognitive life. But do they really save us cognitive energy? In a series of clever experiments, Macrae, Milne, and Bodenhausen (1994) examined the assumption that stereotypes function as cognitive resource-preserving tools. They examined the ability of participants to do two cognitive tasks at one time: form an impression of a target individual while also monitoring a prose passage. For some participants, the impression-formation task also included a stereotype label of the target, and for others, no stereotype label was provided. If stereotypes facilitate fast judgments of others, and conserve cognitive energy for other resources, one should find that those who were given the stereotype label would be able to devote more cognitive effort to the prose-monitoring task (a paragraph describing Indonesia) and the impression-monitoring task, compared to those who did not get the label. Indeed, the results indicated that those who were provided with the stereotype label were able to recall twice as many personality descriptors for the target and recalled more of the paragraph information compared to those given no stereotype label. Macrae, Milne, et al. suggest that the stereotype label enabled participants to devote less attention to forming an impression of the target and more attention to remembering stereotype-associated personality descriptors and the paragraph information in the prose-monitoring task. These results suggest that stereotypes do in fact function as energy-saving tools in social perception.

In general, much research shows that when we are confronted with a lot of information about a target, and we are required to make a social judgment about that individual, stereotypes are more likely to influence our impressions of them (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). On the other hand, when our cognitive task is simple, we are much less likely to rely on stereotypes because our cognitive capacity to think carefully about the other person's attributes is not taxed by the need to process a lot of information about the person to arrive at an evaluation (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987). Research by Sherman and Bessenoff (1999) also indicates that people use stereotypes to guide their memory retrieval about an individual. These researchers assigned their participants to either a high- or low-cognitive-load condition while doing a task. Those in the high-cognitive-load condition were asked to hold an eight-digit number in their mind while simultaneously deciding which trait-related behaviors (from three lists of behaviors) described the target they were told about at the beginning of the study (either a priest or a skinhead). Sherman and Bessenoff found that when an individual's cognitive capacity was constrained by the simultaneous cognitive tasks, the person was less able to accurately recall the episodic memories (target behaviors), and instead relied on stereotypes about the target to help them decide which target behaviors were associated with the target. Thus, when our recall for individuating behavioral information about a person is compromised by a limited cognitive capacity, we may tend to rely on stereotypes in our social judgments. Stereotypes therefore help simplify the cognitive task before us, and they enable us to quickly come to an evaluation about another person. As we see in Chapter 4, implicit prejudices (automatic gut feelings we have about groups) perform some of the same functions.

HOW AND WHY STEREOTYPES ARE MAINTAINED

Because stereotypes enable the perceiver to make a judgment about another individual extremely quickly, they nicely satisfy a major goal of cognitive life: to arrive at the fastest judgments possible, using the least amount of cognitive effort. The issue of whether the judgments are accurate is secondary to the utility of the stereotype in helping the person quickly evaluate another individual and move on to devote more thought and time to other cognitive tasks—that is, for most people, most of the time, it is more important to arrive at *any* evaluation, even if it isn't very accurate. Thus, stereotypes are difficult to give up, even though most people agree that they are undesirable. Indeed, they can promote inaccurate evaluations of others, and they can lead to strained relationships between groups of people.

People are therefore confronted with the cognitive dissonance aroused by the thought that one has stereotypes of others that guide one's social judgments, and the thought that one is a good, fair, and rational thinker. According to dissonance theory, one of these cognitions must change in order for dissonance to be alleviated. Which one changes? It is almost always the cognition that is most amenable to change (i.e., the most weakly held conviction), and in this case it is—you guessed it—one's cognitions about stereotyping. Rather than think that we use stereotypes to evaluate others, we simply do not allow ourselves to come to such a conclusion, and we instead convince ourselves that we are indeed a fair, logical thinker by making our social judgments after a considered assessment of the information about the target individual. In other words, we often either do not realize, or do not consciously acknowledge, that we do indeed stereotype others, or that our stereotype-derived impressions of them might be inaccurate. This self-delusion helps us maintain our stereotypes while reducing the possibility for cognitive dissonance related to our self-concept. How then do we continue to use stereotypes without being consciously aware of their influence? How are stereotypes maintained in the face of stereotype-disconfirming evidence? Below we discuss the various ways that people maintain their stereotypes of others, and we review the research on the factors that facilitate stereotype maintenance in daily social judgments.

Selective Attention to Stereotype-Relevant Information

We are constantly exposed to a wide variety of information that pertains to our stereotypes of others. Some of the information is consistent with our stereotypes, and other information is stereotype inconsistent. Stereotype-inconsistent information can be perceived as dissonance arousing, because it is threatening to one's self-concept (though people usually do not consciously perceive such information as threatening). In other words, if I learn that the way I think about others, and the way I interpret and categorize others is unsound, I may feel foolish. Rather than do that, I will change the way I think about the validity of the stereotype-inconsistent information. One way to do this is through *confirmation bias*: only pay attention to information that confirms what I already believe (my stereotypes), and pay no attention to stereotype-inconsistent information. Indeed, research indicates that this is in fact what most people do, and this explains how they maintain their stereotypes in the face of stereotype-inconsistent information (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg,

1996; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Rothbart, Evans, & Fulero, 1979; Wigboldus, Dijksterhuis, & van Knippenberg, 2003).

One of the functional features of stereotypes is that they help us anticipate likely motives, attitudes, and behaviors of others, and they therefore provide us with a comfortable sense of what to expect in our daily social interactions. These expectations certainly guide our behavior, and they also guide our perceptions of social information. In a meta-analysis of 54 experiments, Stangor and McMillan (1992) reviewed the literature on the influence of such expectations on memory for expectancy-consistent and expectancy-inconsistent information. Their results indicated that memory tends to be better for expectancy-*incongruent* than for expectancy-congruent information. This is in line with much of the cognitive literature on memory, which shows that our attention is grabbed by unusual or surprising information, and therefore, we are more likely to remember that information. However, Stangor and McMillan found that when it comes to *strong* expectancies, which describes most stereotypes, we are more prone to remember expectancy- (or stereotype-) consistent information (see also Bodenhausen, 1988). Research by Bastian and Haslam (2007) suggests that the preference for stereotype-consistent information may be especially strong among those whose implicit theories of personality include the belief that human attributes are unchangeable (i.e., entity theorists).

Interestingly, when it comes to stereotypes about our own group, we remember things differently. Koomen and Dijker (1997) presented participants with stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent information about their own groups (Dutch vs. Turkish) and about an outgroup. Their memory for this information was then tested for accuracy. With regard to stereotype-relevant information about an outgroup, the results indicated that participants remembered more stereotype-confirming information than disconfirming information. However, when it came to stereotype-relevant information about their own group, participants were more likely to remember stereotype-*inconsistent* information. This supports earlier research (e.g., Park & Rothbart, 1982), and suggests that we like to think of our own groups as comprising unique individuals, and other groups as comprising people who share common characteristics who are more similar than they are different. Koomen and Dijker's findings show that one way we can do this is by focusing on stereotype-inconsistent (stereotype-disconfirming) information about our group, and stereotype-consistent information about other groups. On the other hand, research by Sherman, Stroessner, Conrey, and Azam (2005) found that high- (but not low-) prejudice persons pay more attention to stereotype-inconsistent behaviors—but only in order to explain them away as due to external factors—and they attribute stereotype-consistent behaviors to internal (personality) factors.

Human memory and cognition are nothing if not flexible and adaptive to the challenges presented by an ever-changing world. If we are to survive, we need to develop flexible cognitive mechanisms for processing and remembering important information related to how we interact with the world and others in it. Consider then, the adaptiveness of a cognitive system that rather blindly processes only one kind of information, and ignores all other information, when there is really no good reason to do so. Such is the case with stereotypes. Recall that some research has shown that stereotypes facilitate the processing of stereotype-consistent, but not stereotype-inconsistent, information (Rothbart et al., 1979). For example, Macrae, Stangor, and Milne (1994) found that

people who had stereotypes activated in their memory were subsequently able to more efficiently process stereotype-relevant (specifically, stereotype-consistent) information.

However, some research suggests that this may not represent the full picture of how we process stereotype-relevant information. Sherman, Lee, Bessenoff, and Frost (1998) argued that our cognitive system must be more adaptive and flexible in processing social information than is characterized by past research that suggests that we perceive and remember only stereotype-consistent information. In a series of experiments, Sherman and his colleagues found that stereotypes are indeed efficient because they facilitate the processing of *both* stereotype-consistent and -inconsistent information when cognitive capacity to process information is low. Sherman et al. found that when we are under a cognitive load (due to any number of factors, such as information overload, parallel tasks, etc.), stereotypes enable us to process stereotype-consistent information more quickly, and to devote more cognitive resources to stereotype-inconsistent (and thus, surprising and attention-getting) information. As a result, less attention is given to stereotype-consistent information, and this information is thus weakly encoded in memory. Because most of our attention is given to stereotype-inconsistent information, this information is encoded in greater detail, and our memory for the specifics of this information is better. In a follow-up series of experiments, Sherman and Frost (2000) replicated these findings, and suggested that while perceivers have stronger stereotype-consistent impressions of a target, their memory for the specific stereotype-relevant information may be poor. This can lead perceivers to be easily misled (and often inaccurate) in their recollections of the target's behavior or characteristics.

Indeed, there is a compelling argument to be made for the idea that the act of categorizing something (or someone) can reduce one's openness to revision of that initial categorization, even in the face of evidence that the initial assessment was incorrect. Von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, and Vargas (1995) suggest that stereotypes lead perceivers to encode social information in ways that facilitate the maintenance of the stereotype. This is a different perspective on how stereotypes influence our social judgments, because it suggests that stereotypes have their strongest influence at the actual *perception* of the social information, and not later when one is trying to recall that social information. As evidence for this hypothesis, Von Hippel et al. cite research by Wyatt and Campbell (1951) in which participants saw a series of blurred pictures and were asked to generate guesses as to what the pictures might be. Later, participants were shown the pictures in gradually increasing focus, and were asked to modify, if they felt it necessary, their initial guesses. Results indicated that the initial guess about the picture interfered with an individual's ability to accurately perceive (and identify) the subsequently presented clear picture. Von Hippel and his colleagues recount the results of their own program of research on this issue, as well as a number of other studies, which all support the idea that once we categorize an ambiguous (or even unambiguous) stimulus, our later perception of categorization-inconsistent information is impaired, thus facilitating the perpetuation of the initial stereotype in the perceiver's memory.

Subcategorization

Most researchers agree that stereotypes have a basic hierarchical structure in which the category information tends to become more complex and differentiated as time goes on

(Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Sherman, 1996; Stangor & Lange, 1994; Stephan, 1989; Taylor, 1981; Weber & Crocker, 1983). The information about the group tends to be initially stored in terms of superordinate abstract stereotypes that apply to all group members. But sometimes counterstereotypic information really stands out and activates further processing to explain it (e.g., let's say you have a strong stereotype that older adults are sluggish and grumpy, but you meet an older adult who is especially spritely and cheerful). When such stereotype-discrepant information confronts us, we often form **subcategories** (also known as "subtypes"), which are separate categories for the deviant individual (Weber & Crocker, 1983). We do this because the stereotype-inconsistent member of the stereotyped group is seen as unrepresentative of the whole group, so stereotypes that apply to the group do not appear to apply to the particular group member. Because we have such a strong motivation to keep our stereotypes (for cognitive simplicity and efficiency), we are motivated to keep our stereotypes intact and safe from the threat presented when we encounter an outgroup member who does not fit the group stereotype. Subcategorization allows stereotypers to "have their cake and eat it too" by maintaining cognitively efficient stereotypes and the perception that those stereotypes are accurate. It also enables one to think of oneself as not prejudiced toward that particular group. As most (but not all) stereotypes are predominantly negative, it is likely that deviant (stereotype-disconfirming) group members represent positive qualities and characteristics not typically associated with the outgroup. As a result, we are more likely to have positive affect for, and evaluate positively, those individuals for whom we have created subcategories. For example, a White individual may create subcategories for Neil deGrasse Tyson, Oprah Winfrey, an African American friend and coworker, and others. In this way, people can convince themselves that they are not prejudiced because "some of my best friends (or people they admire) are Black."

While much research has been devoted to understanding how high-prejudice persons subcategorize atypical (positive) members of a stereotyped group, one obvious question that hasn't garnered similar empirical attention is "Do low-prejudice persons subcategorize, and if so, how do they subcategorize?" Research by Riek, Mania, and Gaertner (2013) found that low-prejudice persons do subcategorize, but they do so only for negative outgroup members. Remember, high-prejudice persons have a negative view of the outgroup, so the unusual, positive outgroup member would need to be subcategorized. Similarly, it makes sense that for low-prejudice persons, the outgroup is viewed positively, and in this case, the atypical outgroup member is one who presents with negative traits, and thus that person would need to be subcategorized, in order for the low-prejudice person to maintain their positive view of the outgroup.

When an individual is otherwise seen as a good fit or as "representative" of a group but who nevertheless shows stereotype-inconsistent characteristics, it may be more difficult to subtype the person. In these situations, people may actually modify their stereotypes about that group and perceive more variability among group members (Rothbart & Lewis, 1988). In this way, the group is seen as more heterogeneous and comprises individuals, and less of a homogeneous ("they-are-all-alike") collective. To the extent that this happens, the stereotypes of the group are less useful for the perceiver because they are less applicable for the target group. However, when the perceived individual is not otherwise seen as representative of the group, then it is easier for perceivers to regard that person as a deviant, and any of the individual's stereotype-inconsistent characteristics are less likely to influence (i.e., dispel) the stereotypes the perceiver has about the group

as a whole. Research indicates that when we can explain away a member of a stereotyped group who doesn't fit the stereotype as a fluke, we do so (Kunda & Oleson, 1995). When we can explain the person's stereotype-inconsistent characteristics as being attributable to some aspect of the situation, or to vague stereotype-relevant information, or otherwise have a ready variable that would allow us to explain the origin of the group-deviant characteristic, we use it as a way to subcategorize the group member (Garcia-Marques & Mackie, 1999; Kunda & Oleson, 1995; Rothbart & Lewis, 1988).

Research also suggests that the terms one uses to think of the outgroup member has implications for whether and how they subcategorize the person. In one study, the researchers showed that Whites tend to view a target categorized with the label as "Black" more negatively, with a lower socioeconomic status, and more prone to criminal activity than someone labeled "African American" (Hall, Phillips, & Townsend, 2015). As such, a negatively categorized label target is much less likely to be seen as unusual and thus subcategorized. Rather, that person is likely to be perceived as another example of the overall negatively stereotyped outgroup (in this instance, "Black people").

Illusory Correlations

In our attempt to make sense of the social world, we often try to notice when events co-occur, or covary (Kelley, 1967)—that is, we try to figure out what things are correlated. In so doing, we can develop a sense of what to expect, and even predict when events should occur. If we know that variable A is present, and we know that variable A is highly correlated with variable G, then we can make a prediction that variable G should also be present in that situation. For example, police and insurance companies tend to be aware of a correlation between a driver's gender and age, and the tendency to break the speed limits (or get into an accident). They assume that being a young male (ages 16–28) is highly correlated with the tendency to drive fast and get into auto accidents. This is a legitimate assumption (i.e., at least a somewhat accurate stereotype) because indeed, statistics support the notion that these factors are positively correlated (U.S. Department of Transportation, 1999). However, we often perceive a relationship between variables that are only weakly correlated or not correlated at all. Researchers call these perceived relationships **illusory correlations** (Fiedler, 2017; Hamilton & Gifford, 1976; Hamilton & Rose, 1980). Illusory correlations can lead to both the formation and maintenance of stereotypes. When one perceives a distinctive group (e.g., an outgroup, or a minority group) doing an undesirable behavior (e.g., committing a crime), the person is more likely to notice that event, because it is an unusual occurrence. In other words, we tend to link rare to rare. The co-occurrence of the distinctive group and the undesirable behavior can lead to the perception of a link between the group and the "natural" tendency to do the undesirable behavior. The more cognition and attention devoted to this co-occurrence makes this illusory correlation more accessible in memory, and hence more likely to influence subsequent judgments of the target group (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). This is the beginning of a stereotype for that outgroup.

Illusory correlations also form as a result of the influence of one's existing stereotypes of others. Recall that stereotypes tend to bias our perception of stereotype-relevant information, such that we pay attention to information that confirms our stereotypes, and we pay less attention to information that is inconsistent with the stereotype. Therefore, when making an assessment about a member of a stereotyped outgroup, one

draws upon one's knowledge, beliefs, expectations, and stereotypes of that group. As an example, suppose you believe that older people are grumpy. You will tend to notice and remember only those examples of grumpy older persons who you met (or were exposed to via other means: media, friends, relatives, etc.), and not those examples of happy older persons, or grumpy younger persons. In this way, stereotypes lead you to perceive a strong (illusory) correlation between "grumpiness" and being old.

Interestingly, some research also suggests that a motivation to perceive order and predictability in the world can enhance the likelihood of forming illusory correlations. Lieberman (1999) asked participants to describe what would happen to them when they die and how they feel thinking about their death, and others were asked to describe what would happen to them if they watched television. The first group had their mortality made salient, and the second group did not. According to terror management theory (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991), when we think about our mortality, it arouses a need for stability, predictability, and order in the world. Then Lieberman presented participants in each condition with either ambiguous or unambiguous information about a target group. The need for order is more easily satisfied when we have clear information. When presented with ambiguous information, however, Lieberman predicted that those in the mortality-salient condition should be more likely to form illusory correlations between the negative behaviors listed and the minority group than those who did not have their mortality made salient. This is exactly what he found, suggesting that the motivation for order and predictability (in this case, initiated by mortality salience) led participants to attempt to fashion order from the ambiguous target group information by forming illusory correlations. Forget that it is an inaccurate way of thinking of a group—these participants were more interested in obtaining a predictable sense of what the minority group was like. As we mentioned in the first chapter, all people tend to be cognitive misers, tending to be more interested in the cognitive efficiency and speed of judgments, rather than the accuracy of their evaluations. However, it appears that under certain conditions (e.g., mortality salience), this tendency can be "supercharged," and this increases the chances for heuristic, stereotypical thinking about other groups.

Finally, Jeff Sherman and colleagues (2009) provide insight into the mechanics of how illusory correlations occur when learning about groups. They point out that we tend to learn about our ingroups first. And, for most of us (thankfully), our ingroups are generally seen as good. As we move our attention outward and learn about outgroups, we look for ways to distinguish "us" and "them." Since "we" are generally good, any information that "they" are also good would not help us to distinguish the two groups, resulting in a bias against seeing them as good. So, sadly, we humans tend to have an information-processing bias against seeing outgroups as good.

Motivation

Stereotypes and prejudice have many different sources. In addition to the many cognitive biases, heuristics, and other capacity limitations of our cognitive system, we also form and maintain prejudice on the basis of motivations to do so—that is, we may have a specific interest in perceiving another group as inferior to our own group, and our efforts and energy directed at meeting that goal is what most researchers would refer to as motivation. Motivation is a nebulous concept, and has a myriad of definitions. It

is hard to pin down, but for our purposes, we define motivation as *those processes that energize and direct behavior toward a goal* (Reeve, 1997). When we are motivated to do something, we have a goal (or more than one goal) in mind, and we find that goal of sufficient import to initiate actions to attain that goal. For example, if you are reading a book, and your roommate comes home and asks you whether you want to go out to a party with them, you may not feel sufficiently motivated to do all the behaviors necessary for going out (i.e., getting cleaned up, putting on nicer clothes, etc.). However, if an important goal of yours (e.g., to meet a potential significant other) can be pursued (i.e., your roommate says that the person you're interested in is going to be at the party), then you may suddenly find yourself with more than enough energy to get ready to go out with your roommate.

Similarly, some people tend to be more motivated than others to form accurate impressions of others, and to not rely on stereotypes in their social perceptions. Stangor and Ford (1992) have suggested that people can be identified as either perceiving others in an "accuracy-oriented" or "expectancy-confirming" manner. Some people are concerned with arriving at the most accurate perception of individuals they perceive, based on the target person's qualities, characteristics, interests, and so on. Such individuals are motivated then to avoid any bias in their evaluations of others. Research indicates that these accuracy-oriented individuals tend to be much less likely to rely on stereotypes in their evaluations of others, compared with those who are not motivated to be accurate in their social perceptions (Hilton & Darley, 1991; Pendry & Macrae, 1996).

Fehr, Sassenberg, and Jonas (2012) found that the motivation to not behave in a prejudiced manner is effective in helping the person disregard activated stereotypes. Interestingly, this effect applies to both people who have this motivation as part of their personality and also those who were randomly assigned to pursue the nonprejudiced goal. It should be noted that these findings, specifically with regard to those with an external motive to respond without prejudice (i.e., they avoid prejudice only to avoid social scorn), are in contrast with Butz and Plant's (2009) review of the literature on both types of motivation. Butz and Plant conclude that those with an external motive to respond without prejudice fail at regulating difficult-to-control prejudice and respond with anxiety and avoidance—and sometimes later backlash. Why the different findings about those with an external motive to respond without prejudice? Looking closer, those in the Fehr et al. study were given a primed goal that was important to them to achieve, and the more they believed that goal would be helped by responding in a nonprejudiced way, the less prejudice they showed. Those externally motivated persons in the studies reviewed by Butz and Plant were motivated to respond without prejudice only in order to avoid social sanction. It is thus apparent, as Butz and Plant write, that "in order to fully understand how motivation to respond without prejudice impacts the quality of interracial interactions, it is crucial to consider not only whether people are motivated to respond without prejudice but also the *reasons underlying their motivation*" (emphasis added; p. 1312). For example, people with *internal* motivation to respond without prejudice have an egalitarian self-image, and put forth greater effort to rid themselves of prejudice, often with success.

Other people are motivated to perceive people according to expectations they may have of that individual (i.e., expectations for the target person's behavior based on stereotypes about the target's group; Neuberg, 1994). These individuals attend to expectancy-confirming behavior in the target, and they disregard (forget) instances of

expectancy-disconfirming behavior in targets. Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla, and Chen (1996) suggest that this latter group is acting from a “defensive” orientation, because these individuals are seeking to defend their prejudices and preexisting beliefs. The defensive motivation stems from the need to maintain one’s belief in the current societal system of group hierarchy (and inequality) and the predictable structure of the social status quo (Jost, 2020). For example, majority-group members may recognize their relatively better deal overall and try to convince themselves that the system is fair, and that it was their hard work, and not their privilege, that led to their positive outcomes (Phillips & Lowery, 2020).

Of course, people are sometimes accuracy oriented and sometimes expectancy oriented, and it is rarely the case that a person is only one or the other. However, it turns out that, in general, accuracy-oriented people are in short supply. Indeed, Taylor (1981) made the point that most people are *not* motivated to think very carefully about others, individuating each person they perceive, because to do so would require more cognitive energy than they are willing to devote. Additionally, perceivers reason that there is no harm done in using heuristic strategies (such as relying on stereotypes) in evaluating others, and that, for example, if one categorizes a person they pass in the mall on the basis of their ethnic group, and associated stereotypes, it is not a problem because no one will know of this evaluation. Thus, many people are not motivated to avoid using stereotypes in social perceptions because there is usually little motivation to think carefully about others and expend that much cognitive energy in our social evaluations.

Research by Kunda and her colleagues (Klein & Kunda, 1992; Kunda, 1990) suggests that people do not merely believe whatever they want (or expect) to believe about outgroups. To convince themselves that they are objective in their evaluations of others, people attempt to construct justifications for their evaluations and beliefs. They do this by searching their memory for belief-supporting target information, and they pass over target-relevant information that does not support their beliefs. Thus, their objectivity is illusory, because their search was motivated by a biased goal. For example, when Klein and Kunda told participants that they were about to interact with an individual with schizophrenia, the participants expressed more positive stereotypes about people with schizophrenia compared to the nonmotivated participants (who were told they would merely view an interaction with an individual with schizophrenia). In this way, participants who have a self-interest to view another person positively (because they would like the upcoming interaction to go well, and not be uncomfortable) will generate more positive information about the target. Kunda and Sinclair (1999) further suggest that the activation, application, and inhibition of stereotypes tends to be guided by motivated reasoning. In other words, if one has a goal of disparaging a particular group, then one may activate negative stereotypes (that they may or may not normally activate when thinking about others), apply them to people to whom they might not have otherwise applied those stereotypes, and inhibit information in their memory that is incompatible with the goal of forming a negative impression of the group members (i.e., positive information about that individual, or positive stereotypes).

Unfortunately, being motivated to avoid stereotyping others may not be sufficient to actually individuate others in one’s social judgments. Pendry and Macrae (1994) examined the influence of processing goals and attentional capacity on an individual’s use of stereotypes in judgments of others. They reasoned that when one’s outcomes were dependent upon another individual (i.e., the person would win a cash prize if they

worked well with another participant, an older woman, to generate the best solutions to some word problems), one would be less likely to rely on stereotypes in an assessment of the other person. If one is to do well on a task with a partner, it is important to have an accurate sense of one's partner's capabilities. Relying on cognitive shortcuts, such as stereotypes, would be an impediment to that goal in this situation, which is why participants should be motivated to think carefully about their older partner, with the goal of forming an accurate impression of her.

Other participants were told that they may win a cash prize based on their performance alone, and thus their outcomes were independent of the performance of their older partner. In these conditions, Pendry and Macrae (1994) predicted, participants would not be motivated to think carefully when forming an evaluation of their partner, and they would thus be more influenced by stereotypes in their perceptions of their older partner. Results indicated support for these predictions. However, something interesting happened when the attentional capacity of participants was manipulated. When Pendry and Macrae had half of the participants read the self-description of their partner (a precompleted demographic sheet, ostensibly filled out by their older partner) while simultaneously doing a digit-rehearsal task, their attentional capacity reached its limit. They were then asked to complete an evaluation of their partner's personality. The other half of the participants did not have their attentional capacity depleted. They read their partner's information at their leisure and then completed an evaluation of their partner's personality. Results indicated that when outcome-dependent participants' attention was depleted, they were equally likely to rely on stereotypes in their evaluation of their partner as those who were in the outcome-independent condition. The results of the Pendry and Macrae experiment, as well as those of similar other studies (e.g., Moreno & Bodenhausen, 1999), suggest that if we are to avoid stereotyping others, we need both the motivation and the (cognitive) ability to do so. We see in Chapter 4 how theories of implicit prejudice (or "implicit bias") make similar claims.

INTERGROUP DYNAMICS AND THE ORIGINS OF PREJUDICE

Our discussion of motivation as it relates to creating and maintaining stereotypes provides a nice bridge to the next section of this chapter on the origin of prejudice. Recall from Chapter 1 that stereotyping and prejudice are almost always integrally related (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996). Feelings of prejudice nearly always encompass stereotypical beliefs about outgroups, and endorsement of stereotypes usually carries an accompanying negative affect and evaluation of the outgroup in question. Note that stereotyping and prejudice are *almost always* related. This is because there are some instances where one may not have prejudice toward the outgroup in question and may have knowledge of (but not personally endorse) stereotypes (Devine, 1989). Because stereotyping and prejudice are linked in our social perceptions, it is important therefore to understand the origin of prejudice, how it interacts with stereotyping in ways that maintain the stereotype, and how stereotypes can promote the maintenance of prejudice toward outgroups. Most researchers conceptualize prejudice as originating out of a motivational impetus (Brown, 1995; Fiske, 1998; Jones, 1997)—that is, the reason one endorses stereotypical beliefs and holds negative feelings toward another group is to attain one's own psychological goals. More specifically, we tend to dislike others in

order to feel better about ourselves. Let us turn now to an examination of the various theories that discuss the genesis and structure of prejudice through the lens of pursuing one's goals.

Social Identity Theory

In the last 30 years, perhaps no other theory of prejudice has had as strong an impact on the field of prejudice research than **social identity theory** (SIT) by Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986). According to SIT, we all have a need for positive self-regard, and this need fuels motivational and cognitive biases in social perception aimed at helping us feel good about ourselves. The theory says that there are essentially two ways we can obtain positive self-regard: by one's own achievements, and by the groups to which one belongs. If I create, accomplish, or achieve some goal, I should feel good about myself and my abilities. My self-esteem should naturally be high as I bask in the glow of my accomplishment. However, in those instances where one hasn't particularly achieved or accomplished something to one's satisfaction, positive self-regard may be obtained by thinking about one's *social identity*—the part of one's self-concept that is based on one's membership in social groups. In other words, if I feel like my self-esteem is a bit low (if I don't have any personal achievements to boost my self-esteem), I may try to restore my self-regard by considering that I belong to one or more groups that are highly regarded in society. By doing so, I can bolster my deflated self-esteem and thus meet the strong need (that we all have, according to the theory) for high self-esteem.

SIT is premised on the notion we discussed earlier that people naturally partition their social environment into "us" (ingroups) and "them" (outgroups). It further states that people are motivated to perceive their own groups as superior to other groups on important, valued dimensions. This creates a bias in favor of their own group, and against outgroups. The theory suggests that one way one can increase one's positive feeling about one's ingroup is to derogate (or evaluate negatively) outgroups. What happens when one's ingroup is one that has been traditionally of lower status, or was high status but now that high status is being questioned (or is fading)? SIT says that in these instances, we tend to highlight the unique, or distinctive nature of our group (Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997) in order to shield our group from the potential for a decline in status. Another way we maintain the perceived high status of our group is by derogating deviant or stereotype-confirming ingroup members (so-called black sheep), or others that reflect poorly on the ingroup, in an effort to maintain the status of one's ingroup.

So SIT says that we are highly motivated to show ingroup bias (favoritism) for our ingroups, and we are also motivated to negatively evaluate outgroups (and members thereof). According to SIT, this intergroup bias is the core reason that prejudice toward outgroups emerges. However, empirical scrutiny lends support to only parts of SIT. Research has shown, for example, that while we do tend to favor our ingroups, and this bolsters our self-esteem (e.g., Chin, 1995; Hirt, Zillman, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992), there is less evidence that we also regularly engage in outgroup derogation (but see Fein & Spencer, 1997, for evidence that prejudice emerges solely from outgroup derogation) as a way of enhancing self-esteem (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Brewer, 1979; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996). Thus, we can be prejudiced toward outgroups even if we do not derogate those outgroups, because we are favoring our own ingroups (Jones, 1997). Recall from our definition of prejudice (in Chapter 1) that prejudice does not only mean

negative affect directed toward an outgroup—it can also refer to a preference for favoring of one's ingroups. In other words, prejudice is more about ingroup love than outgroup hate.

The main tenet of SIT, that people engage in group comparisons to enhance their self-esteem, has also been the subject of increasing criticism in the last few decades (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Hogg & Abrams, 1990; Swann & Bosson, 2010). Critics of the self-esteem-enhancing motive proposed by SIT point to the finding that people who have low self-esteem sometimes identify *more* with their embattled ingroup, rather than seek a higher-status group (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Long & Spears, 1997). Other research indicates that it is those with high self-esteem who show a greater identification with low-status groups than those who have low self-esteem. Thus, while self-esteem may not be a prime motive in the dynamics of social identity and ingroup–outgroup relations, it remains an important part of the motivations that drive social identity processes. The theoretical and empirical issues with self-esteem, and the lack of empirical support for the derogation of outgroups as a self-esteem enhancement strategy, led some researchers to turn to other theories of motivation that may better explain the origins of prejudice. Despite these critics, SIT remains an influential theory of intergroup relations. It continues to provide a useful model of the origin of prejudice (Swann & Bosson, 2010). Some research even suggests that neuroscientific methods (e.g., functional magnetic resonance imaging [fMRI]) support SIT and help modify the model by identifying more subtle forms of intergroup prejudice (Scheepers & Derks, 2016).

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

Recall that SIT suggests that people sometimes feel a need to identify strongly with a particular group in order to enhance their self-esteem. Brewer (1991) suggests that our social motives are governed by an alternating tension between our need to be unique and our need to belong. In her **optimal distinctiveness theory** (ODT), Brewer (1991; Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010) suggests that it is aversive for people to be too extreme regarding the needs for uniqueness and belongingness. In these cases, an individual's sense of worth and security is in jeopardy, and this motivates the individual to find groups that can help provide a balance between these opposing needs. ODT therefore predicts that we will feel isolated and alone if we too extremely fulfill the uniqueness need, and this comes with the cost of a diminished sense of belongingness. However, too much enmeshment of one's social identity into a group can also have negative consequences, such as a diminished sense of a unique personal identity. Indeed, there is evidence that if one's social identity is strongly salient (i.e., one's personal identity recedes into the background in favor of belongingness), there is an increased tendency to evaluate outgroups in terms of shared ingroup stereotypes about the outgroups (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999).

Therefore, one reason that exclusive groups are so valued is that they tend to provide just the right balance between uniqueness and belongingness (Brewer & Brown, 1998). This theory then nicely accounts for the findings discussed earlier that sometimes people more strongly identify with low-status groups. Specifically, ODT says that when the need for uniqueness is strong, people value membership in minority groups (because these groups can fulfill the need for uniqueness) more than membership in a majority group. They value such allegiance irrespective of any gulf in status between the

minority and majority. So, according to ODT, if we want to be able to predict when and with what group an individual will identify, we need to know more than the status of the individual's ingroups relative to their outgroups. To be more accurate in our prediction of intergroup behavior, we need to understand the balance between the belongingness and uniqueness motives in the individual. This theory has much intuitive appeal, and it elegantly addresses some of the criticisms that dogged SIT. While only a few studies have tested ODT, most have indicated support for the predictions of ODT (Brewer, Manzi, & Shaw, 1993; Comello, 2011; Hornsey & Hogg, 1999; Leonardelli & Brewer, 2001; Slotter, Duffy, & Gardner, 2014), while others do not support ODT (Hiel & Mervielde, 2002). More research is needed if we are to have a better understanding of the extent to which ODT allows us to predict general intergroup behavior, and group identification and prejudice in particular.

Scapegoat Theory

Some theorists have suggested that the likelihood of intergroup conflict is often tied to economic conditions, and that when the times get tough economically, people are more likely to take their frustration out on outgroups. In one of the earliest studies of this idea, Hovland and Sears (1940; see also Hepworth & West, 1988) analyzed the relationship between the number of lynchings of Black individuals (most of which occurred in the southern United States) and the economy of the south. They operationalized "economy" by measuring the farm value of cotton, and the per-acre value of cotton, because cotton was a major product of the south, and it would therefore be a good index of economic impact for the population studied. Hovland and Sears charted the economy from 1882 to 1930, and found, in line with their predictions, that lynchings were more frequent during hard economic times (i.e., when cotton prices were low), and lynchings were more infrequent during times of prosperity (see Chapter 1 for some complications to these findings).

Why would people be motivated to dislike another group when that outgroup had nothing to do with the source of their frustration/anger? In Hovland and Sears's (1940) study, why would White individuals commit such violence against African Americans when the price of cotton fell? One explanation that has empirical support is known as **scapegoat theory** (Allport, 1954; Berkowitz & Green, 1962). This theory postulates that when an individual becomes thwarted from a particular goal, they may feel anger, irritation, or disappointment. In general, we tend to feel negatively when something prohibits us from attaining what we want. The anger or hostility we feel toward that frustrating agent may be, in many ways, similar to the negative emotion associated with one's views of a disliked outgroup. What happens then, according to the theory, is that because both the frustrating agent and the outgroup arouse similar emotions, they tend to become associated in the individual's memory. As Berkowitz and Green suggest, "There is an acquired equivalence between the frustrater and the minority group which mediates the generalization of the aggressive responses from the former to the latter" (p. 295). Some have suggested that the scapegoat theory may be one contributing factor to wars, and conflict between groups, from the beginning of human history (Allport, 1954). For example, throughout the last several thousand years, an often-scapegoated group has been Jewish persons (Allport, 1954). Many scholars suggest that Hitler was able to rally his country around his ideas because, in part, he introduced a common scapegoat—the

Jews—for Germany's economic plight after its defeat in World War I (e.g., see Goldhagen, 1996). While the scapegoat theory has intuitive appeal, it has received mixed empirical support. A problem with the theory has been the fact that many studies have shown that when people are frustrated they are no less and no more prejudiced toward disliked outgroups than they are toward other, liked outgroups (Brown, 1995). Another problem with the theory is that it cannot explain the choice of targets (scapegoats). For example, the theory is not able to predict which disliked outgroup the Germans in the 1930s would choose as their scapegoat (Stroebe & Insko, 1989). As a result, researchers have turned to another approach to understanding intergroup prejudice, called "relative deprivation."

Relative Deprivation

People are routinely comparing themselves to others, in order to assess how their attitudes, cognitions, feelings, or behaviors compare to others in their environment (Festinger, 1954). We also tend to compare our situation to that of others—that is, we are interested in knowing whether the things we have (status, power, wealth, possessions, employment, etc.) are equal to, lesser than, or greater than other individuals (and outgroups) in our society. For example, suppose every one of your classmates has unlimited data on their cell phone, and you have a paltry 5-gig limit. In comparing yourself to your classmates, you may experience what Davis (1959) called "relative deprivation"—that is, your situation is lesser than that of others (you are deprived of an important quality, *Z*, relative to a particular group). In his formal statement of **relative deprivation theory**, Davis suggests that if people (1) decide that they want *Z*, (2) compare themselves to similar others who have *Z*, and (3) feel entitled to *Z*, then they will feel deprived.

In the intergroup context, then, the theory suggests that feelings of prejudice and hostility toward outgroups arise out of a feeling of relative deprivation with regard to that outgroup in terms of an important goal (e.g., good educational opportunities, jobs, housing). As with the scapegoat theory, the empirical literature on relative deprivation has yielded only intermittent support. Bernstein and Crosby (1980) note that this may be due, in large part, to the fact that relative deprivation is defined differently by different researchers. While four versions of the theory (including Davis's 1959 version) have been popular, they adhere to the basic elements of Davis's model. Despite the mixed empirical support, the theory continues to generate substantial interest among researchers (Pettigrew, 2016; Smith & Pettigrew, 2015). This research has also suggested a further refinement in Davis's original formulation. Runciman (1961) suggested that it is important to distinguish between "egoistic relative deprivation" and "fraternal (or collective) relative deprivation." The former is the type of situation in which an individual compares their life to that of other individuals (as in the example of comparing your cell phone data to your classmates'). *Collective* relative deprivation, however, involves a comparison of how one's ingroup fares relative to an outgroup with regard to a desired goal (Shteynberg, Leslie, Knight, & Mayer, 2011). Subsequent theory (Crosby, 1976) and research (e.g., Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972) have supported this distinction (with some exceptions; see Osborne, Sibley, Huo, & Smith, 2015) and the data indicate that while collective relative deprivation is strongly related to negative outgroup perceptions, egoistic relative deprivation does not appear to be related to negative outgroup evaluations. For example, Vanneman & Pettigrew found the most

anti-Black prejudice among White Americans who felt they (as a group) were worse off than others. More recently, White Americans living in rural parts of the United States have seen jobs and incomes decline over the past few decades, which has led many to demonize Black Americans and recent immigrants for their woes (Hochschild, 2018). Thus, feelings of prejudice emerge when one's group is perceived to be at a disadvantage in comparison to another group.

As research on the notion of relative deprivation suggests, it only appears to be the case that we develop feelings of hostility and prejudice toward another group if we believe that our ingroup as a whole is at a disadvantage, relative to an outgroup, with regard to an important goal. But why do you suppose we don't feel outgroup hostility and prejudice toward other groups when we feel that our own situation is worse than that of other individuals? One possibility is that it may arouse greater feelings of helplessness and threat to believe that one's ingroup is at a disadvantage relative to another group. As individuals, there's not much we can do to control or affect the standing of our group compared to an outgroup, and that sense of powerlessness may be a strong contributor to the prejudice that arises between groups when those groups vie for similar goals. In other words, if we cannot change the disadvantaged status of our group relative to an outgroup, one way we can vent this frustration and also try to equalize the two groups is by bringing down the other group by directing feelings of prejudice toward the outgroup.

However, we have much more control over our own situation, and a feeling of relative deprivation compared to other individuals (in one's ingroup or outside of one's ingroup) would tend to arouse in oneself either a sense of increased motivation to reduce that discrepancy, or a sense of dejection (if one believes they cannot reduce that discrepancy). In this situation, it wouldn't make any sense to foster prejudice toward an outgroup for the feelings of deprivation one feels at the egoistic (and individual) level, because railing against outgroups wouldn't really better one's individual situation.

Realistic Conflict Theory

Closely related to relative deprivation are our feelings toward outgroups against whom our group is competing for a scarce resource. Notice, here the goal is not just similar, it is scarce, and that may mean that one group gets the goal, and the other one doesn't. In this instance, the goal is thus a finite, "zero-sum" scenario (i.e., there is only one winner, and there must be a loser; two cannot share or each get the prize). Campbell (1965) suggested that these cases represent "realistic" conflicts, because they are based on competition for real resources. In his **realistic conflict theory (RCT)**, Campbell suggested that when two groups are in competition for scarce resources, feelings of hostility and prejudice toward the other group will emerge. Zárate, Garcia, Garza, and Hitlan (2004) demonstrated that realistic conflict-induced prejudice tends to emerge when people perceive an outgroup as having similar work-related personality traits and abilities. Interestingly, however, when perceivers were asked to evaluate an outgroup's similarity to themselves on non-work-related traits, they were *less* prejudiced against who were rated as more similar.

In a classic demonstration of Campbell's (1965) prediction, Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, and Sherif (1961) conducted an experiment with a group of twenty-two 11-year-old boys who were going to a summer camp at Robbers Cave State Park in Oklahoma.

Sherif had designed the whole camp experience as a study of RCT and had obtained permission from the boys' parents and school administrators to include the boys in this experiment. The boys were selected on the basis of similar (above-average) IQ scores (median score of 112); good school performance; and no physical, psychological, or emotional problems. Of course, the boys were unaware that their camp experience was designed to examine the tenets of RCT. Sherif trained the camp counselors, and essentially, they were to remain fairly nondirective (within reason), allowing the boys to choose what activities they would like to do, and so on. Sherif's plan was to have 11 boys ride to camp on one bus, and set up camp at the other end of the park, unaware of the other group of 11 boys at the opposite end of the park.

During Phase 1, which lasted about a week, the boys were oblivious to the existence of the other group. Sherif wanted them to form an ingroup identity, and each group chose a name for their group (one called themselves the "Eagles," and the other boys called themselves the "Rattlers"), and to do activities to foster friendships and group unity and loyalty (such as pitching tents, serving meals, climbing on dams, making signs, etc.). After this initial phase, the two groups were introduced to each other. During Phase 2, Sherif brought the two groups together to compete in a series of sporting events, and the winning team would receive a team trophy, money, and medals and pocket knives for each member of the winning team. Thus, the boys were competing for a scarce resource. As RCT would predict, the boys during this stage started to show a great deal of outgroup prejudice. They referred to the other team members as "sneaky" and "stinkers," while they described their own group members as "brave" and "friendly." They raided each other's cabins, stole items from the other group, and their dislike for the outgroup members was evident in their prejudiced feelings about and stereotypes of the outgroup members. When asked who their friends were, the boys invariably listed only ingroup members as their friends. At the end of Phase 2, the winning team (the Rattlers) was announced, and that team was given their prizes.

During the final phase of the camp experience (Phase 3), Sherif wanted to reduce the prejudice that had been produced through competition. He first decided to test the **contact hypothesis**, which suggests that prejudice can be eliminated (or reduced) if two groups are brought into contact with each other (Allport, 1954). The idea here is that because prejudice is often born out of ignorance and fear, then having people get together with outgroup members (with whom they normally have little contact) would result in them forming intergroup friendships, and their prejudices would subside (we discuss the contact hypothesis in greater detail in Chapter 12). To test this prediction, the boys were asked to sit among the outgroup members at the camp cafeteria, alternating every seat with an ingroup member, an outgroup member, an ingroup member, and so on. Unfortunately, this did not result in decreased prejudice, but a food fight between groups. Prejudice was still high between groups. Sherif then decided to test another prediction made by RCT. Campbell (1965) speculated that when the goals of two groups are compatible, the attitudes of one group toward the other group should be more tolerant, if not outright friendly.

Sherif introduced two situations where the goals of the two groups were compatible. In each instance, the goal could not be accomplished without the assistance of the other group. So, all of the boys needed to work together to solve what Sherif referred to as a **superordinate goal**. In theory, the superordinate goal should work to reduce ingroup/outgroup distinctions and cause the individuals to reconceptualize their group

affiliation in terms of a unified, inclusive group (and thereby abandoning—or at least relegating to a lesser role—their former separate group affiliations). In one situation, the camp's water supply malfunctioned (a paper sack had clogged the faucet of the camp water supply). The boys worked together to brainstorm ideas on how to clear the faucet of the obstruction, and they were successful. In the other situation, Sherif arranged for the bus that was to take them home from the camp to break down. Specifically, the boys were told it wouldn't start. The boys again worked together to think of a way to get it to start (manually, by getting the bus to move and the driver would then try the ignition). They decided to hook a rope to the bus, all of the boys pulled the bus, and the driver was able to start the bus. After these events, Sherif and the counselors noticed a dramatic decline (if not absence) in hostility between the groups. Indeed, each group started regarding outgroup members in positive terms, and some even formed outgroup friendships. As an epilogue to this classic experiment, on the way home, the boys chose to ride on one bus (not two separate buses), and the Rattlers decided to spend their \$5.00 for ice cream for all of the boys.

Subsequent lab and field research on RCT has yielded data supportive of the theory (Brown, 1995; Jones, 1997; Krosch, Tyler, & Amodio, 2017). However, critics have noted a couple of problems with the theory (Brewer & Brown, 1998). One is that subsequent research has indicated that ingroup identification is harder to eliminate than the Sherif et al. (1961) data would lead one to believe. Thus, even though two groups may be motivated to work together on a superordinate goal, they still tend to identify themselves along their separate group identities, and not as a larger, single group. As such, it becomes more difficult to not think in terms of "us" and "them," and the associated prejudices and stereotypes about the outgroup therefore become that much more difficult to eliminate. However, Hornsey and Hogg (2000) contend that maintaining one's separate group identity is not only OK but essential to intergroup harmony. These researchers suggest that as long as groups can maintain their important group identity *and* successfully locate these identities within the "context of a binding superordinate identity" (p. 143), the likelihood of intergroup tension will be greatly reduced. A second problem is that, even before the Rattlers and Eagles were to formally compete for the prizes, they expressed a desire—almost immediately upon learning of the other groups' existence—to compete and win against "them." Recall that such a finding doesn't fit with RCT, because according to RCT, feelings of hostility toward an outgroup will emerge only when one's group is competing for a scarce resource with that outgroup. Some researchers (e.g., Fiske & Rusher, 1993; Perdue et al., 1990) have suggested that it may be the case that merely seeing someone else as an "outgroup" member can arouse negative affect in a perceiver. Such a possibility would nicely explain the anomalous findings in the Sherif et al. study and speak to the growing literature on the automaticity of stereotyping and prejudice (see Chapter 4 for our discussion of implicit stereotyping).

Finally, there is a long-standing debate about whether the threat posed by an outgroup stems more from a *realistic* threat (e.g., over jobs, housing, educational opportunities) versus a *symbolic* threat (Stephan, Ybarra, & Rios, 2016). The latter includes perceived threats to a group's value system, their "way of life," and other cherished beliefs. For example, it is unlikely that allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry will be a threat to anyone's livelihood, yet many people believe that it does pose a threat to the "traditional family." We examine symbolic threats more deeply in Chapters 6 (racism), and 9 (heterosexism).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have examined research and theory on the factors that contribute to the formation of prejudice and stereotypes, and the reasons why stereotypes and prejudice persist, even in the face of stereotype-inconsistent information. Research in social cognition has led to great advances in our understanding of the nature of stereotyping, showing, for example, that stereotyping is the result of the mind's normal tendency to categorize stimuli in the environment, and is not—at least for most of us—the product of a deviant mind, or maladjusted personality. Of course, such a conclusion does not in any way suggest that we ought to condone the endorsement of stereotyped beliefs. Rather, it clarifies that stereotyping is an outgrowth of the innate tendency of the human brain to categorize the world, in order to greatly simplify the amount of information it must deal with at any given moment. With this perspective, researchers have been able to identify the cognitive tendencies and processes (such as illusory correlations, subcategorization) whereby we maintain the simplified view of the world, and we maintain the cognitive efficiency (and frequent inaccuracy) that stereotypes afford us in our daily lives. These tendencies tend to be somewhat automatic, and as such are difficult to control. However, because one knows of stereotypes does not imply that one endorses them, and this is an important distinction in our understanding of the difference between high- and low-prejudice persons (and we discuss this in detail in the next chapter). We then explored the reasons why some people dislike other groups, and our discussion focused on the motivational factors that lead to the development and maintenance of such prejudices. Motivational theories for prejudice have tended to implicate the self, self-esteem, and group identity as factors that lead one to actively dislike other groups, in order to feel better about oneself or one's ingroups. Current researchers are focusing on motivational explanations of prejudice, as they have the most explanatory power and theoretical promise as a tool for understanding the nature of prejudice, and we explore this further in the final chapter in our discussion of future trends and unanswered questions in prejudice research.

GLOSSARY

Contact Hypothesis—the prediction that intergroup prejudice will diminish (or be eliminated) when the two groups are brought into contact with each other.

Illusory Correlation—the overestimation of the association between two variables (e.g., a group and a trait/behavior) that are either weakly or not related at all.

Implicit Theories—our individual beliefs about the nature of personality, and the behaviors, attitudes, and values associated with certain types of individuals.

Ingroups—those groups to which we believe we belong.

Ingroup Bias—the tendency to favor, and have positive affect for, members of one's own group, and to attribute more positive characteristics to one's ingroups than to outgroups.

Minimal Groups—groups formed on the basis of some (sometimes trivial) criteria, and which are otherwise devoid of the normal aspects of group life, such

as face-to-face interaction, group norms, interactions with other groups, and a group structure.

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory—suggests that our social motives are governed by an alternating tension between our need for uniqueness and our need to belong to groups. We are therefore motivated to find and affiliate with groups that can help provide a balance between these opposing needs.

Outgroups—those groups to which we believe we do not belong.

Outgroup Homogeneity—the belief that members of outgroups are more similar to one another than are members of one's ingroups ("they all look alike").

Realistic Conflict Theory—a theory of intergroup conflict, which states that when groups are competing for scarce resources, prejudice and hostility between the groups will result.

Relative Deprivation Theory—states that when groups perceive that they are at a disadvantage relative to an outgroup in their attainment of important group goals, the group that feels disadvantaged (or deprived) feels prejudice and resentment toward the other group.

Scapegoat Theory—postulates that when an individual becomes thwarted from a particular goal, the person may feel anger, irritation, or disappointment. That anger is similar to the negative affect people feel toward disliked outgroups, and eventually, the outgroup is blamed for the ingroup's failure to attain their goal, and the ingroup feels prejudice toward the outgroup.

Social Identity Theory—states that the need for positive self-esteem motivates individuals to perceive people in the environment in terms of ingroups and outgroups. Suggests that people can get positive self-esteem either by their own accomplishments, or by affiliating with high-status groups.

Subcategorization—the tendency to create a special, separate cognitive category for deviant (i.e., stereotype-disconfirming) members of a stereotyped outgroup, leading the original stereotype to remain intact; also referred to as "subtyping."

Superordinate Goal—a task that, if it is to be completed successfully, requires the cooperative efforts of two (or more) groups.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After reviewing the research on the automatic nature of stereotyping, what do you think about Macrae et al.'s (1997) suggestion that seeing a category word will evoke the associated stereotypes, but seeing a member from that category may not necessarily evoke stereotypes (because the perceiver may categorize the individual on another salient dimension)?
2. How do your salient ingroups change as you go from one social situation to another, and as you go from one social interaction to the next? How do you

think this influences (or does not influence) your tendency to perceive others according to their category membership (and to evoke various stereotypes about other persons)?

3. In your own experiences, what sources of stereotypes (e.g., parents, television, magazines, friends) have been most prevalent and influential? When do you think you started noticing different social groups and developing attitudes toward them?
4. Can you identify some major stereotypes that are communicated in today's media (movies, social media, television)? What are some specific examples of prejudiced or stereotypical messages or portrayals of a group?
5. How much do feelings and thoughts of relative deprivation contribute to prejudice in the United States today?
6. How would realistic conflict versus symbolic threats explain anti-immigrant attitudes?

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