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The Study of Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination Within Social Psychology

A Quick History of Theory and Research

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The history of the empirical study of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination is a young one, but nevertheless one that is rich, exciting, and potentially useful in informing public policy. It is a history that has happened incredibly fast—indeed it is a great pleasure for me to personally know pretty much everyone who has helped to create the excellent research that I try to summarize in this chapter. This literature has been developed and presented in the myriad journal articles that we have published on these topics, and summarized in a substantial number of comprehensive reviews (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Fiske, 1998; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Mackie & Smith, 1998; Major & O’Brien, 2005; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2003; Messick & Mackie, 1989; Nelson, 2002; Stangor & Lange, 1994; Wilder, 1986), as well as innumerable edited books. This work has also been improved and refined through the many enjoyable conferences that we have shared together.

We should be extremely proud of the accomplishments that we have made in this field. When we began our enterprise, less than 100 years ago, it was not clear how stereotypes and prejudice should be conceptually considered, or that they could be effectively operationalized. In less than a century we have created a generally accepted conceptualization of these important ideas, which we routinely assess using sophisticated implicit reaction time measures and brain imaging techniques, in addition to our standard repertoire of behavior and self-report. We understand, at least to some extent, the sources of these beliefs and attitudes, and we have made some progress in understanding how to effectively change them. Most important, we have developed a substantial understanding of the influence of stereotypes and prejudice—as social expectations—on behavior. This represents a major conceptual advance in only a short period of time.

Our research has also been widely incorporated into other fields, including clinical, developmental, educational, legal, and organizational psychology. This suggests that the results of our endeavors are important and useful. On the other hand, we have had a tendency to focus on the easy problems and ignore the more difficult ones. Despite some important exceptions, we have tended to work in our labs rather than hitting the field, we study college students who by and large are not prejudiced, and we refrain from making many public statements about the implications of our research. These limitations have probably prevented us from advancing as quickly or effecting as much social change as we might like. I think we should try to do more in this regard.

I hope you will enjoy my review, and will not be offended where I have included my own unique, and potentially debatable, interpretations of some of these topics. Let me be the first to acknowledge,
however, that in many ways there is little point in either reading or writing it. The chapter represents, in essence, an abridged version of what to me is the real history of the social psychology of stereotyping and prejudice, which is David Schneider’s (2004) amazing book, *The Psychology of Stereotyping*. In all honesty, you don’t have time to read my chapter—you should take the time instead to read the real story—from Professor Schneider.

### DEFINING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE

The definitions that we find most consensual regarding stereotyping and prejudice have changed over time as the field itself has changed. Most important, our definitions have generally simplified with the years. We now define prejudice as a negative attitude toward a group or toward members of the group. Defining stereotyping has been more problematic—there are tens, if not hundreds of definitions in the literature, although they are mostly based on the general idea of stereotypes as knowledge structures that serve as mental “pictures” of the groups in question (Lippmann, 1922). With some exceptions, I’d say that we generally agree that stereotypes represent the traits that we view as characteristic of social groups, or of individual members of those groups, and particularly those that differentiate groups from each other. In short, they are the traits that come to mind quickly when we think about the groups.

The tendency to simplify things has led us to discard some of the presumed characteristics of stereotypes and prejudice that were integral to early conceptualizations, such as those of Allport (1954), including inaccuracy, negativity, and overgeneralization. It is unfortunate that we have let those original requirements go—after all, they really are the heart of why we care about the topic at all. Our concepts should be simple, but also not so simple that they lose their essence. Stereotypes are problematic because they are negative, inaccurate, and unfair—they would simply be part of the study of person perception more broadly if they weren’t.

In terms of negativity, the data are clear, and we probably should acknowledge it more fully, as we generally do regarding prejudice. Although they can be positive, stereotypes are primarily negative. We generate many more negative than positive stereotypes when asked to do so, and even expressing positive stereotypes is not seen positively. Consider how we might react to people who have claimed that African Americans have the positive traits of being athletic and musical. The problem, in part, is that if we express positive stereotypes, it is assumed that we hold the negative ones, too.

It is more difficult to get a good handle on the accuracy question. Although some have tried (Judd, Ryan, & Park, 1991; Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995; McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980; Ryan, Park, & Judd, 1996), the conclusions they have drawn have not been consistent. Suffice it to say that there is a good kernel of truth to most group beliefs—there is a correlation between perception and reality (Swim, 1994). Whether stereotypes are in general over- or underestimated is not so clear. In any case, it is the process of using stereotypes (overgeneralization), more than holding them, that is problematic, because it is so unfair (Fiske, 1989; Stangor, 1995). No matter how accurate our belief is, it does not describe every member of the group—therefore, basing judgments of individuals on category level knowledge is just plain wrong. The idea that categorization is less fair than individuation is a major contribution of this literature, and one that I think has also made some difference outside of the field.

Over the years, the participants that we use in our studies have become much less willing to admit that they are prejudiced or hold stereotypes, perhaps in part because their beliefs have in fact changed (Devine & Elliot, 1995; Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983a). This creates some conceptual issues, most notably in terms of measurement, as I discuss later. Another outcome of this change, however, is that we really rarely see prejudice in the populations that we tend to study. The evaluations of most outgroups are overall positive—at least above a neutral point (Brewer, 1999; Brewer & Silver, 1978). This creates a conceptual question regarding whether positive evaluations of outgroups (evaluations that are nevertheless more negative than evaluations of ingroups) represent prejudice: Is
ingroup favoritism really a problem if it is not accompanied by outgroup derogation? There may not be a good answer to the question, but it must make us wonder if we are really studying prejudice (the “negative evaluation of members of outgroups”) at all. In any case it is clear that we must compare attitudes toward outgroups to those of relevant ingroups, and that these two sets of attitudes may be quite independent (Brewer, 1999; Brewer & Silver, 1978).

Group attitudes and beliefs are, of course, in large part about cognition, and this has remained, as far back as Lippmann (1922) and D. Katz and Braly (1933), the focus of our approach. Most fundamental is social categorization—a natural process that occurs spontaneously in our everyday perception (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, Thorn, & Castelli, 1997; Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978). Stereotypes, the traits associated with social categories, represent an important form of social knowledge, and we have learned, through an extensive line of research, much about how they are mentally represented. Most generally, stereotypes exist as cognitive structures, such as schemas (Augoustinos & Innes, 1990; Fiske & Linville, 1980; Martin & Halverson, 1981; Woll & Graesser, 1982), prototypes (Brewer, Dull, & Lui, 1981), and exemplars (Bodenhausen, Schwarz, Bless, & Wanke, 1995; Smith & Zárate, 1992). This does not mean that these beliefs are rigid; they are not—they change fluidly across social context (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Smith et al., 1992; Smith & Zárate, 1990). The study of stereotypes has informed person perception more broadly, just as the study of person perception has informed our understanding of stereotypes.

Other conceptualizations of stereotypes, although not as common, are potentially useful. For instance, we can also think about group beliefs in terms of their variability, in addition to their means (Linville, Salovey, & Fischer, 1986; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992; B. Park, Judd, & Ryan, 1991). This seems important, and it would be good to more regularly measure this dimension of group perception. We may more frequently change stereotypes by changing perceived variability than by changing perceived means. Group beliefs can be conceptualized as theories about the world of social groups and group relations—our beliefs about the essence of social groups (Rothbart & Taylor, 1992; Yzerbyt, Schadron, Leyens, & Rocher, 1994). Theories about responsibility, for instance, explain why negative attitudes are stronger for people who we see as responsible for their negative characteristics (Crandall & Biernat, 1990).

We have focused primarily on process, but there has been some work on content (Maner et al., 2005). Fiske and her colleagues (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) have attempted to categorize the fundamental components of stereotypes, focusing on the dimensions of warmth and competence. These two dimensions are basic to social psychology (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957), and capture a good proportion of the variance in perceived stereotypes. Attempting to develop models of the content of our group beliefs, in addition to our focus on process, is an important goal that we need to spend more time on.

Categorization is driven by desires for simplicity (Ford & Stangor, 1992; Macrae, Hewstone, & Griffiths, 1993; Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). We desire, as much as possible, to differentiate individuals from different categories from each other, and to view individuals within categories as maximally similar. These desires can distort perceptions and create biases even in minimal settings, and these distortions are particularly powerful when the categorization dimension involves differentiating ingroup from outgroup members, under concerns of maintaining one’s social identity in the presence of competing groups (Brewer & Campbell, 1976; Fein & Spencer, 1997; A. Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999; S. Haslam et al., 1998; Mummendey, 1995). Indeed social identity is a—perhaps the—fundamental underlying motivation behind prejudice and discrimination, although the results of this vast literature are complex, often conflicting, and difficult to simply summarize (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Categorization also involves the self—the principle of self-categorization (Hogg & McGarty, 1990; Turner, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994; Turner & Oakes, 1989). Self-categorization concerns the ways in which the individual perceives his or her interactions with other
people. We may sometimes act as individuals, but at other times we may act more as a representa-
tive of a social group. The dynamic between perceiving and interacting as individuals versus group
members is fundamental, and has contributed broadly to our understanding of group relations.

In addition to their cognitive components, our attitudes are based in large part on our emotional
responses to social groups (Bodenhausen, Kramer, & Sasser, 1994; Fiske, 1982; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Mackie & Hamilton, 1993). Affect predicts attitudes as well or better than does
cognition (Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991), can influence categorization (Dovidio, Gaertner, Isen, & Lowrance, 1995), and indeed has a variety of effects on stereotyping and prejudice, depending in
part on the particular affect (Bodenhausen, Gabriel, & Lineberger, 2000; Bodenhausen et al., 1994; J. Park & Banaji, 2000). The relationship between stereotypes (cognition) and prejudice (affect) is
not always strong, but is reliable (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996). This is reason-
able, because affect and cognition represent different components of the same underlying attitudes,
and because stereotypes are in part rationalizations for our prejudices (Jost & Major, 2001; Sinclair & Kunda, 2000).

Although we know that emotion matters, probably more than cognition, we have focused to a
large extent on the latter, perhaps in part because our samples are generally made up of college stu-
dents who are highly cognitively focused (Sears, 1986), and for whom cognition probably explains
a relatively large part of their social judgment and behavior. And, of course, we have taken most of
our paradigms from cognitive psychology. More important, perhaps, is the difficulty of measuring
emotion. People do experience emotions when we respond to and interact with social group mem-
bers, but they have more trouble expressing them on self-report measures. Our arsenal of measure-
ment techniques is poor, in comparison to those for assessing cognition. Indeed, it is probably not
wrong to say that at this point we have no measures of emotion other than self-report. The ability
to pinpoint emotion-related brain activity through newly developed social neuroscience techniques
will likely help us in this regard (Olsson & Phelps, 2007).

We can think of group beliefs at both the individual (“I believe. . . .”) as well as at the social (“We
believe. . . .”) level (Stangor & Schaller, 1996). We have tended to focus on the former, because this
is in general what we all do, although we also acknowledge that the latter is fundamental. Indeed, if
there is not general agreement within our participant populations about which beliefs are associated
with which social groups (who is good or bad; who has which traits), then our studies, even though
they are individual in orientation, won’t work. On some measures it is difficult to determine whether
we are measuring personal or collective beliefs (Karpinski & Hilton, 2001).

There have been some important attempts to focus on the social side of prejudice, particularly
by studying how individuals communicate their stereotypes and prejudices, and the effects of com-
munication on beliefs (Kashima, 2000; Lyons & Kashima, 2003; Ruscher, 1998, 2001; Schaller, Conway, & Tanchuk, 2002). Perhaps most impressive is the work by Crandall (Crandall & Stangor,
2005) showing how strongly group beliefs correlate with perceived social norms. This work sug-
gests that, most fundamentally, stereotypes and prejudice are social norms. This is an old idea
(Pettigrew, 1959), and one that perhaps isn’t that sexy in today’s context—but it is in fact the most
important way we think about social stereotypes. In short, people hold and express stereotypes and
prejudice to the extent that they see it as appropriate, within their social contexts, to do so.

It is my feeling, taking it all together, that we need to focus more on prejudice and stereotypes as
social rather than individual constructions. Stereotypes represent our relationships with our groups
and our cultures—with those we know and care about. This was the initial argument of the original
stereotype researchers—D. Katz and Braly and Allport, for instance. In short, we are prejudiced
because we feel that others that we care about are, too—that it is okay to be so. Similarly, we are tol-
erant when we feel that being so is socially acceptable. Conceptualizing stereotypes and prejudice
within their social and cultural context is essential, and we frequently do not.
MEASUREMENT

We can measure stereotypes in many ways, both self-report and behavioral. These measures may be more or less reactive. Our major approach has been self-report, including thought listings (Stangor et al., 1991), trait check-offs (D. Katz & Braly, 1933), probability judgments (McCauley & Stitt, 1978), and, of course, Likert scales. These measures are reliable and generally predictive of discrimination—they are the best measures we have, in my opinion. We need to be careful in our interpretation of these measures, however, because no social group is ever evaluated out of its social context. Variations in subjective perceptions of scale meanings and of the implied reference groups may distort group judgments (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001; Biernat & Vescio, 2002; Collins, Crandall, & Biernat, 2006).

Nonreactive, indirect, or unobtrusive (Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980) behavioral measures such as seating distance (Macrae et al., 1994) and “implicit” reaction time measures (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001; Dasgupta, McGhee, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2000; Devine, 1989; Dovidio, Evans, & Tyler, 1986; Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983b; Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005; Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, & Tyler, 1990; Rudman, Greenwald, Mellott, & Schwartz, 1999) have also been prevalent, although until recently less popular overall because they are more difficult to collect. Physiological and neurological measures of prejudice are also available (Cooper, 1956; Ito, 2006; Mendes, 2002; Phelps, 2000).

We have tended to measure using whatever technology is most current. When Likert scales were first developed, they were used to good stead. When physiological measures were created, we started to use them (Cooper & Singer, 1956). When we got PCs in our labs, reaction time measures predominated (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Devine, 1989; Dovidio et al., 1986). Now, as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) magnets get cheaper they will naturally become more popular, and we will be able to view stereotypes and prejudice in the brain.

A limitation of these changes is that it is not always clear that newer measures tell us much more about the core social constructs of stereotyping and prejudice than older measures do. The street has run in large part one way—we adapt the measures that others have developed, but do not provide much in return. It seems to me that any of these many measurement techniques will likely predict behavior, but it is not clear that any one predicts any better than any other. In short, creating new measurement techniques has not always produced much insight into the underlying processes of interest.

The really social aspect of the measurement issue involves the presumed contaminating role of self-presentation. It is bad to hold and to express prejudice, and the assumption is that indirect measures therefore represent more valid responses. This general belief has been historically prevalent, beginning perhaps with the “bogus pipeline” (Sigall & Page, 1971), and has guided the development of unobtrusive measures of all sorts, and more recently the implicit approach to measurement. Indeed, some of our most important theories about racism and sexism have been based on the idea that we are more prejudiced than we care to show ourselves or others (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1981, 1986; Monteith, Deneen, & Tooman, 1996; Zuwerink, Devine, Monteith, & Cook, 1996), and that we express those prejudices more when they can be covered up by other external excuses (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977).

We have developed a number of nonobvious sexism and racism measures to try to assess beliefs among the “well-intentioned” (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1981). These measures include aversive, ambivalent, modern, and symbolic racism and sexism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Glick & Fiske, 1996; McConahay, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998b; Sears & Henry, 2005; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). In large part these measures have been developed as a result of our focus on those who are not really prejudiced, and who live in a climate of political correctness. If we were to study the really bigoted, then perhaps we would feel more comfortable using more direct measures. More important, these ideas are important because they allow us to learn something about the content of prejudice—that prejudice is in fact multifaceted and takes on different forms for different groups.
We are not uniquely negative to outgroups, and in some cases quite the opposite; in short, simple liking–disliking measures are not always sufficient to really capture the full meaning of prejudice. Yet other researchers seem to not have worried about the self-presentation issue so much, going instead for direct questioning regarding the underlying constructs. For instance, a popular and highly predictive measure of prejudice (I believe it is the best overall measure of prejudice that we have) is social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999)—a measure that directly asks about group differences. Similarly, Devine and her colleagues ask their participants how hard they try to avoid being prejudiced—again a direct and useful measure that creates variability and predictive power (Plant & Devine, 1998).

What can we conclude in this regard? My reading of the literature leads me to think that we do not need to worry so much about being indirect. Yes, indirect measures can be useful—but implicit measures are no “truer” than are explicit measures. To be really useful, indirect or unobtrusive measures must either predict the same outcome measure above and beyond direct measures, they must predict different outcome measures, or they must otherwise differentiate attitude components. Some research has demonstrated these properties (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997; Gregg, Seibt, & Banaji, 2006) but by and large we have not addressed these issues. The approach is generally to correlate implicit and explicit measures (Brauer, Wasel, & Niedenthal, 2000; Karpinski & Hilton, 2001; Nosek, 2005), perhaps looking at the moderators of the relationship, without much concern for how these measures differentially predict the important outcome variables. This is not to argue that implicit measures are irrelevant or unimportant—they may be, but they also have limitations (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004). In many cases implicit and explicit measures show similar effects. Consider, for instance, the large-scale Web-based research of Nosek and his colleagues (Nosek et al., 2007), who find, across millions of participants, shockingly similar results on implicit and explicit measures.

My gut feeling is that explicit measures (or perhaps implicit measures that are truly social) are going to take us farther in the long term. Because prejudice and discrimination are highly influenced by social norms, and perhaps especially by the prescriptive ones, the relationship between attitude and action will be higher for measures that are indeed influenced themselves by these norms—and these are generally the explicit ones. We want people, when they express prejudice, to do it within a social context. People may lie on direct measures such as social dominance orientation just as they lie on any other self-report measure (consider the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, hugely influenced by self-promotion, and yet highly valid). In these cases we expect that self-promotion represents an overall main effect that does not interact with the predictive correlations. The distribution of scores, although inflated, is nevertheless predictive of the outcomes that we care about. In any case, no matter what measures we use, we need to validate them on broader populations than we generally use (Biernat & Crandall, 1999).

PREDICTING PREJUDICE: THE PREJUDICED PERSONALITY

A small cottage industry has developed around the goal of discovering the individual difference variables that predict prejudice. This interest has come in large part out of Allport’s and others’ claims about the “prejudiced personality,” and has continued to expand with new measures virtually every year. Individual difference variables that are known to predict prejudice include social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1981, 1988; Backstrom & Bjorklund, 2007), need for closure or structure (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Schaller, Boyd, Yohannes, & O’Brien, 1995; Shah, Kruglanski, & Thompson, 1998), internal and external motivations to control prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998), humanism and the Protestant work ethic (I. Katz & Hass, 1988), egalitarianism (Moskowitz, Wasel, Schaal, & Gollwitzer, 1999), implicit attributional theories (Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997; Plaks, Stroessner, Dweck, & Sherman, 2001), and religious fundamentalism (Rowatt et al., 2006).
This approach seems informative—we can learn about the fundamental motives of prejudice by understanding the personality variables that relate to it—indeed, our beliefs about social groups represent an essential part of our underlying political and social value orientations (Biernat, Vescio, & Theno, 1996; Biernat, Vescio, Theno, & Crandall, 1996; Jost et al., 2003; Schwartz, 1992). I think we have been better off when we think broadly about the topic, and that we can do more in this regard. The many individual difference measures naturally factor into fewer dimensions, and understanding these dimensions can help us get to the core of prejudice. Perhaps the best progress in this regard has been made by Altemeyer and his colleagues (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988), who find that attitudes toward outgroups are determined in large part by two personality dimensions, indexed broadly by authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. Stangor and Leary (2006) found similar results—the various personality variables that we studied factored into an egalitarianism and a traditionalism dimension, and egalitarianism uniquely predicted attitudes toward outgroups, whereas traditionalism uniquely predicted attitudes toward ingroups. It will be important to continue to link our conceptualizations of intergroup attitudes to fundamental human motives, and I think there will be excellent payoffs here.

**WHY STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE MATTER**

The direct social and health impact of prejudice and discrimination on members of minority ethnic groups has been extensively studied, although not particularly by social psychologists. Discrimination has been blamed for the large percentage of Blacks living in poverty, and their lack of access to high-paying jobs (Williams & Rucker, 2000; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Discrimination also has negative effects on the physical and mental health of those who experience it. African Americans have elevated mortality rates for virtually all of the leading causes of death in the United States (Williams, 1999). Racial minorities have less access to and receive poorer quality health care than Whites, even controlling for other variables such as level of health insurance status (Williams, 1999; Williams & Rucker, 2000). Blacks are less likely to receive major therapeutic procedures for many conditions and often do not receive necessary treatments, have delayed diagnoses, or fail to manage chronic diseases (Bach, Cramer, Warren, & Begg, 1999).

Existing research also suggests that discrimination may have negative effects on the mental health of its victims. Stigmatized individuals who report experiencing frequent exposure to discrimination or other forms of unfair treatment also report more psychological distress, depression, and lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness (N. Anderson & Armstead, 1995; Corning, 2002; Glauser, 1999; Kessler, 1999; Williams, 1999; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; Schultz et al., 2000; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001; Williams, Spencer, & Jackson, 1999; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Social psychologists should take better note of these health-related findings, because this is a domain where we can put our expertise to important use (Ottati, Bodenhausen, & Newman, 2005).

In addition to their effects on mental and physical health, there are a variety of other potential outcomes of perceiving or misperceiving discrimination. There are substantial effects of discrimination on job hiring and performance evaluations (Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988; Riach & Rich, 2004). Members of minority groups feel rejected when they experience discrimination (Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002). Individuals who believe that they are the victims of discrimination may begin to avoid or distrust members of the relevant social category—a sense of “cultural mistrust” (Terrell, Terrell, & Miller, 1993; Watkins, Terrell, Miller, & Terrell, 1989). In some cases this avoidance may be adaptive and appropriate, but in other cases it may cause individuals to overestimate the extent of discrimination directed at them, leading them to see prejudice as inevitable (Pinel, 2002). The perceived possibility that perceivers are acting on their stereotypes and prejudice tends to poison social interactions (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991). Thus prejudice and stereotyping create a variety of stressors for their victims (Inzlicht, McKay, & Aronson, 2006).
Self-expectations matter—just thinking about our own social category memberships, which naturally activates the stereotypes associated with the categories, can create self-fulfilling prophecies that influence behavior (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, & Steele, 1999; Cadinu, Maass, Frigerio, Impagliazzo, & Latinotti, 2003; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003; Steele & Aronson, 1995). It appears that we do not need to accept the negative connotations of a self-stereotype for it to matter—just making stereotypes accessible, salient, and self-relevant is sufficient to influence behavior. Although these effects seem relatively strong in laboratory settings, creating both positive outcomes (stereotype lift; Walton & Cohen, 2003) as well as negative outcomes (stereotype threat), there is less evidence that they matter that much in real life. Although we have again been reluctant to really look outside the lab to see how these things are really playing out, some of the research in this regard suggests that stereotype threat effects may be weaker in the field than in the lab (Stricker & Bejar, 2004; Stricker & Ward, 2004).

A particularly important aspect of this phenomenon, and one that helps explain the maintenance of status differences within cultures, is that individuals from stigmatized groups may also internalize and accept the negative beliefs associated with their groups (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). As a consequence it becomes very difficult to overcome them. Lines of research such as this one by Jost and his colleagues, which integrate social, cultural, and political psychology, are among the most important ones for us to pursue.

Although it can be and usually is, being the target of discrimination is not always negative. For one, the stigmatized may at least in some cases completely miss that they are victims (Stangor et al., 2003). Although this of course makes it difficult to confront the discrimination, it does protect the self. Believing that one has been the victim of discrimination can increase identification with the ingroup, which can have positive outcomes (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003). Believing that one is a victim can also provide a method of buffering self-worth (Major, Kaiser, & McCoy, 2003). Individuals with more positive outcomes and higher group identity are less affected by stereotyping and prejudice (Kaiser, Major, & McCoy, 2004; Major, Kaiser, et al., 2003).

**ETIOLOGY**

Where do our stereotypes and prejudices come from? They are, of course, developed as all cognitive representations are developed, and we have a good idea of the cognitive process involved in this regard (Bigler, 1995; Bigler & Liben, 1992). Children have an active and seemingly innate interest in learning about social categories and stereotypes, and in understanding how to fit themselves into this categorization system (Ruble & Martin, 1998; Stangor & Ruble, 1989). As a result children learn stereotypes very early and become confident in them, such that they are initially highly resistant to change. Children soften their beliefs and become more flexible after age 10 or so (Bigler & Liben, 1992; Signorella, Bigler, & Liben, 1993).

But what about the content? Most likely this knowledge comes from our parents, from our peers, and from the media. Again, we have not been particularly interested in the issues of content, and the evidence about its development remains ambiguous. Frances Aboud, the world’s expert on stereotype development, argues that there is virtually no relationship between the racial attitudes of children and their parents (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Amato, 2001). Other data suggest at least some correlation (Stangor & Leary, 2006). We really need to know more about the influence of parents on children in this regard, and it is disappointing that the question has not been pursued. Indeed, it would seem important to do the studies that could really tell us—in comparison to other beliefs—the extent to which stereotypes and prejudice come from nature and from nurture. We don’t know if parents can have any influence at all on their children’s stereotypes, and some theoretical approaches suggest that they cannot (Harris, 2002). One important approach would be to do the relevant twin studies (e.g., Olson, Vernon, Harris, & Jang, 2001).
Perhaps prejudice is primarily evolutionary—we like those who we see as similar and thus more likely to be helpful and benign, stigmatizing and avoiding those who appear to be poor partners for social exchange, who may be likely to be diseased, or who threaten important group values (Collins et al., 2006; Maner et al., 2005). This seems possible, at least for the social groups that have an evolutionary history of difference and conflict. That we perceive people differently in the dark rather than in the light seems consistent with the idea (Schaller, Park, & Mueller, 2003).

Of course we also must learn our intergroup beliefs from the media. Film, television, and the Web not only create the relevant stereotypes, but more important, they provide us with the relevant social norms—who we can and cannot like (Ruscher, 2001). Gays were the most recent bastions in this normative progression, now being accepted by many as part of mainstream media. We have not really focused on the media, in part because the relevant questions are more content than process, but doing so is critical; we should conduct the appropriate longitudinal panel studies to assess the role of the media on group beliefs, as we have done to assess the role of viewing violent media on aggression (e.g., C. A. Anderson et al., 2003).

Some group beliefs are the result of purely random factors—fortunate happenstance for some and unfortunate happenstance for others. One possible example of this is the data-based illusory correlation, which suggests that—because minority information and negative information are both highly salient—minority members will be disliked just for being minorities. This idea spawned a generation of research (Hamilton, 1981; Hamilton & Rose, 1980; McGarty, Haslam, Turner, & Oakes, 1993; Mullen & Johnson, 1990; Schaller & Maass, 1989), but again it was a program that never left the lab. We have no idea whether any real stereotypes or real prejudices form as the result of illusory correlations.

Stereotypes also stem from the existing distributions of the roles played by social category members, for instance men and women (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Eagly & Steffen, 1984). This idea is also consistent with the fact that stereotypes change as a result of changes in social context (Devine & Elliot, 1995). In many cases, however, the roles are determined by the stereotypes, too—so our expectations come from our perceptions of existing social conditions, but the expectations may also create these conditions.

**INFLUENCE: USING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE**

Stereotypes matter because they are part and parcel of our everyday life—they influence our judgments and behavior toward individuals, often entirely out of our awareness (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Dijksterhuis, Aarts, Bargh, & van Knippenberg, 2000; Wheeler & Petty, 2001). They become part of our everyday language (Maass & Arcuri, 1996; Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989). These behaviors create self-fulfilling prophecies that bring out the stereotypes in their targets (Chen & Bargh, 1999; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). They are the cognitive “monsters” that poison many of our social interactions (Bargh, 1999).

One of the important, and perhaps discouraging, discoveries is the extent to which social categorization and the accompanying activation of stereotypic material occurs quickly when we first see another person, and without any real intention or awareness on the part of the person who is doing the categorizing. This quick spontaneous or automatic categorization (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Uleman & Bargh, 1989) suggests that these activated stereotypes may be applied to judgments of others, and certainly this can happen. We tend to use our categories more when we are fatigued, distracted, or ego-depleted (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998; Govorun & Payne, 2006; Kruglanski & Freund, 1983), when the going gets tough (Stangor & Duan, 1991), or when we are little motivated to do more (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987). Thus using our stereotypes to size up another person might simply make our life easier (Allport, 1954; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Macrae et al., 1993; Macrae et al., 1994; Tajfel & Forgas, 1981; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 1994).

We are particularly likely to categorize people who we do not know very well or do not care about. In short, we may use our stereotypes almost exclusively when the category is all the information we
have about someone (Brodt & Ross, 1998), or if we are not particularly interested in getting to know the person better. In other cases when we know the individual well (for instance, as classroom teachers know their students), we may ignore people’s group memberships almost completely, responding to them entirely at the individual level (Madon et al., 1998).

Even when responding to people we do not know well, we can and do get beyond initial activation to control our responses to others. This takes work, but is the right thing to do (Fiske, 1989). Just as we hold and express stereotypes that are normatively appropriate, we tend to use stereotypes when we think it is acceptable to do so—for instance when we think we have some valid knowledge about the group in question (Yzerbyt et al., 1994).

We are also more likely to categorize people using categories that are perceptually salient. As a result, categorization occurs frequently on the basis of people’s sex, race, age, and physical attractiveness, in part because these features are immediately physically apparent to us when we see other people (Brewer, 1988). Categories also become particularly salient when individuals are in the context of members of other, different, categories—that is, when they are solos or when they are in the minority (Cota & Dion, 1986; Kanter, 1977; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991; Taylor, 1981; Taylor & Crocker, 1981).

Social categories, like any other knowledge structure, can be more or less cognitively accessible, and thus more or less used in information processing (Stangor, 1988). For instance, members of minority groups might find ethnicity to be a more important category than members of majority groups, and, because it is highly accessible, these individuals might be particularly likely to think about others in terms of their ethnicity. Similarly, highly prejudiced people may also be particularly likely to categorize by race (Stangor, Lynch, Duan, & Glass, 1992), and women who are active in the feminist movement might be particularly likely to think about people in terms of gender (Bem, 1981; Pinel, 1999).

REDUCING STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE

Perhaps the most important contributions that social psychologists have made involve the potential for improving intergroup relations. This is an important, but also very difficult topic, and one that has been cracked in large part on the theoretical and not the applied level. We have developed excellent models to work from, but know little about how to implement programs that will make a real difference. The recent focus on cognition, conducted primarily in controlled lab studies, has moved us away in large part from the original empirical approaches that defined the domain of inquiry. It was the historically earlier field studies—generally intensive in orientation and scope (Cook, 1978, 1984; Sherif & Sherif, 1953)—that still allow us to make our most important statements regarding stereotype and prejudice change, and that still form the foundations of our textbooks. Since then, our approaches have been more limited in scope—although there have been some exceptions to this rule (e.g., Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978).

One thing that is clear is that we are not going to stop categorization entirely. Forcing a colorblind perspective is not that useful, and can even be harmful (Schofield, 1986; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Tutenbrink, 2000). People have a natural tendency to categorize, and this is not likely to go away soon. Given this inherent limitation, it seems therefore that there are three ways in which we might proceed.

First, we can attempt to change the beliefs themselves. This is perhaps the most common approach, but perhaps also the most difficult. The problem is one of inertia—expectancies tend to support themselves in virtually every possible way. As a result, providing the stereotype holder with stereotype-inconsistent information generally tends to be ineffective because the conflicting knowledge is ignored (Trope & Thompson, 1997), distorted (Darley & Gross, 1983), forgotten (Fyock & Stangor, 1994; Stangor & McMillan, 1992), attributed away (Hewstone, 1990; Swim & Sanna, 1996), or if it has influence, that influence is very limited (Rothbart & John, 1992; Weber & Crocker, 1983). An alternative approach, and one that deserves more attention, is to attempt to change the
perceived variability of groups such that the perceiver sees that the stereotypes, although perhaps true, are far from true for every group member and thus not that diagnostic.

Positive intergroup contact can change beliefs (Cook, 1978; Desforges et al., 1991; Pettigrew, 1998a; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), but this approach has substantial problems. For one, contact is not always positive; indeed situations that provide opportunities for positive attitude change are limited—bad situations make things worse (Stangor, Jonas, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1996)—and the conditions that create good situations are very difficult to achieve (Hewstone, 1996; Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Second is the issue of generalization. We change our beliefs about the individuals we contact much faster than we change our beliefs about the group as a whole, particularly because we tend to “subtype” individuals who do not match our expectations into lower level group memberships (Brewer et al., 1981; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Taylor, 1981; Weber & Crocker, 1983).

Generalization is more likely when the targets provide information that is relevant to existing beliefs such that the conflicting information is more difficult to ignore (Desforges et al., 1991; Rothbart & John, 1985).

Another approach to changing beliefs, and one that avoids the issue of generalization, is to attempt to convince people that their prejudiced beliefs are nonnormative (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001; Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001). Although this technique has been successful in the lab, again we do not know if it will work outside of laboratory settings.

Second, we can allow the beliefs to remain intact, but help people avoid applying them to individuals. This also is hard—because stereotyping is so well-practiced, and because it occurs often out of awareness, it is difficult to stop (Bargh, 1999). However, some social situations, including repeated practice in denying beliefs (Kawakami, Dovidio, Moll, Hermens, & Russin, 2000), awareness of one’s moral hypocrisy (Son Hing, Li, & Zanna, 2002), the presence of counteracting exemplars (Bodenhausen et al., 1995), and instructional sets (Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair, 2001), seem to be able to reduce automatic as well as explicit stereotyping.

Legal remedies are designed in large part to force us to stop using our stereotypes and prejudices, and these approaches are successful. More generally, we must try to convince people to do the right thing—to make the hard choices—in this regard (Fiske, 1989). We must individuate or personalize others, rather than categorizing them (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). In some cases, learning about others as individuals will completely overwhelm the influence of their group memberships on our impressions of them (Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, & Hepburn, 1980).

Finally, and perhaps most likely to be successful, is the possibility of leaving both the beliefs and their use intact, but reducing the categorization process itself. Our cognitive approach has taught us much about the determinants and outcomes of categorization, and this provides a powerful tool in our arsenal. Stereotyping and prejudice are reduced significantly when the members of the different groups are able to perceive themselves as members of a common group, to see each other similarly, and to make friends with each other (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Dovidio, et al., 2000; Gaertner et al., 1989; Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990, 2000; Wright et al., 1997). This change can be accomplished perceptually, but is most effective through intergroup contact. Through fostering perceptions of shared identities, encouraging meaningful contact that defies group boundaries, and highlighting similarities on other dimensions unrelated to group distinctions, the ingroup and an outgroup can begin to see each other as more similar than different, thereby reducing negative intergroup actions and promoting positive ones (Gaertner et al., 1989; Gaertner et al., 1990).

Again, our paradigms have been in large part lab-based. We know much less about actually changing beliefs through recategorization in real-world contexts. An exception is our study of forced contact through school busing. Our data suggest that this seems to have worked (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), although it also did not work very quickly.
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

If there is a single theme that runs through this review, it is my opinion that we have spent too much time on the easier questions, with a relative neglect of the harder ones. One could argue that this is an issue of basic versus applied, and perhaps that is true. We have focused on the basic cognitive and affective processes that guide social perception, we have made huge progress in understanding these topics, and these findings have been applied in other domains. However, the tendency to ignore content, to keep our research in the lab, and to base our findings on the responses of college students has not come without some cost. In the end we know little about the truly prejudiced and bigoted—they are not in our domain of investigation. This could have some real consequences. For instance, some fundamental underlying assumptions, such as the idea that “true” attitudes are more negative than expressed attitudes may not be true across the population at large.

Our research has also tended to be individual rather than social, and has tended to ignore the playing out of intergroup attitudes in real life. There are some exceptions. For instance, some recent studies have investigated the costs and outcomes of intergroup contact using real time intergroup interactions (Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Hill, 2006; Smart & Wegner, 1999; Vorauer, 2006; Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006), and other research has focused on underlying implicit processes to better understand the tough decisions that law enforcement personnel must make (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Correll et al., 2007). These are very important studies, and represent the kind of research that we must do more of. We also need to keep contributing to social policy—we have done some of this, including the Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S.483 (1954) decision and others (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991).

These are important contributions, but we really should do more. For instance, our research should have taught us a lot about how to make the best use of racial diversity in the classroom and in working groups, but we have not really tested these things (McCauley, Wright, & Harris, 2000). We should be contributing to the creation of diversity training programs, to prejudice-reduction programs in schools, and to the political discourse on discrimination. We know more about these topics than anyone else.

I make these statements because I feel that our reluctance to go out of our labs has in large part led us in many ways to be ignored by the world around us, and more recently by granting agencies. It is not seen as important by many to study stereotyping and prejudice, perhaps in part because we have not well linked our theories with policy and real social change. I have no doubt that the next 100 years will see us making substantial contributions to this issue.

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